

## **Unmoored** [15]

2023 Sweden 93 mins

UK released 15 August 2025

Director Caroline Ingvarsson

Screenplay Michèle Marshall; (novel by Håkan Nesser)

Cinematography Michal Dymek

Music Martin Dirkov

Cast Anna Próchniak (Magdalena); la Langhammer

(Chief Inspector); **Thomas W. Gabrielsson** (Magnus); **Kris Hitchen** (Mark); **Mirja Turestedt** 

(Maria); Sven Ahlström (Bergman)

Good storytelling, especially of the cinematic variety, has the ability to make us sympathise with and even root for characters that have committed heinous acts. What if that terrible act is understandable, if not entirely justified? That's the question we find ourselves asking throughout director Caroline Ingvarsson's Unmoored, adapted from Hakan Nesser's novel 'The Living and the Dead in Winsford' by screenwriter Michèle Marshall.

The terrible act is committed by Maria (Mirja Turestedt), a Swedish TV presenter known for her confrontational onscreen manner. Her public persona is that of a committed feminist. In her private life it's a different story. She's under the thumb of her boorish husband Magnus (Thomas W. Gabrielsson), whom she is currently standing by amid an accusation of sexual assault.

When Maria suggests the couple leave Sweden until the scandal dies down, Magnus agrees, but he dismisses her desire to travel to England. Instead, Magnus wants to go to Morocco, with a stop in Poland to visit a friend along the way. While in Poland the couple have an argument, which clearly is just the latest of many. When Magnus storms off down a beach, Maria has a rush of blood to the head and drives away, taking Magnus's dog Caspar with her.

Maria ends up in England, but her paranoia suggests she didn't merely leave her husband stranded. The film teases out the truth of what happened between Maria and Magnus on the beach in flashbacks that unveil Maria's actions one piece at a time. We also see a past confrontation between Maria and the young woman who accused her husband of rape. It's clear that Maria believed the victim but stood by Magnus regardless.

Maria begins a brief affair with a sensitive local man (Kris Hitchen), a subplot that thankfully just about avoids straying into treacly Nicholas Sparks territory, but for most of the movie Maria is alone with her thoughts, with her paranoia, with her guilt. Turestedt, who looks awfully like the Danish actress Sidse Babett Knudsen, is very good at conveying the forces eating away at her character, forces which we fear will ultimately consume her.

But why do we fear for Maria, especially when we learn the full details of her actions? Well I guess it's because we all know of examples of men like Magnus who use their power to avoid any consequences for their misdeeds. We may not condone Maria's particular act, but many viewers will applaud her courage in finally taking some sort of action.

Some aspects of the film don't quite hold up to interrogation, and as a thriller it may have worked better if set in a pre-internet era. Such details take us out of the film at key points, which is a shame as Unmoored is an otherwise tense and paranoid thriller with a protagonist we can sympathise with if not entirely condone.

Eric Hills, Movie Waffler, (abridged)

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