



Fireworks Wednesday

Director: Asghar Farhadi

Country: Iran

Date: 2007



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A review by Peter Bradshaw of *The Guardian*:

Admirers of *A Separation* by the Iranian director Asghar Farhadi will be looking forward to his new movie *The Past*, to be released here in late March. They will also relish the ongoing discovery of his back catalogue: *About Elly* from 2009 was intriguing, and now his 2006 film *Fireworks Wednesday*, co-written with Mani Haghighi, has been released here on DVD. This is a thoroughly engrossing and densely textured drama, showing Farhadi's cool skill in dissecting the Iranian middle classes and the unhappiness of marriage.



It is set in Teheran, during the traditional boisterous New Year celebrations, involving fireworks in the street; Jafar Panahi's *This Is Not a Film* was set around this time as well. There are, of course, some emotional explosions. Taraneh Alidoosti (who played the fleeting title role in *About Elly*) is Roohi, a young woman who is thrilled to be engaged, and keen to save up as much as she can for the wedding. She gets a one-off job from a contract agency to clean a flat, and is highly disconcerted to find it a wreck, covered in dust sheets from an apparently abandoned plan to repaint and littered with broken glass from an unexplained violent row.

Roohi finds herself in the middle of the warring marital partners who live there: Mozhde (Hediyeh Tehrani) and Morteza (Hamid Farokhnezhad). Mozhde is obsessed with the idea that Morteza is cheating on her with the next-door neighbour, beauty-salon owner Simin (Pantea Bahram): she listens at the ventilation duct in her bathroom and at the wall behind the closet, and it is enigmatically unclear if she has actually heard anything incriminating or not. Poor Roohi finds herself inveigled into undercover ruses to spy on Morteza, and also finds herself telling fibs to help him out.

Instantly, instinctively, she has entered the world of little secrets and lies that comes with the territory of marriage, and her open, beautiful face becomes clouded with fear and unease as she guesses what might be in store for her in the married future. As with his other films, Farhadi shows an icily cool control in his camerawork, comparable to a Haneke, especially in the gripping street-brawl scene, blankly filmed from an ascending lift. A formidable and technically accomplished drama from Farhadi.



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