

The Jaws That Bite

Description

Whenever someone asks me what my passions or vices are, I usually respond that I like movies and television too much. But that is putting it mildly â€” I **adore** movies. I would watch a movie every day of my life if I could, and that extends to all sorts of different entertainment avenues where you are the audience, like plays, musicals, etc. But movies will always be my number one favourite.

I love to be entertained, taken away, transported to somewhere else and experience the highs and lows that cinema can invoke in all of us. Thereâ€™s nothing better than sitting in a dark theatre and sharing an emotional thrill ride with everyone else in the theatre. Itâ€™s a magical experience, and it took me a long time to understand why.

I was having a conversation with a friend of mine the other day, and she asked me what it was about movies that I loved so much. I responded by saying that I liked the sense of escapism. That it allows me to turn my brain off, forget my problems, and enjoy the ride.

And some movies, what a ride they are!

Recently, I re-watched one of my favourite movies of all time: *Jaws*.

I saw *Jaws* when I was probably around eight years old with my brother, and I distinctly remember my dad recommending it because it was about sharks (which I loved), a Stephen Spielberg film (which I loved), and the first summer blockbuster ever. And I devoured the film â€” pun intended. And I have watched it over and over again in the over 20 years since, and have yet to get tired of it.

Jaws is by no means a perfect movie, but it is pretty damn close.

The casting is spot-on, with Roy Scheider playing new Police Chief Brody, Richard Dreyfuss as the underappreciated shark expert Hooper, and Robert Shaw playing the shark-hunter Quint. Each of them deliver fantastic performances, with my personal favourite being this scene:

The film masterfully builds up levels upon levels of suspense, mostly because you really never see the shark in the first half of the movie. You see it attack swimmers, the aftermath of the attacks, the paranoia of the townspeople, and the thoughts of the three main stars â€” but never the shark itself (mostly because the shark didnâ€™t really work during production, causing Spielberg to hide it).

And then, the scene where first see the shark is pure movie magic:

The film continues to build from that moment, from one encounter with the shark to the next, as the crew find themselves completely unprepared for the ferocious nature and pure tenacity of the predator. That is, until the explosive final confrontation between Brody and the shark that puts an end to the threat once-and-for-all.

However, as much as I like the movie (and I do), I am of two minds with regards to it. To put it simply, I love everything about the movie, but I hate the aftermath of the film.

As a result of Stephen Spielberg scaring everyone out of the water back in 1975, people began to hate sharks because of how the great white shark was in the movie, as a mindless killing machine. As a result, individuals went out in the water with the specific purpose of hunting and killing sharks, simply because of the movie.

In fact, the author of the book that the film was based on, Peter Benchley, mentioned repeatedly that if he would have known more about real sharks and their behaviour, he would have never written the book, and deeply regrets what happened as a result of both the book and film. As a result, Benchley became an advocate for sharks and ocean conservation, and spent the rest of his life trying to undo the damage he did and try to alleviate people's fears of the majestic animal. ([Source](#))

A fantastic new film, entitled *The Shallows*, came out recently, and hits many of the same beats as *Jaws*. Blake Lively stars as Nancy, a young woman who gets attacked by a shark on a surfing trip and becomes stranded on a rock too far to swim to shore, as the shark is patrolling nearby. It is a great movie and Lively is amazing in it, but the absolute best part of the movie happens when her character finds a GoPro in the water.

As she records a final message to her family in case she doesn't survive her daring plan of escape, she says one extremely important line. She doesn't blame the shark; she blames herself, as she admits that she wandered into the shark's feeding ground and put herself at risk.

In an interview with [Entertainment Weekly](#), Blake Lively said:

She's surfing and she comes upon a shark's feeding ground and a whale carcass. She swims into that, and as any wild animal would do, when food is scarce and times are tough, here something is on its feeding ground and it protects its territory. Both of them are just battling to stay alive. Neither one of them is evil, necessarily — they're both fighting each other for their lives.

And that is just amazing.

Look how far we've come in 41 years, and I can only hope that people continue to realize that sharks are not evil, just misunderstood.

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