

Film Review: 'Cake' Serves Emotionally Honest, Career-Growing Dramatic Role for Jennifer Aniston

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CHICAGO – It's been a while since I walked out of a screening so affected and feeling that I just experienced a truly honest, important film.

Sure, other ones have since, but back in 2007, ["Once" especially made me feel that way](#) [19] long before the Oscars. I never would have expected it here and nor will you from this film you've probably heard little or nothing about, but a little engine that could called "Cake" has done that to me again. And you'd never guess who primarily made it possible: Jennifer Aniston in a visually unflattering, dramatic role.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

While "Cake" as a film is receiving mixed reception, Aniston is being recognized for the career-growing range it's proving for her beyond the "Friends" comedic stigma she's trying to grow beyond. Though she tried with the dramatic romance "Love Happens" in 2009, it bombed. "Horrible Bosses" in 2011 and "Horrible Bosses 2" in 2014 has memorably put Aniston in the comedic supporting-role seat as a sex-crazed dentist and no one's upset that she's played Dr. Julia Harris, D.D.S.

But much like what the visually unflattering, career-growing role of "Monster" did to Charlize Theron, you can tell "Cake" is an actually important role to Aniston personally. The film is primarily a drama, which is certainly against type for Aniston, but it's also a dark, angry comedy that is relatable to anyone who's ever been bitter about anything.



[Read Adam Fendelman's full review of "Cake".](#) [20]

More than just for her fans, playing Claire Bennett is a role Aniston is using to try to change Hollywood's comedic-only perception of her. While "Cake" is an under-the-radar, low-budget film with an accomplished cast, Aniston's work is already getting recognized. In 2015, Aniston has been nominated for Best Actress in "Cake" by the Golden Globes, the Screen Actors Guild Awards and the Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards.

She's won for the role at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival. Though she was eligible with a qualifying Dec. 2014 limited run of "Cake," Aniston was not nominated for an Oscar, which is being viewed as a snub. But more than just a vehicle for awards, "Cake" features an overdue, career-growing, award-worthy, emotionally honest role for Aniston anchored by a patient script written by real humans about real humans.

Feeling like it was written expressly for her, the role is the best of her career thus far. The film, though, is a hidden gem that could get overlooked by a quiet January release. Currently at one day in release in only 482 theatres and \$266,000 in box-office earnings, "Cake" deserves a wider audience than it's going to get. (By comparison, a large film will release to around 3,500 theatres.)

"Cake," which screened on the same day as the more known film "The Boy Next Door," stars Jennifer Aniston as a character named Claire. "The Boy Next Door," by the way, stars Jennifer Lopez as a character also named Claire. Though both films opened yesterday, they are nothing alike and there is no quality comparison. "Cake" blows away JLo's newest mega flop.

“Cake” stars Jennifer Aniston, Anna Kendrick, Sam Worthington, William H. Macy, Chris Messina, Mamie Gummer, Adriana Barraza, Felicity Huffman, Lucy Punch and Britt Robertson from director Daniel Barnz and writer Patrick Tobin. The film, which opened on Jan. 23, 2015, has a running time of 102 minutes. It is rated “R” for language, substance abuse and brief sexuality.

 [Continue for Adam Fendelman’s full review of “Cake”.](#) [20]



Jennifer Aniston stars as Claire Bennett in “Cake”.
Image credit: Cinelou Releasing

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