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## THE CELLAR DOOR (2007)

-- Review by Nic Brown--



[The Cellar Door](#)

James Dumont, Mich...

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Love, everyone looks for it, but some people take drastic measures to capture that special feeling, even if it means imprisoning and torturing others. Writer Christopher Nelson and director Matt Zettell explore the mind of a just such a man and his next victim in their film THE CELLAR DOOR. Herman (James DuMont) seems like an ordinary, if socially inept man - the typical “quiet neighbor” next door that always seems to be the one hiding something. In Herman’s case though, the stereotype is appropriate as he is hiding something: his taste for kidnapping women and holding them in his cellar where he keeps them almost like pets, but with a much more sinister edge.

When his current “girlfriend” dies during an escape attempt, Herman must find someone new to keep him company. It doesn’t take long for him to fixate on a pair of young women, Rudy (Michelle Tomlinson) and Christa (Heather Sconyers). The pair is blissfully unaware as they go through their normal daily routine that they are being stalked by Herman, who begins the process of choosing which of the women will become his next guest. He decides on Rudy and wastes no time in kidnapping her late one night right out of the house the two women share.

Rudy awakens to find herself imprisoned in a heavy wooden cell in Herman’s cellar. This small wooden box becomes Rudy’s whole world and to her horror she is now dependent upon Herman and his whims for survival.

Rudy quickly understands just how much control Herman has when he demands a blood sample. Herman collects samples from his victims for posterity. Everything from blood to feces is kept in jars around shrines that he builds for them. Although disgusted by this, Rudy also quickly realizes that there have been others before her and that despite his admonitions that he will not harm her, she knows that the other women could not have survived their stay in Herman’s care.

The film becomes a psychological game as Herman tries to break Rudy's will and force her to love him. Rudy in turn must try and make Herman believe she is falling under his spell so he will make a crucial mistake and give her the opportunity to escape.

Nelson and Zettell's THE CELLAR DOOR is a psychological thriller that maintains a tight tension almost from the start of the film. Both DuMont and Tomlinson are excellent in their respective roles as captor and victim. DuMont manages to convey intelligence and cunning, but the same time a level of naiveté that is almost childlike. His desperate need to be loved and in control creates an unnerving character. It is Tomlinson though who steals the show with her performance as the "woman in the box." Although his captive, Tomlinson's Rudy is in her own way as cunning and ruthless in pursuit of her freedom as he is in his quest for dominance. She plays the part of someone who seems to be slowly falling for her captor, not rushing it, but taking her time to make Herman believe and trust her. However, when Herman's attention is elsewhere, Tomlinson's eyes express the truth - that she is still in control of herself and will do whatever it takes to be free.

THE CELLAR DOOR is an intense film. The physical and mental abuse inflicted upon Herman's victims can be a hard pill to swallow at times, but it is nonetheless essential in creating the empathy with Rudy that allows the audience to understand the changes that are going on within her. Well written and well acted, the characters are what make THE CELLAR DOOR a good film. So if you have the chance, check out director Matt Zettell's independent thriller THE CELLAR DOOR and remember to keep an eye on that quiet neighbor when he starts putting bars on his windows.

<http://www.cellardoorthemovie.com>

**When you're done reading about THE CELLAR DOOR,  
check out B-Movie Man Nic Brown's new novel:**

***"Blood Curse: Werewolf For Hire Book One"***

