

Winter's Bone

2010 | 100mins

Director: Debra Granik

Starring: Dale Dickey, John Hawkes, Jennifer Lawrence



Based on Daniel Woodrell's 2006 novel of the same name, *Winter's Bone* is a tough, unsentimental exploration of rural drug crime and the effects it has on the local population. The film follows Ree Dolly (Jennifer Lawrence), a hardy and self-reliant 17 year-old who's forced into the role of both caretaker of her fragmenting family as well as detective when her meth-cooking father Jessup Dolly goes missing. It's not long before she finds out that he's got into serious trouble with the local crimelord Thump Milton (Ronnie Hall), and her journey to finding out what happened to him takes her into increasingly dangerous territory...

Debra Granik's second independent feature is impressively plotted and paced. It is also a beautifully shot thriller with the Missouri Ozarks locales never looking less than bleakly impressive, courtesy of cinematographer Michael McDonough.

Performances throughout are uniformly excellent, with Lawrence showcasing her future talent via an unshowy display of heartbreaking maturity, and Oscar nominated John Hawkes as Uncle Teardrop shows him as a lean, coiled streak of menace whenever he appears on-screen. No less chilling is the ever-reliable Dale Dickey as Merab, Thump Milton's terrifying female relative who has no remorse in preventing Ree getting too close to discovering what happened to her father.

At a crisp 100 minutes, the film never outstays its welcome and, given its social realist credentials, manages to have both a realistic and satisfying ending, despite studio pressure to resolve things in an upbeat manner. It is a deservedly acclaimed crime classic, adding to the growing 'rural noir' sub-genre (e.g. *Shotgun Stories* (2007), *Blue Ruin* (2013)).

'Winter's Bone really suited having a lower budget. It would be so hard rolling into a rural setting, a place where people are poor, and to be thinking you've got \$10 million to make a piece of entertainment.'
 -Debra Granik.

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here



Excellent

Fair

Poor

Did You Know?

- The film's title comes from an old Appalachian saying: "like a dog digging after a winter's bone", meaning someone (in this case Ree) who will not give up searching for something.
- Lawrence was originally turned down for the role of Ree for being "too pretty." To eventually win over the casting director and Granik and get the role, she decided to fly to New York and purposely walked thirteen blocks in the sleet to the casting office, and auditioned with a runny nose and hair she hadn't washed in a week. Not surprisingly, she got the role.
- Most of the supporting cast members were local to the Forsyth, Missouri area where the film was shot, including the Army recruiting sergeant Russell Schalk who answered Lawrence's questions exactly as his job would have demanded of him.

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Also directed by Debra Granik, *Leave No Trace* is about survival in marginal places, and family relations under stress.

Excellent

Fair

Poor



What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here

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