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Key, The (2006)



Director: [Todd Kaufman](#),
Starring: Kristen Shaw, James Morrison, Craig Braun, and Ronald Hunter
Length: 18 minutes
Rated: NR

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Needs To Be Unlocked

by [Jonathan W. Hickman](#)
reviewed: 2006-06-08

Miriam hasn't physically left her apartment building in years. Her tiny abode is neat and tidy but strangely dated years older than she appears to be. A key stands between Miriam and freedom. That very key dangles on a chain around her neck.

Todd Kaufman's 18 minute short [film](#) "The Key" is a fascinating combination of sight and sound. [Music](#) interlaces with tense agoraphobia as Miriam finds herself at first outside her apartment door and then into the night in the unfamiliar city. But is this city kind and gentle or rough and dangerous? Miriam will find the answer whether she wants to or not.

I was taken by this scant but potent tale of a troubled young woman fighting with her mental illness. All the characters are sensitively aware of Miriam's fragile condition and subtly offer up assistance. One such character is Raymond, played well by "24" series regular James Morrison. Raymond himself appears to have a lurking phobia, one that separates him from others but not to the debilitating extent experienced by Miriam. When his eyes find hers there is a romance but maybe not one that will follow conventional lines.

Based on Nobel Laureate [author](#) Isaac Bashevis Singer's [short story](#), "The Key" is a different sort of story that maturely touches on things that in lesser [films](#) are often talked to death, over-articulated. The focus here is on the expressions of emotions largely found in the eyes and the posture of one's body. A history is in there waiting to be interpreted. This is a film that knows its theme well enough to permit the viewer to find a key to its meaning.

[Jonathan W. Hickman](#)

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