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[Art Of Brooklyn Film Festival] Meme (2018) - Reviewed



This drama was written, directed and edited by Sean Mannion, known for making no-budget films for the internet, which immediately had me foreseeing a dreadfully boring, shaky cam pile of rubbish to wade through.

I have never been this happy to be wrong. Dead wrong.

The acting is solid and believable. Jennifer is played by Sarah Schoofs, known for the 2012 drama *Gut* and *Phobia* (2013), among others. Jennifer is an independent graphic designer, struggling through a dwindling relationship with Tommy (Shivantha Wijesinha) and trying to salvage what is left of a downward spiralling career which leaves her broke and lost.

Tommy and his friends are heavily into rare VHS tapes, and it is here where Jennifer finds an intriguing mashup tape with surreal images. As her relationship slowly slips from her, she decides to throw herself into her own investigation into the creator of this VHS tape called *Meme* to gain greater insight into what the creator is trying to say.

As she discovers more from people featured on the tape in the search, Jennifer is forced to reassess aspects of her relationship, how to deal with her difficult clients, and confront a drinking problem that progressively threatens to alienate anyone who still tries to help her.

I dare say this, and you can quote me – Sean Mannion is a genius. Even based only on this film. The production is everything but no-budget or even low budget and the editing is peak. From an original way of presenting interactions by utilizing scene backgrounds, to the sound use of periodical intercut scenes that reiterate the main character's realizations to effectively portray the elements of Jennifer's crumbling relationship.

Mannion's editing expertly tells the the true story behind the scripted deception. The video tape explains the metaphor of Jennifer's dilemma by urging her to look at her situation objectively. The use of repetition throughout the film affirms Jennifer's perception as well as her descent into alcoholism beautifully.



Meme appears to be an average drama about the whiles of a relationship, but it is so much more. Once the mashup tape becomes the focus of the second part, Mannion flings us headlong into deeper philosophical exposition using physics vs the human condition in a sharp and surprising way.

Meme masquerades as a common relationship drama, when in fact it presents a fascinating existential commentary that is perfectly tied up in a full circle approach. After watching it, you might find a new perception of your life and situations in clever suggestion.

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