At one point in BITTEN (coming on no-frills DVD from Vivendi July 6), a new vampire film starring Jason Mewes, the sexy Danika (a gorgeous Erica Cox) says with full conviction, “It’s like I want to f**k you and eat you at the same time.” Now I want you to take a good, long look at this quote and ask yourself one question—was this meant to be funny, or is it just bad writing?

Unfortunately, that’s the same thing I kept asking the entire film, and I couldn’t help feeling the director, writers and cast were not quite sure either. While BITTEN is billed as a dark horror/comedy, it never hits either of those notes very well, getting stuck instead in some uncomfortable void in the middle where everything just seems awkward and out of place.

Jack (Jason Mewes) is a paramedic who works the graveyard shift with Roger (Richard Fitzpatrick, the movie’s true bright spot) and is slowly losing his social life because of it. One night, on his way back from work, he comes across Danika, a young woman covered in blood and shaking in an alley. Figuring her to be the victim of an attack by one of the drug dealers roaming his street, Jack brings Danika into his home to care for her. After she comes to, he begins to fall for her, even as he realizes she’s not entirely human…

If it sounds like you’ve seen this movie before, it’s probably because you have. This is a by-the-numbers human/vampire romance, which poses a problem: If we already know the destination, the journey had better be pretty damn special.

Too bad it isn’t. The film mostly takes place in Jack’s apartment and deals with his and Danika’s growing relationship, with brief reprieves of Jack working with Roger. If this film has any ace in

the hole, it’s the latter character, as Fitzpatrick brings a fine comic lightness and some funny moments to the film (even as he wades through bad dialogue); as the clock ticked forward, I increasingly wished the movie was about him.

Then there’s the love story, or what’s supposed to be one. You see, there’s a problem with Danika: She’s naked for nearly the whole film. Now, as a straight male, I can’t say I entirely minded this, and while Cox deserves a ton of credit for baring all—something most young actresses would refuse to do—I couldn’t help feeling it was just a distraction, and an awkward one at that. After a while, it’s not clear *why* she remains naked—except maybe for the fact that she’s always horny and either wants to f**k or drink blood. But wait a minute—isn’t this supposed to be a love story? The movie asks the viewer to care about a “romance” built purely on the fact that this guy has a gorgeous naked girl in his apartment? Not only that, he literally knows *nothing* about her except that she’s a hot vampire. This might not sound like a big deal, but as the film continues, the only reason we’re given to care about her survival—and, by association, her relationship with Jack—is that she’s good-looking and horny, not anything to do with her character or the duo’s nonsensical affair.

This may sound like harping (and to an extent it is), but BITTEN’s main issue is that nothing adds up. Very few of the jokes work (unless delivered by Roger), nor do most of the horror bits (which are too dark/quick), and while the movie has a few good moments, they’re brought down by awkward writing and acting. Even Mewes comes off stilted, and the excessive swearing (I’m no Puritan, but it’s just ridiculous) comes off as a forced, tacky attempt to wring humor from bland, unfunny material. It’s not appallingly bad, but it’s so forgettable that, as I write this review literally a day after watching the film, I’m having trouble remembering certain details of it.

{jcomments on}