

‘Alyce Kills’ Takes Viewers Down Rabbit Hole to Horror

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 21, 2013 - 9:51am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Long-delayed stateside, premiering On Demand, stupidly retitled (it was and still should be just “Alyce”), Jay Lee’s twisted trip down the rabbit hole of sanity, “Alyce Kills,” was not high on my list of anticipated films. Much to my surprise, “Alyce Kills” is a riveting slice of weird, a tale that reminds me of great films like “Repulsion” and “May” more than most of the junk that falls through the genre cracks and ends up in a similar launch pattern. It’s ten times better than most horror movies that will hit the multiplex this year. Genre fans will eat it up.

Alyce (Jade Dornfeld) is unstable but the kind of mousy, harmless unstable that you might sit next to on your commute to work and barely notice. There are little hints of personality disorder but the fact that her ring tone is “Crazy Train” is supposed to be funny to her friends and not a warning sign. The ring tone has a little more meaning when we learn that Alyce chose the legendary Ozzy tune because her friend Carroll (Tamara Feldman) had chosen it as her ring tone as well. Alyce and Carroll have a slightly dark history as jokes about the former being a little “Single White Female” with the latter are made. But bridges appear to have been mended and Alyce & Carroll head out for a night on the town.



Alyce Kills

Photo credit: The Collective/Bloody Disgusting

Several drinks later, and a trip to a shady drug dealer (Eddie Rouse), Alyce and Carroll are on the roof of Alyce’s apartment building, enjoying the sights and drunkenly laughing. Carroll keeps moving to the edge, and, in a blur that may include a push, she’s falling. Did Alyce purposefully push her? Was it an accident? It would be a traumatic incident for anyone but it’s made even more so when Alyce learns that Carroll didn’t die. She’s a disfigured mess who may decide to point a finger at Alyce. The idea that Carroll could turn her in or even that she tried to kill her in the first place sends Alyce down into a wonderland of drugs and sin. Before you know it, she’s doing harder drugs, getting into long conversations with dealers, and hallucinating hardcore. And all the while there’s a question that lingers over “Alyce Kills” – Is this the story of a girl who goes crazy or a girl who was always crazy?

There are three distinct acts and major, jarring tonal shifts that go with them in “Alyce Kills.” The first act seems like a meek, gentle girl caught in a nightmare. She hates her job. Her former friends (including James Duval) think she’s weird. And the only friend who likes her takes a dive off a roof. Then the second act really turns into something trippy with images of ghostly creatures and a “Hardcore”-esque descent into darkness. It’s an abrupt twist to go from the quiet Alyce to the one getting banged by a drug dealer for Ecstasy but I didn’t mind the shift because Rouse and Dornfeld make it interesting, if not completely believable. “Alyce Kills” is always a stylized piece and I don’t think it works

if you take it as realism. Alyce’s descent is too fast to be believable but that doesn’t mean that it isn’t fascinating.



Alyce Kills

Photo credit: The Collective/Bloody Disgusting

Then there’s the third act which, without spoiling anything, lives up to the expectations of a film goer buying a ticket to the directorial follow-up to “Zombie Strippers”. Alyce goes gore. And it really works, in large part because it’s so brief and tightly directed. Once again, I won’t spoil anything, but think about the chaos at the end of a film like “The Woman” – intense, to the point, and riveting. “Alyce Kills” is almost a slow burn in that what comes in the final reel is so violently different than what viewers may be expecting from poor Alyce.

I love the little touches in “Alyce Kills” – the ringtone, the way Alyce constantly tells people what she’s doing (“*I killed her*,” “*I’m disposing of a dead body*,” etc.) but everyone writes it off as a joke, the willingness on Lee’s part to allow Rouse to monologue as drug dealers do, the brutality of the final scenes – but it is the performance of Jade Dornfeld that really elevates “Alyce Kills”. She can be both cute and terrifying in exactly the same moment. I do wish the tonal shifts were a little smoother and the film was tighter overall but it’s still such an intriguing, strange, almost mesmerizing piece of work. It really stuck with me in ways that a lot of horror has failed to do in the ‘10s. Jay Lee is the real deal and you won’t soon forget Jade Dornfeld and her version of “Alyce”.

“Alyce Kills” stars Jade Dornfeld, Tamara Feldman, Eddie Rouse, and James Duval. It was written and directed by Jay Lee. It premieres On Demand today, May 21, 2013, and opens in some markets theatrically on May 24, 2013.



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