



[Review] Bathroom Troll (Fantastic Fest): School Bullying And Satanism Collide

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SUPER SCARY SHORTS SATURDAY

reviews of short horror films

After androgynous high school student Cassie (Blanca Sanchez) is bullied by a quartet of mean-girl classmates in a campus bathroom, her mother (Melissa Connell) calls upon satanic forces to seek revenge in writer/director Aaron Immediato's *Bathroom Troll*. This short film pays homage to Brian De Palma's 1976 screen version of Stephen King's *Carrie* while giving a fresh, current take on high-school-outsider revenge horror.

Sanchez is outstanding as a young woman whose looks confuse and infuriate some of her classmates. Kelly Holstrom, Lauren Lee, Kara McGee, and Cassidy Sanders also give solid turns as they play four self-obsessed girls who complain about what they see as their own physical shortcomings while knocking their other friend's opinions. When these girls discover Cassie silently hiding in a bathroom stall, they question her gender, physically and verbally abusing her.



As meek and frightened as Cassie is — and Sanchez's marvelous facial expressions convey this superbly — her mother is quite the opposite. She is headstrong and forceful in making Cassie accompany her to a secluded spot to perform a diabolical ritual. Enter the titular demon (Hannah Gold), who, thanks to very cool makeup by Becca Smith and a unique costume design, looks like it could have been doing double duty as a glam death metal musician.

The revenge troll goes after Cassie's tormentors one by one, but our protagonist isn't keen on her mother's deadly idea. As Cassie finds the courage and strength to stand up for herself, the stakes are raised for all involved.



Immediato paces *Bathroom Troll* marvelously, infusing the short with occasional humorous moments but keeping the story clearly in horror territory. His outsider protagonist is a girl whose looks make her an easy target for loudmouthed, rude people, and Cassie comes off as a relatable character with a huge heart.

Bathroom Troll screened at Fantastic Fest, which ran in Austin, Texas, from September 19–26.

★★★★★ (3.8 / 5)

BATHROOM TROLL

A FILM BY AARON IMMEDIATO

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Joseph Perry

Joseph Perry fell in love with horror films as a preschooler when he first saw the Gill-Man swim across the TV screen in "The Creature from The Black Lagoon" and Mothra battle Godzilla in "Godzilla Vs. The Thing." His education in fright fare continued with TV series such as "The Twilight Zone" and "Outer Limits," along with legendary northern California horror host Bob Wilkins' "Creature Features." His love for silver age and golden age comic books, including horror titles from Gold Key, Dell, and Marvel started around age 5. He is a contributing writer for "Phantom of the Movies VideoScope" print magazine and the websites Gruesome Magazine, Diabolique Magazine, Ghastly Grinning, The Scariest Things, Horror Fuel, and When It Was Cool. He is a co-host of the "Decades of Horror; The Classic Era" and "Uphill Both Ways" podcasts. Joseph has also written for "Scream" magazine, "Filmfax" magazine, "SQ Horror" magazine, and the websites That's Not Current and HorrorNews.net. He occasionally proudly co-writes articles with his son Cohen Perry, who is a film critic in his own right. A former northern Californian and Oregonian, Joseph has been teaching, writing, and living in South Korea since 2008.

Tagged Bathroom Troll, Fantastic Fest, Super Scary Shorts Saturday

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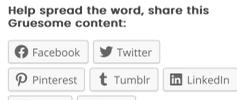
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