KINONIK

HIGH NOON (1952)

With Gary Cooper Grace Kelly

WEDNESDAY June 11th 7PM



High Noon (1952) was part of a wave of psychological, noir Westerns that boomed in the Red Scare era. At a time when Americans wrestled with the paradox of economic and military dominance yet felt powerless to shape global events, the old myth of the lone hero triumphing and being celebrated no longer resonated. Writers and directors were more than ready to take a genre they had spent over two decades developing to a new, more serious, level.

High Noon's screenplay by Carl Foreman, who would be blacklisted from Hollywood and forced to emigrate to Britain during the film's production, seemed to many to be an obvious metaphor for McCarthyism. So obvious, in fact, that John Wayne refused the lead role and even proudly played a part in getting Foreman booted from the industry. But the parallels (a man in a desperate situation, help denied him by those who he thought were his community) alone do not define it. The film’s power lies in the blend of Foreman’s script, the nuanced performances of Gary Cooper, Grace Kelly, and Katy Jurado, and Fred Zinnemann’s precise direction. Together they create a study of the individual versus the collective, emotion versus ideology. What right, or duty, does a man have to act alone, in the face of his community's wishes?

Its dramatic, character-led story is made all the more tense by **High Noon**'s real-time plot progression–ticking down until that eponymous hour and the arrival of a fate-defining train. A controversial but awards-sweeping film, High Noon is a stellar piece of art that manages to pack a lot in without losing momentum.