The Dark Half: The sparrows are flying again

George A. Romero's film of Stephen King's novel finally flys across the big screen

by Kristie L. Guldner
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Have you ever wished you had a twin? Someone who looks just like you so you can blame everything on him? Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could bring someone else into life who could go to class for you, talk to your parents, even work for you? (Dream on, huh?)

For author Thad Beaumont, however, his twin has been brought to life - by his dreams; his dark dreams.

Thad Beaumont (Timothy Hutton) seems like your average, everyday English professor. Like some college professors, he also moonlights as an author to make more money.

Thad lives in Maine and has a summer home in Castle Rock. Knowing Stephen King, whose novel The Dark Half this George Romero production is based on, Castle Rock might not be the best place to own a house. He has a wife, Liz, and a set of twins, one boy and one girl. Thad is the all-American dream come true, until George comes along that is.

Like many writers (Stephen King among them), he writes respectible books uder his own name, but uses an pseudonym, George Stark, while writing the lurid, trashy novels that make him money. These books consist of stories of murder, gore, sex, and everything else a person could want in a cheap smut and guts novel. Thad is your everyday, average nice guy most of the time, but while writing as George Stark, he takes on a violent, seedy persona.

George Stark is not the kind of man you would care to meet in a dark alley around midnight with no one else around. He is the embodiment of all that modern society deems as evil. It's a good thing he's only imaginary.

Well, at least he was imaginary until Thad had the brilliant idea to kill him off.

The day Thad decides to write as himself is the day the murders, accusations, and birds begin to fly.

Since George is the creation and exact copy of Thad, his finger prints are all over every murder scene. This is not good when you and your wife know you didn't do it, but the police are not so inclined to believe you.

Thad knows George wants his life and it's only a matter of time until he gets to killing him. In order for George to remain in this world, Thad has to start writing him life again. A showdown, inevitably in Castle Rock, is sure to come.

I am definitely not a person who loves the typical slasher, blood and guts horror movie. But, while *The Dark Half* does have its share of blood and gore, it is exceedingly better than the typical horror movie.

Also behind this movie is a psychological thrill that keeps us asking why and how all of this could happen. This movie takes the extremeness of being a "number one fan" of *Misery* fame to a new twisted level.

Director and scriptwriter George A. Romero (of *Night, Dawn* and *Day of the Dead* fame) instills this flick with great power. Since I have read the book, I knew what was going to happen. And although a two hour movie cannot encompass the entire 500 some odd pages of the novel, he puts the full force of the novel's plot behind his movie.

This movie is a must see for everyone who loves Stephen King and horror movies. It stays extremely faithful to the novel and, while it does have its share of gross-outs and shocks, it keeps up a high level of tension throughout.

Surprisingly, Timothy Hutton is marvelous in the dual role of Thad/George, and the other leads (Amy Madigan and Michael (*Henry:Portrait of a Serial Killer*) Rooker) carry their parts well.

The Dark Half is, however, not for the weak of stomach or anyone who hates sparrows. If you want to know why sparrows, see the movie. Just remember "The sparrows are coming."

Indian Summer leaves you cold

New Big Chill rip-off can't hold interest

by Jennifer Toubakaris
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Have you ever seen one of those movies that tried to be sentimental but left you feeling like you had to puke because of all the corny lines and mushy love scenes? *Indian Summer* is one of those movies.

It's packed with talented new stars, has a decent soundtrack and contains some beautiful cinematography. Some of the scenes are actually humorous and touching, but the film lacks that certain ingredient that pulls a movie together.

Eight friends return to Camp Tamawkawa in Ontario twenty years after going their separate ways. Obviously, many changes have occurred in their lives since then.

Diane Laine plays Bethy, a young woman that has just lost her husband. Camp Tamawkawa is the place she and her late husband met.

Elizabeth (Big) Perkins plays Jennifer, a modern business woman who returns to camp because she feels lonely. She falls for her old sweetheart who is now her best friend's husband.

Uncle Lou, Camp Tamawkawa's owner, is played by Alan Arkin. He fits the part well as the tough, all-knowing camp counselor who helps his campers work out their problems.

There was some humor in the movie, like when the male campers put one of their buddy's hands in warm water while sleeping so they can listen to him urinate, and when Perkins' character gets so fed up with Uncle Lou ringing a bell at 6 a.m. that she tapes a Kotex pad to it.

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The movie has some interesting subplots and the acting is decent but it still lacks something. I sometimes found myself bored at certain parts and interested at others. This rollercoaster effect leaves something to be desired.

My advice is to stay away from *Indian Summer*, save your money and go to Cedar Point instead. You expect the ups and downs on the rides, and you'll leave them feeling more fulfilled.

Benny and Joon

by Eric Kneisiring
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Um, well, you see. This movie leaves me at a loss to describe it. *Benny and Joon*, is.....is.... is.....supercalifragilisticexpialidocious. Really.

Benny and Joon's greatness runs deeper than its plot. Benny (Aidan Quinn) and Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson) are brother and sister (I didn't know that movies were allowed to explore that kind of relationship). Joon lives with Benny because she is a tad bit insane. The strain of this arrangement leaves Benny with no life.

After his goldfish Steve dies, he considers putting Joon into a group home for everyone's good. Then Sam (Johnny Depp) screeches into their lives.

Joon is many things. She is a prolific artist who enjoys fingerpainting. She is possessed by the urge to direct traffic in a scuba mask with a ping pong paddle. She is medicated. She is well aware of the fact that Benny thinks her competence level to be childlike. She is a fruitcake. 'Unbalanced' understates the case. Crazy does not do her justice.

Depp's character has the demeanor of Charlie Chaplin, with a detachment from society that most teenagers would die for. The only limit of his charisma is his ability to weird people out.

When Benny drags Joon to a friend's house, she gets into an any-bet-goes poker game. When she loses, she has to keep Sam. She was holding a hearts flush. I would have stayed too.

I've spent the last few years looking for movies that are irrepressibly amazing. *Benny and Joon* is one of those movies. The film's humor, even when just exploring food preparation skills, will refresh any viewer. Even more rare, is the romantic charm of Joon and Sam's sincerely sweet relationship.

Perhaps the movie's most astounding quality is how real it is. The characters are all emotional thunderstorms. They get angry almost as often as they get blissed out. The central tie between all the characters is a sense of craziness and need.

I was a bit nervous when I saw the critics liked Benny and Joon. I don't trust them. When I saw the movie, my doubts ceased. *Benny and Joon* is fun. The audience has a good time. It just shows that there is still a place for a movie without sex or explosions.

The college crowd should love this film. If nothing else, they might see themselves. Life is a strange thing. To be authentic is to be bizarre.

Benny and Joon is about being wierd. It's about laughing. It's about finding out where you belong. It's about life.