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Film Review: The Hunt (2010)

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SYNOPSIS:

Following in the footsteps of recent extreme French horror movies like High Tension, Frontiers, Inside, and Martyrs, The Hunt follows an undercover reporter commissioned to write a story about a series of gruesome murders. His investigation leads him to a secret society of wealthy businessmen who hunt humans for money. Caught in a spiral of violence, he is forced to participate in the game until he discovers that he has become the hunted.

REVIEW:

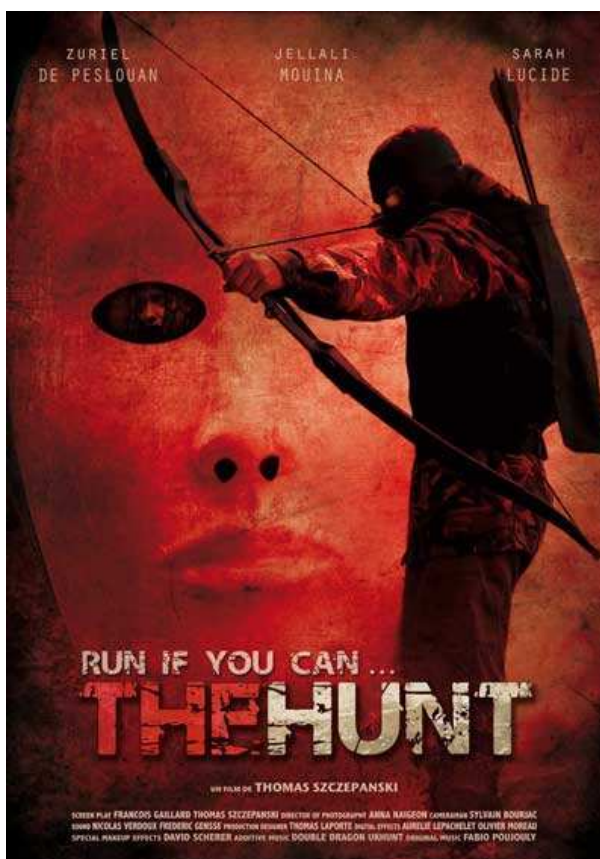
Blending Richard Connell's popular short story *The Most Dangerous Game* with elements of *Hostel* may not sound like the most original concept, and admittedly there have been several films to utilize the themes explored within these works in the last several years. When done correctly, they offer a roller coaster of a ride for the audience. However, when done wrong, they can be excruciating. Fortunately, *The Hunt* mostly falls in the latter category, though does have a few minor issues.

The film centers around a young, successful writer who pens articles for a pornographic magazine. His editor is not happy with his recent output and sales of the magazines are down. As a result, she gives him an ultimatum: find a story that will attract attention or be fired. Desperate, he asks his stripper girlfriend for ideas since he knows she has a menagerie of strange clients. Indeed, she tells him about a client who loves rough, crazy sex and who loves to film himself being sexually humiliated. He follows her to one of her sessions with him and secretly spies, only to come across an intriguing letter and phone message. He decides to follow up on this lead instead, which proves to be a brutal and terrible mistake.



The Hunt wastes no time hooking the viewer with a violent and bloody prologue before launching into the set up for the plot mentioned above, which does have its tedious moments. Many of the scenes involved in the exposition come off as amateurish because of hokey set pieces and acting from supporting characters, and they often make the film appear older than what it actually is. This is unfortunate because the rest of the film actually excels in these areas. In fact, once the film hits its stride and gets to the meat of the story, it is quite a treat both stylistically and with its pacing.

When our protagonist is forced into the hunt, the tone of the film becomes extremely gritty and brutal. During the first half, there is a half-hearted attempt to create a dirty, gritty tone much like that of 8MM, but it falls short, so it is a pleasant surprise to see this attempt come to fruition during the later scenes. The pacing is perfect, as the film is barely an hour and ten minutes to begin with. The scene where the launching of the game and who will play it is interesting and suspenseful and sets the tone perfectly for what is to come when the players and victims are set free in the vast forest. Certainly the most interesting aspect of The Hunt comes in watching our hero be thrust into a deadly scenario and struggle with whether he will take part in it or not and the actor does a nice job at displaying this internal struggle.



For the gore hounds, there is a sufficient amount of carnage throughout the film. Tongues are cut out, throats are slit, bodies are impaled with arrows, bodies are chopped up and fed to pigs.....and all of looks pretty damn impressive! But despite the decent effects, what really allows the gore to have an impact is the sheer brutality

and mean-spiritedness of it all. And while some will be automatically turned off by having to read subtitles (did I mention this is a French film?), all that can be said for that is THANK GOD for the French and their willingness to not give us the predictable, pleasing end. Instead, the finale to this film is depressing and vicious.

Overall, **The Hunt** delivers a solid, entertaining, and slightly unique take on the “hunting humans” theme, despite a shaky exposition. The film is surprisingly violent and the pacing brisk enough to keep the audience interested. If nothing else, the film may cause you to look at pigs in a different light.

The Hunt (2010)



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