

Megan morphs into monster in tasteless zombie flick

Written by Kam Williams



Megan Fox's *Transformers 2* may have been the biggest box-office hit of the summer, but her new film, *Jennifer's Body*, has a better chance of becoming the biggest flop of the fall. This relentlessly-offensive horror film is based on a screenplay by Diablo Cody, the stripper-turned-scriptwriter who won an Oscar last year ago for her debut offering, *Juno*. Unfortunately, Ms. Cody succumbs here to the proverbial sophomore jinx, despite an obvious attempt to imbue her latest title character with the identical, above-it-all attitude of her previous one.

The story is set in the tiny town of Devil's Kettle where terminally-flip Jennifer (Megan Fox) and nerdy Needy (Amanda Seyfried) have been best friends since childhood. Both are a little boy crazy, but while the former is gorgeous and tends to sleep around, the latter is homely and grateful just to have a steady boyfriend (Johnny Simmons). Jennifer loves to leverage her looks at the high school by making boys salivate over her and by making mean-spirited comments about her less-comely competitors, calling them crude nicknames like "Vagisil" and "Monistat."

The atmosphere abruptly shifts from shallow teensploit to eerily ominous the fateful evening a fire accidentally burns the crowded Melody Lane Tavern to the ground while a heavy metal rock group is playing on stage. This instantly-recognizable scenario is essentially a disturbingly-tasteless recreation of the 2003 nightclub conflagration which actually killed 100 people in a place called The Station in West Warwick, Rhode Island. To mount a thinly-veiled reenactment for a horror film is not merely uncreative, but terribly ghoulish and totally inappropriate.

But I digress. Although eight of her classmates and a teacher are among the dead, Jennifer barely escapes herself. Yet, instead of showing any sympathy for the recently-departed, she callously refers to the incident as a "white trash pig roast."

The plot thickens when she is escorted away from the scene by the equally-blasé band members of Low Shoulders on the pretense of their wanting to comfort her. Truth be told, they

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are secretly devil worshippers and in search of a virgin to butcher as a sacrifice to Satan. However, since she isn't exactly chaste, an unforeseen "demonic transference" occurs. In other words, Jennifer doesn't die, but rather morphs into a man-eating monster.

Then, reincarnated as a cute cannibal, she proceeds to spend the balance of this gratuitous splatter flick making major mayhem, projectile-vomiting black bile when not luring unsuspecting males into the woods in order to eat them alive.

The film's fatal flaw is that there's not much of an arc to Jennifer's character. For she remains as unlikable after becoming a zombie as she already was before, and she never even bothers to go after the creeps responsible for her transformation, which at least would be understandable.

No, we have to watch her seduce and devour dudes guilty only of finding her attractive or, at worst, of hitting on her. Consequently, the audience would just as soon root against Jennifer, which is the opposite of director Karyn Kusama's intent. At the screening I attended, we frequently burst into laughter in unison at moments intended to be tense or taken seriously, not good.

Megan Fox needs to set her sights a little higher now that she has some clout in Hollywood.

Poor (0 stars)

Rated R for profanity, sexuality gory violence and brief drug use.

Running time: 101 minutes

Studio: 20th Century Fox

To see a trailer for Jennifer's Body, visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYQ19JM_M1g