

Winter's Bone

Cert 15 USA 2010 100 mins

Crew

Director	Debra Granik
Screenplay	Debra Granik Anne Rosellini
Cinematography	Michael McDonough
Editor	Alfonso Gonçalves
Production Design	Mark White
Music	Dickon Hinchliffe

Cast

Jennifer Lawrence	Ree Dolly
John Hawkes	Teardrop
Kevin Breznahan	Little Arthur
Dale Dickey	Merab
Garrett Dillahunt	Sheriff Baskin
Sheryl Lee	April
Lauren Sweetser	Gail
Tate Taylor	Mike Satterfield
Isaiah Stone	Sonny
Jashlee Thompson	Ashlee
Ron 'Stray Dog' Hall	Thump Milton

Synopsis

The Ozark Mountains, Missouri. With an absent father and a mentally-ill mother, 17-year-old Ree Dolly is left to raise her two younger siblings and hold their impoverished household together. The sheriff informs that her father Jessop, a well-known crystal-meth manufacturer, is one week away from breaking bail, and that he has put up their home as bond. She sets out to find him. However, it is dangerous to ask questions in this closed, criminal society. No-one will help her, not even her uncle Teardrop. Ree eventually concludes that Jessop has been murdered. Unless she can prove that he's dead, the family will be evicted. When she persists in trying to speak with local crime lord Thump, she is beaten by his henchwomen, led by Morab.

Abridged from Sight & Sound, Oct. 2010



Jennifer Lawrence as Ree



Review

...Winter's Bone author Daniel Woodrell's literary style is as raw as the territory these people inhabit: a modern world that could be from another, less evolved age. Broken-down homes litter the back roads, yards are filled with detritus, smashed TVs, broken toilets. It's a chilling landscape (in both senses) that deters visitors and brutalises the countryside the community's set in. Michael McDonough's stark photography gives this almost hermetically sealed place a ruddy beauty that never once hints that spring might come and bring the fields to lush life.

In this environment of characters with features as distinctive and gnarled as the bark of the frostbitten trees, Lawrence's indomitable performance as a young woman pushed to breaking point by the desire to remain loyal to local customs and the will to survive is a truly standout piece of work. She's the focal point of almost every frame, whether at its corner, anguishing over her family's fate, or refusing to be warned off or frozen out. Quietly heroic yet determinedly dogged, even a beating at the hands of the local womenfolk sees her still watchful and aware. Asking if she's to be killed, she's told, chillingly, that the idea was talked about before the ever-brooding uncle (a terrific John Hawkes) panics her would-be aggressors like a cat scattering pigeons.

Ree's grimy rites-of-passage — even its dénouement is unhurriedly violent and downbeat — is not so much about overcoming insurmountable odds, but surviving them. She's as much a part of these freezing hills and fields as a horse staked to the ground, profile stark against the unyielding sky.

[The film is] a vivid reworking of Daniel Woodrell's novel that brings the book's conflicted heroine to searing life in a piece of unhurried filmmaking too rarely seen these days.

Philip Wilding, Empire Magazine

- Debra Granik is an independent American filmmaker. This is her second feature length film. Her first, *Down To The Bone* (2004) won several major independent awards in the US, but was not released in the UK
- Winter's Bone premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Grand Jury Prize. It has won 20 other awards, and was nominated for four Oscars, including Best Film and Best Leading Actress
- Jennifer Lawrence was born in 1990 in Kentucky. She has been acting in film and television since she was 16. Her most recent film is *Like Crazy* which premiered at Sundance this year.
- Many of the lead players (including Isaiah Stone as 'Sonny', Ashlee Thompson as 'Ashlee' and William White as 'Blond Milton') and most of the extras, are from Forsyth, Missouri, where the film was made, and had never acted before.
- To play her role as Ree, Jennifer Lawrence had to learn how to skin squirrels, chop wood, and fight.