Brick (2006) [1]

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Brick (2006) [3] is a film that no matter how well you describe it, it still kind of sounds like a tacky idea and it easily could have been. A hard-boiled noir style detective film set in a modern-day high school? Hmm. But let me assure you that great care was taken with the specifics of the film that make this setup work surprisingly well. Joseph Gordon-Levitt (Inception, 500 Days of Summer) stars as Brendan, a quiet loner who acts as the gumshoe in this movie. He's lost contact with an ex-girlfriend at school who was straying into the world of drug trafficking and wants to make sure she's okay. When she turns up dead, he begins a quest for answers through the underground world of popular kids, the drama vamps and the super-smart geeks.

See? Still sounds a little tacky doesn't it? What saves the film from collapsing under the ridiculous setup is the script and the performances. The characters play the roles like they're actually in a 1940's detective film complete with rapid-fire speech and archaic slang that takes a little effort to follow. All the film noir tropes are here: the smart detective who knows how to take a punch, the bombshell who can't be trusted, the menacing kingpin and his muscle-bound henchman. This is a film that doesn't insult the viewer's intelligence and succeeds by playing the whole thing straight with nary a wink to suggest that the situations are taking place in an out-of-context environment. The plot becomes convoluted as double-crossing and lies start to twist the narrative.

This is certainly no "Disney's High School Detective" sort of film. The violence and drug content makes it clearly intended for an adult audience. It's a smart, classy and surprisingly emotional film that succeeds despite its inability to be described in a satisfying way. Definitely recommended.
Posted by intern on February 7, 2011
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