

Arnold Schwarzenegger's Dour Zombie Drama 'Maggie'

Submitted by [NickHC](#) [1] on May 8, 2015 - 7:59pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – A common quagmire during a zombie outbreak, as expressed in the 367 films about the topic made about such an event since 2000, concerns what to do when your loved one is infected. For many movies, it makes for the tearful, climactic moment; for the dour drama "Maggie," it's the total narrative examination that just about fills half a movie, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a rugged, lumberjack dad who is disturbed by the ailing conditions of his infected daughter (played by Abigail Breslin).

Directed by newcomer Henry Hobson from a screenplay written by an AOL user name (John Scott 3), "Maggie" is a maudlin vamp on a farmer father living with his daughter's condition, a "sick kid" narrative with a hazardous ticking biological time bomb. After rescuing her from government quarantine, Schwarzenegger's Wade watches over Maggie, getting her medical attention and keeping bossy policemen at bay. Meanwhile, her condition worsens while she accepts her mortality, bonding with her hosting aunt Caroline (Joely Richardson) and a young man of similar conditions (Bryce Romero).

Removed by almost a decade from her breakout part in "Little Miss Sunshine," Breslin remains still in search of a brilliant adult role. Still, "Maggie" bulks up her resume by showing her as apt within physical horror and coming-of-age drama, providing the type of presence that makes a character more memorable than the script originally aimed for.



'Maggie'

Photo credit: *Roadside Attractions*

Providing this story with both the muscle and the softness that it needs, Schwarzenegger continues on a route that's more unexpected than the world of many of his "Expendables" compadres. He's playing the hundredth patriarch who has lost a wife that he idolizes, and must support his daughter, but in the environment of Hobson's film, this one is different, I promise. Wade has the classic Schwarzenegger touch -

an all-American man with an Austrian accent that no one questions - and his charisma similarly continues to be a non-issue. Though he loses the classic *Ahh-nuld* stoicism, he remains an intriguing, transparent presence.

In the film's half-successful tonal gamble, the energy within this very atmospheric story is strictly the underlying anxiety about what do with Maggie. It's less a focus on the debate than observing her deterioration, which is aptly presented through performance and make-up, creating a moral dread even for a title character who doesn't read as fully constructed.



'Maggie'

Photo credit: *Roadside Attractions*

What doesn't substantiate this distinct attitude is the film's incessant weepiness, as the script's sub-sadnesses aren't planted well enough to justify how much the story wallows on them — "Maggie" isn't so much slow with its grievance as it is shallow. The question of when a human loses their humanity (and becomes full-blown zombie) only threatens to ache when it comes to Maggie. Early into the ordeal, Wade hesitates to kill two zombies because "there was something in their eyes," a total projection of humanity. This remark, along with scenes that focus on the dilemmas from other families, only proves a distance between the film's dramatic aspirations as opposed to its presentations. Instead of enlivening its unique angle of morality to zombie control, Hobson's film only gets soggy with the amount of tears that characters shed about the world or infected loved one around them.

Smothered in a moaning score and only able to achieve one note with its dreary aesthetics, "Maggie" is the endurance of a single intriguing plot line in a narrative environment where other observations are less rewarding. Breslin & Schwarzenegger are integral to the film's effect and memorability, with the direction and script cutting so far back on narrative elements that the story nearly dies without them.

"Maggie" opens in a limited amount of theaters on May 8. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Abigail Breslin, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Joely Richardson, and Bryce Romero. Written by John Scott 3. Directed by Henry Hobson. Rated "PG-13"



[12]

By [NICK ALLEN](#) [13]
Editor & Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
nick@hollywoodchicago.com [12]

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