

Movie Review: The Girl with the Needle

Description

•The Girl with the Needle•: A Haunting Journey into the Shadows of Womanhood

Magnus von Horn's *The Girl with the Needle* is a cinematic plunge into the dark depths of post-WWI Denmark, unearthing the horrific realities faced by women cast aside by society. Premiering at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, this 2024 crime drama is a visually stunning and emotionally charged exploration of a woman's struggle against a patriarchal world.

A Sinister Fairytale

Set against the backdrop of a grimy, war-torn Copenhagen, the film follows Karoline (Vic Carmen Sonne), a young pregnant woman who finds herself desperate for support. She takes on the role of a wet nurse for Dagmar (Trine Dyrholm), a seemingly kind-hearted woman who runs a candy store that hides a dark secret: a clandestine adoption agency. As Karoline becomes entwined in Dagmar's world, she uncovers a chilling reality that forces her to confront her own trauma and societal abandonment.

Stunning Visuals, Unforgiving Themes

Cinematographer Michał Dymek and production designer Jagna Dobesz transform the city into a haunting Gothic landscape, filled with shadowy alleys and oppressive interiors that mirror Karoline's isolation. Von Horn masterfully crafts a visually striking narrative that feels like a fever dream—both beautiful and deeply unsettling.

The film's opening montage presents a grotesque kaleidoscope of human suffering, setting the tone for the emotional turmoil that unfolds. The raw performances, particularly from Sonne and Dyrholm, breathe life into characters entrenched in despair yet driven by the flicker of hope.

A Mirror to Society's Cruelty

At its core, *The Girl with the Needle* serves as a stark reflection on the brutal realities women faced in a patriarchal society. Karoline's descent into the underground world of Dagmar's operations is a poignant commentary on the lengths to which women are forced to go when abandoned by men and society. As she navigates her painful choices, the film explores themes of motherhood, sacrifice, and survival.

Dyrholm's portrayal of Dagmar is both chilling and tragic, as she embodies a woman who, through her own suffering, inflicts pain on others. Yet, the film avoids simplistic villainy, instead presenting a complex web of desperation that entraps both women in a cycle of violence and regret.

An Uncompromising Vision

Von Horn's third feature is not merely a narrative of horror; it's a visceral experience that compels viewers to grapple with the stark realities of its characters. While the film may challenge audiences with its dark themes, it ultimately offers a glimmer of hope amidst the despair.

As Karoline seeks to piece together a sense of family from the remnants of her shattered life, *The Girl with the Needle* reminds us of the resilience of the human spirit. "The world is a horrible place," Dagmar warns, "but we need to believe it is not so."

Conclusion

The Girl with the Needle is a hauntingly beautiful examination of the trials faced by women abandoned by society. With its rich visual storytelling and powerful performances, Magnus von Horn's film solidifies itself as a significant work that resonates with both historical and contemporary issues. As it competes for the Palme d'Or, this film is sure to leave an indelible mark on audiences and critics alike.

Category

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