

Mean Creek - Film Review



Intelligent, superbly acted and thoroughly absorbing



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I knew next to nothing about this film when I went to see it. I knew it starred Rory Culkin, who was so good in 2000's best film, "You Can Count on Me," and received some critical acclaim. But I knew nothing about the story and what a wonderful _____ "Mean Creek" proved to be.

This is an _____, engaging movie buoyed by some of the best acting by young _____ this year. Writer-director Jacob Aaron Estes, who won a 1998 Nicholl Fellowship in Screen writing for his script, takes the basic premise of _____ against a school bully and turns it into a moving and gripping film.

Given the subject matter, "Mean Creek" could easily have been another after-school special _____ as an indie feature. But Estes _____ the conventions of the genre to give his characters unexpected _____ and create an engrossing _____ play. None of his characters is a caricature; they're all flawed and unmistakably _____. The moral issues they face are real and _____; the crises they create are dealt with expertly.

What's special about "Mean Creek" are its fine young actors. Culkin again is convincing as a _____ young boy being picked on by the school _____, but the two startlingly brilliant _____ are by Josh Peck as the bully George, and Carly Schroeder as Millie, the young girl unexpectedly dragged into the plot.

Peck makes George _____ when he could just as easily made him a typical, one-note bully. Peck gives George substance and turns on the charm so well that we understand the others' _____ to go through with exacting his _____. George becomes likable, someone who seems to resort to bullying to hide inadequacies of his own. Peck draws us into his character; we feel _____ for someone who is supposed to be unsympathetic.

One of the most _____ parts for me in the movie is when the Bully, George, is filming with his camcorder and zooms in on an exotic spiral shape, saying "This is my life". That's such a brilliant line because _____ is such a horrible and awkward stage in life. High schoolers (being one myself) are filled with an assortment of emotions and feelings and "Mean Creek" portrays that with such power.

The flaw in Estes' writing is that after making George someone who elicits compassion, Estes unwisely opts for an easy way out by forcing George to turn to his uglier side. Had George suddenly not turned _____, the moment would have been far more potent than it already is.

Young Schroeder is downright extraordinary. Her Millie is _____ way beyond her years. She serves as the group's moral core and Schroeder's scenes in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy are so astonishingly raw, you're likely to forget she's a young teen actress. Hers is one of the best supporting performances the year.

"Mean Creek" is one of the best _____-of-age films. All teenagers and their parents should see this, despite its R rating. It's unfortunate the censors gave "Mean Creek" an R rating because despite the use of the F-word, "Mean Creek" is far less _____ than much of the PG-13-rated garbage - the more recent "Charlie's Angels" movies, for instance - and provides more enjoyment and insight into human _____ in five minutes than almost any _____ movie playing right now.

Fill in the MISSING WORDS!!!
Find the DEFINITIONS of the words in grey!!!

DEPTH
SURPRISE
ESCHEWS
SKITTISH
SYMPATHY
OFFENSIVE
COMEUPPANCE

PERFORMANCES
ACTORS
CAPTIVATING
MAINSTREAM
REVENGE
MEMORABLE

ADOLESCENCE
MEAN
INTELLIGENT
RELUCTANCE
MORALITY
MASQUERADING

HUMAN
BULLY
MATURE
COMPLEX
COMING
BEHAVIOUR