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The Prestige

A deliciously dark film delivers taut thrills about the illusive business of magic.

The Prestige (Touchstone Pictures/Warner Bros. Pictures)

"The *secret* of the trick is nothing...the *trick* is everything."

Such is the mantra of Alfred Borden (Christian Bale) and the idea on which the entire story darkly spins. As young lads and wannabe magicians in turn-of-the-century London, England, Borden and his co-worker, Robert Angier (Hugh Jackman), are immediate competitors. What begins as boyish one-upmanship between

commoner Borden and aristocrat Angier evolves into a lifelong bitter rivalry as their quest for the ultimate magic trick escalates into obsession, jealousy, deceit and danger—with deadly consequences for both.

The story, full of marvelous twists and turns that'll leave you holding your breath, is masterfully helmed by Christopher Nolan, who also directed the dark thrillers *Memento*, *Insomnia* and *Batman Begins*. Within the first few minutes one of the plot's many mysteries is presented and hooks you into wondering what happened, and as the film unfolds you'll obsess about the answer the same way Borden and Angier obsess about wanting to fool their audience, even if only for a second.

Eerie and complex and compelling, this is definitely a film to see more than once. Watch for juicy turns by Scarlett Johansson (as magician's assistant Olivia), Oscar winner Michael Caine (as Cutter, a designer of magic tricks) and musician David Bowie (as the historically real inventor/physicist/engineer Nikola Tesla).

Insider Info: The film is based on the novel, *The Prestige* (Tor Books, 2006), written by Christopher Priest, which won a World Fantasy Award. See the film first, since reading the book will reveal the mysteries, and the book's plot has extra complexities the film left out.

If you like this film try: *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (Walt Disney/Buena Vista Pictures, 1983), also deliciously dark, based on the novel of the same name written by Ray Bradbury.

By *Kate Yorga*

Photo courtesy *Francois Duhamel/Touchstone Pictures/Warner Bros. Pictures.*

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