

## DVD Review: Jennifer's Body

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Monday, 01 February 2010

Shoot, I was hoping I'd like this one.

I am an unapologetic fan of horror films (and sometimes the sleazier the better), yet I admit they are way too often predictable, no matter the subgenre. Jennifer's Body had a chance to be unique. Not only did it star "babe of the month" Megan Fox, it was produced and written by Diablo Cody, fresh off her Oscar winning work for Juno. Thus, I was hoping the film would deliver the scares, yet be sexy and feature a feminist perspective on the proceedings (something rarely found in horror). Sorry, but Jennifer's Body simply doesn't deliver.

The plot, in a small northwest town (which looked WAY too much like the setting for Twilight), bffs Needy (Amanda Seyfried), withdrawn and nerdy, and Jennifer (Megan Fox), head cheerleader and school babe, go to a seedy bar to hear a struggling alt-rock band named Low Shoulder. A fire decimates the club and, upon escaping, Needy is left behind while Jennifer is taken away in a van by the band. Turns out the band has decided to sacrifice a virgin to Satan in order to achieve fame (one of the better lines in the movie "You know how hard it is for an indie band to make it these days?"). Trouble is, Jennifer lied and is no virgin. The unintended consequence: instead of dying, her body is possessed by a demon that needs to feed on human flesh, preferably boys.

Some elements do work in this film. Veteran character actor J.K. Simmons is effective and funny as a teacher trying to cope with the losses at the school. Furthermore, some of Cody's perceptive insights into the ways teens (particularly girls) communicate that made Juno so beloved are found here. Best example: when Needy tells her likeable boyfriend (Johnny Simmons) that Jennifer is evil, he replies, "I know." Needy's explanation: "not high school evil, but evil, evil."

However, there are more hits than misses here. The movie is too similar in look to Twilight or a Buffy episode. The tone and plot was also too similar to the 80's cult hit Heathers (a pretentious movie I hated and still do)

Also, what I was afraid might happen does happen, by trying to be two films at once (a teen horror film and an observation on high school from a feminist perspective), it pulls itself apart and is neither. It is neither scary nor, save for a few instances, particularly funny. Cody-isms such as "freakatard" fall flat.

Finally, though it would seem that Jennifer would be a part tailor made for Ms. Fox, she is not very effective. Sure, she is gorgeous, but is not particularly engaging as an actress. I did not buy her character's friendship with Needy. Plus, beautiful or not, she is so mean and weird acting after her possession that even the horniest teen boy might avoid her.

Jennifer's Body had potential, but falls short. It is not scary, not sexy, not funny or as observant as it could have been. Juno herself would have had a surly comment on this one.