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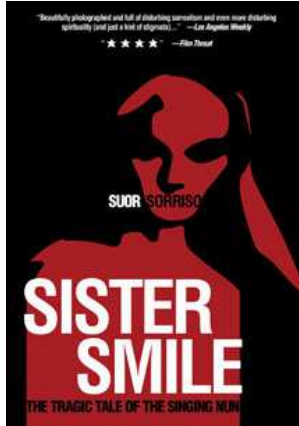
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For the surrealism fanatic, Suor Sorriso (Sister Smile) will give you everything you ever wanted from trippy, drug-fueled visions to beautiful shots of the Italian countryside to devastating love affairs between lesbian nuns. Directed by Roger Deutsch and Francesca Terrenato, Suor Sorriso is a film adaptation of the life of Jeanine Deckers (played by Ginevra Colonna), or Soeur Sourire, who topped America's charts in 1963 with "Dominique" in 1963. After leaving the convent, Deckers' life became obscure. Deutsch

fills in these gaps with turning Deckers into an unstable woman whose insanity and desire for redemption ultimately cannot be sated and tears her apart.

The movie is divided into five parts. Deckers starts off by purchasing the guitar she writes "Dominique" with and heads over to a convent. The mood is happy and Deckers is portrayed as an innocent girl in all-white until she records "Dominique". Her success is the beginning of her torment and she finally flees the convent before taking her final vows.

Deckers looks for work and ends up helping run a shelter for wayward girls alongside the ex-nun, Clara (played by Simona Caparrini), whose strange relationship with the other girls makes you wonder. Regardless, Deckers falls for Clara and becomes explosive once her jealousy aroused by the ex-nun's closeness with the other girls reaches its highest. The shelter is shut down, which sends the other girls back to their institutions and leaves Deckers alone with Clara. With promises of fame and fortune, Clara moves in with Deckers and their relationship turns even more complex and catastrophic.

Deckers spends many nights away drinking, doing drugs and involving herself with general flamboyant and destructive behavior that, by the third part, you're just waiting for the girl to commit suicide. And, hey! It almost happens. Although Clara manages to rescue her beloved in time. Deutsch treats both characters in the next scene with a bit of irony as Clara brings Deckers chocolates. It is both hilarious and incredibly disturbing to watch.

Deutsch pulls your further into the darkness of Deckers' mind by her increased drug and alcohol abuse. In the final part, Deckers locks herself in a cell filled with crumpled paper and inflicts wounds on her hands that are reminiscent of stigmata. The paper catches fire and surrounds the protagonist, who is in obvious misery. I was really ready for her to die at this point. It was getting old watching her become more and more pathetic.

She survives, somehow, and crawls back to Clara whose undying compassion for Deckers makes you want to slap her. It's fantastic. Her love for Deckers is almost masochistic, because in almost every part Deckers does something to torment her. The final scene shows Deckers and Clara sitting together on a bed. Deckers is relatively unscathed save for the stigmata on her hands. She and Clara takes turns swallowing pills with a bottle of wine. Deutsch once again uses irony and I found myself laughing as they waved goodbye before inevitably dying from overdose.



This part is also parallel with the real Jeanine's life. She had fallen into financial problems and, along with her companion, Anna Pècher (represented by Clara in the movie) committed suicide by overdosing on barbiturates in 1985.

Regardless, I wouldn't recommend it to your gore-loving freaks who're in it for the gore. Those of you who want an eerie psychological thrill ride through a disturbed woman's mind will want to pick it up. I'll probably be dreaming about the hilarious use of surrealism in Italian film tonight. Thanks a lot, Italy.

Author:

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