



by: [Charlie J.J. Kruger](#)

This is one of the best movies I have seen in a very long time. The storytelling is brave and powerful, and the acting backs up a cruel and predatory script that demands skill from everyone involved.

In Tennessee in a sort of Ozarks/Appalachian living-in-the-hills community a religion has grown up around a pit that rests in the woods. I don't want to give too many details because the film expertly reveals bits and pieces of the faith and the story throughout its duration, so anything I give you might spoil a part of the film's pacing. But I can say, the community trusts in the pit. They thank it graciously.

From a production standpoint, the sound/audio editing is wonderful, the authentic mountain folk music helps to lend credence to the film's honesty and the mix on the dialogue is wonderful. The set design and costuming is also breathtaking. It feels real, honest, true. Nothing about the movie feels like it is on a screen or acted out on a stage. The care and devotion each actor, and crew-member brought to the table is on screen. Watching the movie, I could feel a hopelessness... a sort of despair that reminded me a lot of 'Winter's Bone'. In fact, the movie is a lot like 'Winter's Bone' meets 'The Lottery', as if raised by 'Rosemary's Baby', and 'The Exorcist'. I meant to say that it is classy, subtle, calm, and thought out. The horror, the discomfort, the pain, the struggle... it never flashes the audience. It is never crude or crass. The movie brings the suffering and remorse of the main characters to your attention with a head nod and a wink, not a scream and a punch.

From the very first scene until the final touching moment I felt like the movie was showing us a world, mirroring our own, that was careless and dismissive. We see the horrible systematic degradation and intimidation of women from that first scene until the end. The emasculation of the 'other' or the less than burly man, and the loss of dignity and humanity that all people suffer under a domineering patriarchy. Ada, our heroine, or voice of hope. She cares for those that are left to rot by a society consumed with pleasing a father who curses them. She risks herself for the needs, the wants, the desires of others. And she does so with a brow-beaten dignity that is heart-breaking to watch. Her sacrifices are endless, and the punishments she suffers for simply existing are painful to watch. Her own mother engages in the misogynistic horror of the society by internalizing her own pain and then externalizing it onto Ada.

Another character, Dawai, is belittled and pushed around for being 'slow'. His job in the community is to have visions, messages from the pit, given to him so that he can carve and then cast jugs with the face of the next sacrifice the pit wants. Thus the film's title, Jug Face. Even with this importance that he has, his 'simple' mind makes him less than a man, and he is treated like the women of the town are treated. Between rape, violence, and sexual/inhumane mistreatment the women of the town bow to the needs of their terrified men.

I loved this movie. Every painful, tear-jerking moment of it. Ada's beauty, not anything so crass as her physical beauty, but her true beauty shines through the film. Her caring, her loving... they way she watches and waits. I was so drawn to her that I felt more moved than I have in months as she confronts her own moment of selfishness. The storytelling is beyond expert. It is truly art.

The reoccurring theme of selfishness and selflessness are well painted, and the way that Ada in particular has to confront that horror is sorrowful and just as honest as you fear it will be. There is so much within the film, that you have to watch it more than once to break it all down. All the fine work done by every element, all of the vile hatred directed at the women of the town, all of the fear and lost light in the eyes of men... this movie is a breath-taking piece of art.

I can't recommend this movie enough.

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