

Blu-Ray Review: ‘The Roommate’ Misses Chance For B-Movie Camp

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 24, 2011 - 10:56am

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CHICAGO – Anyone who’s been through the dorm situation at a college has probably had a creepy roommate or two. (I sure had my share Freshman year but that’s a long story.) The fact that we have to share so much of our existence with a complete stranger whose only psychological evaluation was during a college acceptance interview is ripe for thriller storytelling. What if your new roommate was crazy? Sounds like the set-up for a fun, over-the-top thrill ride, doesn’t it? Then why is “The Roommate” so damn boring?



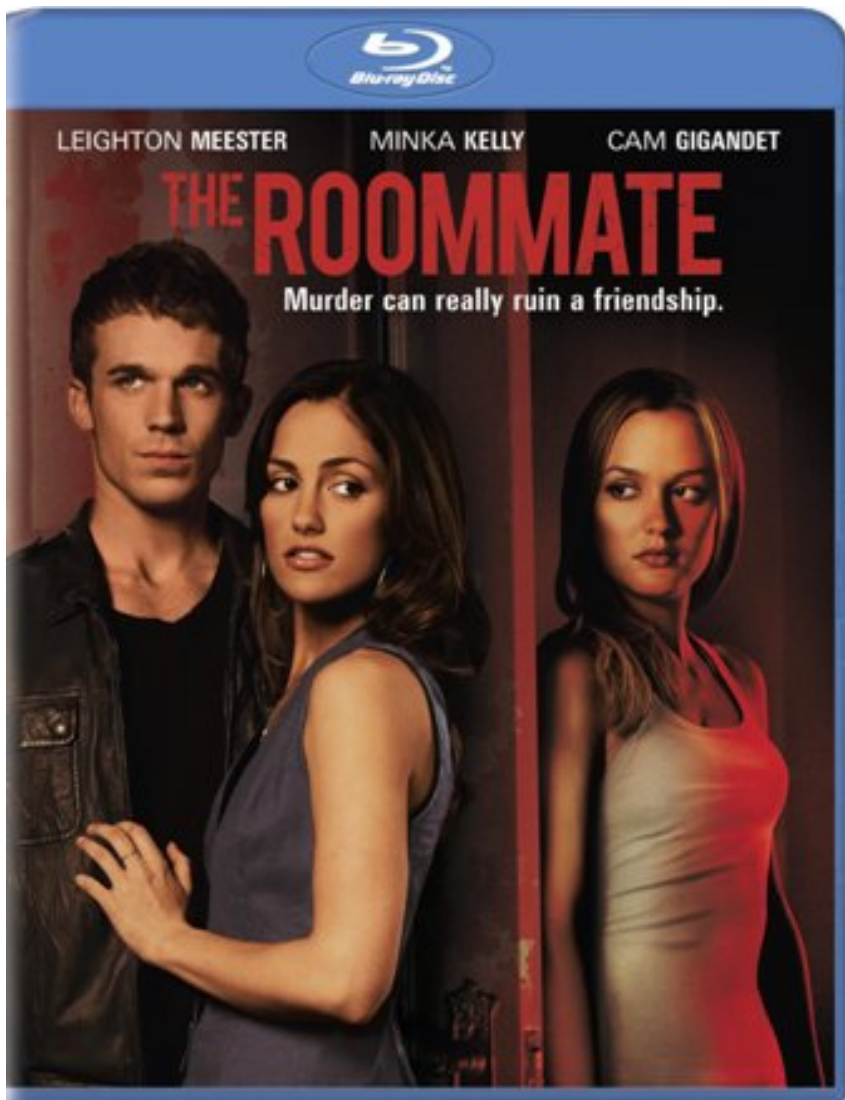
Seriously, one could study this film and still not figure out why it fails so completely. It has a premise that sounds like B-movie gold (one hot chick becomes obsessed with another) and it has a reasonably talented crew of young stars, most of which have proven they can deliver at least somewhat with notable TV roles. But the first hour drags so much that by the time kittens are going into dryers and teachers are being assaulted, “The Roommate” will have lost the interest of most viewers.



The Roommate was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on May 17, 2011
Photo credit: Sony Home Video

College freshman Sara (Minka Kelly of “Friday Night Lights”) is an aspiring design student who meets a cute boy (Cam Gigandet) and has a loyal friend (Aly Michalka of “Hellcats”). Everything should be going well for sweet, stunning Sara. And it is until she ends up partnered with a roommate who has seen “Single White Female” a few too many times. Rebecca (Leighton Meester of “Gossip Girl”) becomes instantly attached to Sara and in dangerous ways. When she thinks that her friend is leading her down the wrong path, she assaults her in the shower and rips off her earring. When a professor (Billy Zane) puts Sara in an awkward position, Rebecca takes DRASTIC action. How far will she go to control Sara’s life?





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Photo credit: Sony Home Video

Sonny Mallhi's script for "The Roommate" never finds a rhythm. Rebecca is clearly a few cards shy of a full deck and it's inevitable that her obsession with Sara will lead to violence but the script takes forever to get there. And it moves in such odd fits and starts. As Rebecca is putting a kitten in a dryer to keep her roommate from moving out and punching herself in the face, one assumes that we've gone over the hill and "The Roommate" is about to become downright loony, which is the only way it could work. But then it settles down again with scenes between Sara and her boyfriend or awkward moments in Rebecca's hometown. You simply can't take a concept this silly seriously. But Mallhi and director Christian E. Christiansen too often try to do just that, playing with issues of violation of power and assault instead of providing the camp for this B-movie to work.

The cast doesn't help. I've liked everyone here before, mostly on TV, but they just don't work in this material. Meester can't do crazy (and was too often directed to pout and stare creepily to convey it). Kelly's too interesting for this dull of a role. And when neither girl in a film like this one registers as believable and the movie doesn't go the other direction into true B-movie camp, then it falls into that gap in-between — just boring.

Special Features:

- o Obsession: The Making of The Roommate
- o The Roommate: Next Generation of Stars
- o Dressing Dangerously
- o Deleted & Alternate Scenes
- o Director's Commentary
- o BD-Live

"The Roommate" stars Minka Kelly, Leighton Meester, Cam Gigandet, Aly Michalka, and Billy Zane. It was written by Sonny Mallhi and directed by Christian E. Christiansen. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on May 17th, 2011.



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