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There

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There

Abstract

This is a review of the short film, *There* (2020), directed by Wu Yu Fen.

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Author Notes

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There (2021), dir. Wu Yu Fen

This is a film about death and how people respond to death. The grandfather has died and Shally, his Indonesian caregiver, must arrange his departure from this earth. To do this Shally must navigate Grandpa's brother, his widow, and his children.

His children respond to his death with indifference. They are all busy, too busy "making money" to come home to attend Grandpa's funeral.

His widow is overwhelmed by self-pity. She is angry that her husband left her so early. She is angry that now she must deal with the children by herself. She is angry that her husband did not leave her money. She is angry that she must now be alone, and she is angry because she believes that no one loves her.

Grandpa's brother is a mess. He wants Shally to cry for his brother. He goes so far as to hire a professional person of prayer, who cries and moans before the altar that has been erected for his brother. He auditions a singer who sings and dances in immodest attire. He is angry that so few people will attend the funeral. All of that anger he takes out on Shally. In the end, his biggest concern is how the funeral will affect his own image in the community.

Death does not always bring out the best in people. But Shally arranges the funeral and it is carried out. What the others do not know is that Shally has said exactly the right prayer for the grandfather. She notes that there is nothing she can do for him except to ask Allah to take the grandfather to be with him and to bless the grandfather. She notes in her prayer that the grandfather treated her well. Although not a member of his family, she is the one who cares about Grandpa. None of the others show respect for the dead person. They all focus upon their own fears and desires. But Shally shows the way to respect the dead. It is simple and private, but it is right.