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# In the Land of Blood and Honey (2011)

Rating: 2 Stars (out of 4)



*Love Gory*

By Jeffrey M. Anderson

Angelina Jolie makes her

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Angelina Jolie makes her feature writing and directing debut with *In the Land of Blood and Honey*, and she makes a critical error. In her deep desire to send a message about the atrocities committed in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, she forgets to spend much time on emotionally interesting characters for her audience to follow. Instead, she jumps right into the atrocities, and we get scene after scene of rape, blood, and brutality.

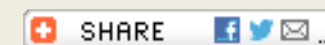
Set in the early 1990s in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the movie tells the story of the Bosnian War. It doesn't go into detail about the war's history, but the Serbian soldiers are the bad guys and the peaceful Croatian Muslims are the good guys. A Croat woman, Ajla (Zana Marjanovic) has a date with a Serbian man, Danijel (Goran Kostic), when the



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**With:** Zana Marjanovic, Goran Kostic, Rade Serbedzija, Branko Djuric, Dzana Pinjo, Nikola Djuricko, Fedja Stukan, Goran Jevtic

**Written by:** Angelina Jolie

**Directed by:** Angelina Jolie

**MPAA Rating:** R for war violence and atrocities including rape, sexuality, nudity and language

**Language:** Bosnian, Serbian, with English subtitles

**Running Time:** 127 minutes

**Date:** December 23, 2011

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war breaks out. Soon, Aja finds herself a prisoner in a camp under his command. Danijel is against the war, but can't stand up to his powerful father Nebojsa (Rade Serbedzija). He decides to keep Aja prisoner to protect her from rape and brutality by his fellow soldiers. She escapes, but is recaptured. This time he allows her to paint, and she grows comfortable; or, is she only biding her time?

Indeed, it's actually unclear as to whether the main characters are ever really in love with one another. They seem happy for about one minute before the war starts, but afterward their relationship is cold and ambiguous. Danijel is shown to be weak and ineffective, and he's not appealing. Whether the point is romance or escape is unclear, and the movie



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fails to work in either direction. There's a ridiculous attempt to keep Ajla beautiful even after months in a prison camp, and there are lessons about "empty space." But these fall flat as they're explained rather than suggested.

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