

Shared Darkness

Mara

A Swedish-Danish psychological thriller starring [model Angelica Jansson](#), **Mara takes tired American horror tropes and sends them across the Atlantic Ocean** in telling the tale of a woman who inexplicably returns to the site of her childhood trauma.

Set in, yes, a secluded house in the middle of the woods, *Mara* centers around Jenny (acting neophyte Jansson), who as a child witnessed a murder in her home that left her understandably scarred. In trying to gain closure and "process things," Jenny decides to return to the scene of the crime as an adult, and spend a weekend relaxing with a couple friends. When an intruder turns up in the house, however, **things take a turn for the bloody**.

Cinematographer/co-director Fredrik Hedberg shoots a moody frame, even though *Mara's* HD video look is cramped, and the production design a bit cheap rather than spare or austere. And Hedberg and his fellow filmmakers (editor Jacob Kondrup and casting director Ake Gustafsson) certainly figure out how to incorporate **plenty of nudity**, which will satisfy tongue-lolling genre hounds. The problem is that the story here is yawningly thin and the acting immature and not fully formed at best, which immediately and effectively undercuts any sense of chilly, orchestrated atmosphere.

Housed in a regular plastic Amaray case, *Mara* comes to DVD presented in 1.78:1 widescreen, with a Swedish language Dolby digital 5.1 surround sound audio track and (obviously) English subtitles. Its main motion menu screen includes a separate sub-menu with a dozen chapter stops, and in addition to the movie's trailer there is also a small cross-section of extras. A four-minute casting featurette kicks things off, and there's also **a separate three-minute, subtitled interview with Jansson** regarding her experiences on the movie. (She says she won't be "running around chasing down [more] roles," but would be happy to act again if another offer came her way; otherwise, she notes that her degree in environmental science could come in handy as she gets older.)

The main supplemental featurette is **a feature-length making-of documentary chronicling the movie's seven-day shoot** in the south of Sweden. Coming in at 74 minutes, barely shorter than the film itself, there are interviews plus lots of haphazardly assembled on-set footage here (hence more nudity), plus a look at a September 2012 test screening of *Mara* for cast and crew. The main throughline, though, centers on a series of power outages that seriocomically plague the set. **D+ (Movie) B- (Disc)**



Posted by Brent Simon at [9/1/2013 8:10 AM](#)

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