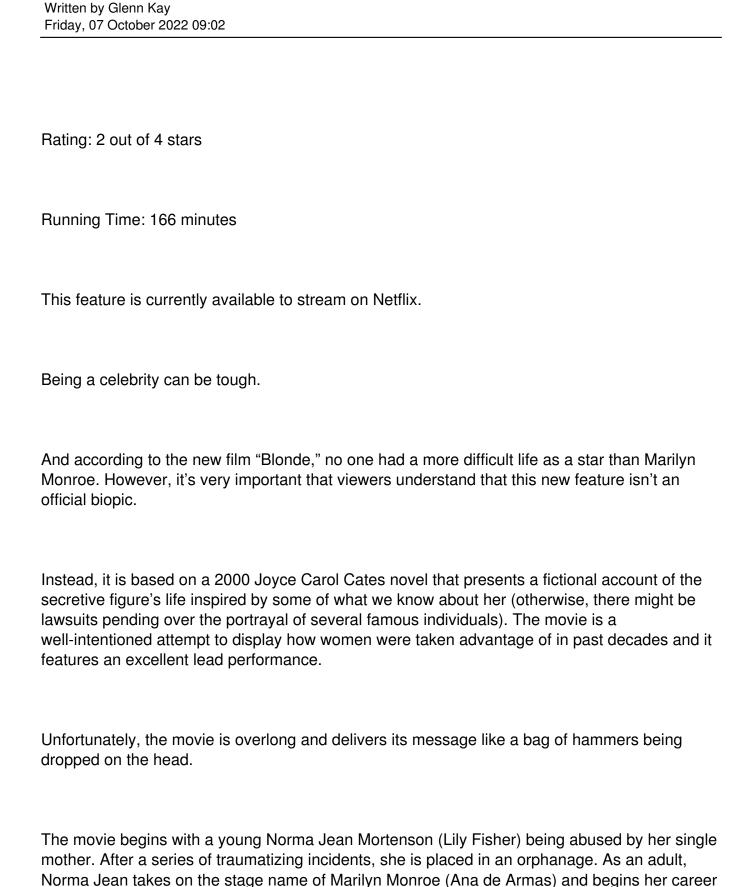
## 'Blonde' paints a bleak picture of bombshell Marilyn Monroe's life

in Hollywood.



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Written by Glenn Kay Friday, 07 October 2022 09:02

But her rise to the top is an entirely unpleasant one. And things don't improve when she becomes a full-fledged star. The actress is demeaned, beaten, raped and manipulated by various figures around her, causing psychological distress. This results in conversations with a fetus she was encouraged to abort during an unplanned pregnancy. In order to keep herself from experiencing a complete mental breakdown, Monroe clings onto hope that she might be reunited with her father after he writes to her.

The biggest positive is lead Ana de Armas. She looks the part of Monroe and embodies the role effectively. It's a challenging one as well, as the character's real-life in the story contrasts so much with her onscreen work and celebrity status. The performer more-than-capably depicts the star losing any optimism about her life, eventually veering into mental illness and prescription drug addiction. Monroe is put through truly harrowing events and the actress is completely committed to bringing this version of the famous figure to the screen.

But while aspects of Monroe's life were tragic (her mother did suffer from paranoid schizophrenia and numerous reports suggest that the star's second husband, Joe DiMaggio, was physically abusive) and some things seen could have occurred, several elements are invented and exaggerated, with almost every individual in the film taking advantage of the star.

As scene after scene unfolds without very few breaks from the gloom, the amplified approach does eventually come across as repetitive and contrived.

The film uses bizarre transitions and includes several lengthy scenes that are impressive on a technical level, but otherwise wear out their welcome. The aspect ratio constantly changes from widescreen to standard Academy ratio, and even something akin to a cell phone.

It also jumps back and forth from black and white to color. Some of the aspect ratio changes may have been to emphasize claustrophobia or distance between individuals and the color alterations to depict the false glamor of Hollywood, but many transitions feel completely unwarranted.

And there's also the very strange subplot involving the lead's interactions with an accusatory aborted fetus, as well as discussions during other pregnancies. The filmmaker is surely attempting to use the tactic to examine Monroe's feelings of guilt and fear of being unable to

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conceive, but it's a jarring tactic.

Though the message is clear and the film clearly wants to scrutinize the mistreatment and psychological toll of social attitudes towards women during the era, it still doesn't quite land as effectively as it could. In fact, some could misinterpret the disparaging depiction of working and living among show business types and scenes of a fetus chiding the lead for aborting it as conservative and traditionalist in view. However, one assumes this wasn't the intended effect.

"Blonde" is an ambitious attempt to tear down horrifically sexist, nasty and cruel attitudes towards women during the Golden Age of Hollywood. But the cavalcade of sinister supporting characters and expressionistic quirks add a sense of falseness to the tale. In the end, it seems that the perfect biopic of one of cinema's greatest legends still has yet to be produced.

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