

If I was asked about my favorite film, I would think for a rather long time about the answer. There are many well-rounded films that I enjoy, so choosing the best of them would be a complicated task. However, if I was asked about the films that I would name among the best, I would almost immediately recall “The Shawshank Redemption”—a film proving that when a person has will power, a dream, and persistence, nothing is impossible for them.

The film was released in 1994; it was directed by Frank Darabont, who is now one of my favorite directors (his “Green Mile” is great). The main roles were played by Morgan Freeman (whose character, Ellis “Red” Redding, in this picture is a kind of secondary character, but as crucial for the plot as the main one) and Tim Robbins. It is necessary to mention that the film has been created according to the novel by Stephen King named “Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption”; for me, almost all movies made after King’s books are amazing (except, perhaps, “The Shining,” which is remarkable, in my opinion, only due to the performance of Jack Nicholson). Anyways, the film tells the story of an accountant Andy Dufrene, whose wife had been found dead along with her lover. Andy was accused of a double murder and was sent to Shawshank—one of the most cruelest prisons in America. My first impression of the film was that I was watching a typical Hollywood drama. However, after a while, I felt intrigued because the film turned out to be not as glossy and sleek as typical mass culture products are. It was telling an uncompromising story of a person who was unfairly accused and put into conditions that anybody would find terrible. However, Andy Dufrene not only managed to survive in prison, but also found inner strength to pursue his dream, which was rather a simple one: to become free and rich, and live in the Mexican town of Zihuatanejo. And he manages to reach his dream: in the end, Dufrene escapes from prison, and the final scene shows him driving a sports car along the seaside.

What I liked most of all was the actors’ performances. Every person participating in the film acted so realistically that sometimes it seems you are watching a documentary. Perhaps, this is due to the influence of the place where the film was made; all shooting was made in Mansfield penal colony, Ohio. All the characters are convex and credible, and sometimes I noticed being sympathetic towards some of them (like Freeman’s Ellis Redding, for example); but then I realized that I was watching a film about prison, and Redding in fact was convicted for a triple murder.

One of the film’s strongest scenes (and one of my favorite) is when the prison’s warden is reported that Andy Dufrene’s cell is empty: he goes there to check it out—and indeed, all he sees is a poster of Raquel Welch hanging on the wall. Angry and anxious, the warden throws one of Andy’s belongings at the poster, and surprisingly manages to make a hole in it. After he hurriedly tears the poster off the wall, he sees a tunnel—the tunnel Andy had been digging for more than 20 years of his imprisonment with the help of a small rock ax. This was the second thing I liked about the movie—the idea that hope never dies, and that will power can make any path possible, and any choice correct.

“The Shawshank Redemption” is a great film to watch; some might find it stressful, because in fact it is a serious drama that shows a lot of injustice, violence, and other discouraging scenes. But, all this is needed to show how a single man with a dream and strong character can withstand all his misfortunes and change any life circumstances for the better.