

Filmthreat.com - Mark Bell

Greg Derochie's *Solitary* is the best kind of thriller mystery in that it never tips its cards to give away what's coming next. Despite my mind working away at what I thought was really going on, I was continually tripped up by the film's reveals and turns. And even if I had predicted where the film was going, the journey there is so much fun, it'd hardly be a mark against the movie.

Amber Jaeger stars as Sara, a woman who has come down with some debilitating panic attacks every time she tries to leave her house. This advancing agoraphobia would be problematic all on its own, but her husband (Kieron Elliott) suddenly goes missing one evening and Sara finds herself alone in her house, trying to figure out what is going on. Luckily, her sister (Kristine Sullivan) sends along a doctor (Andrew Qamar) to help Sara work through her situation, but all he seems to be doing is pointing out just how truly precarious Sara's grasp of reality really is.

For a film that spends the majority of its time in one location, Sara's house, it still manages to hold you attentive and keep you guessing. This is a film that peels and peels away its layers, but never gets too contrived or silly. I didn't know what to expect going in, and it was one of those pleasant surprises to get as caught up in the film as I did, which is a testament to all the pieces working so strongly together. Amber Jaeger's performance is as confident and strong as her character's predicament is frustrating and confusing. Given a weaker performance, I'd probably be very "just go outside already," but when you see the actual pain that being outdoors causes our phobic heroine, you hold back on that sentiment.

Filmmaker Greg Derochie is best known for his visual effects work with various big-time Hollywood blockbusters, such as the *Spider-Man* series, so I didn't expect to see much subtle beauty on display. Maybe I was expecting a VFX calling card film or something, he doesn't need a calling card for his VFX. If *Solitary* is a calling card for anything, it's an example of an intense tale told within limited environs that is as compelling a thriller as any mystery that has come before. For me, it felt like a Haruki Murakami novel with a splash of *House of Leaves* thrown in for good measure. All around a great film.