

‘Falcon Lake’ Review: Pack Water, Sunscreen and Palo Santo

Death and desire are bunk mates in this coming-of-age drama set around a lake cabin in Quebec.



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Joseph Engel and Sara Montpetit in “Falcon Lake.” Yellow Veil Pictures

By Beatrice Loayza

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Directed by Charlotte Le Bon, the coming-of-age drama “Falcon Lake” is a story of summer love steeped in the eeriness of a wilderness slasher. A ghost supposedly haunts the secluded Quebec lake where a 13-year-old, Bastien (Joseph Engel), is vacationing with his family, at a cabin owned by their friends. Chloé (Sara Montpetit), the moody 16-year-old daughter of their hosts, gets a thrill out of playing dead: In one scene, she has Bastien take her picture as she poses on a dirt road like a corpse.

Still scrawny and awkward yet overflowing with hormones, Bastien finds Chloé more terrifying — and fascinating — than any bogey. Like [“The Virgin Suicides,”](#) the film unfolds from the teen boy’s besotted perspective. But relative to the hapless narrator of Sofia Coppola’s young-adult classic, Bastien grows close to his mysterious object of desire, a Wednesday Addams type without the misanthropic streak. Chloé plays the experienced cool girl with ease, taking Bastien on wine-fueled hiking adventures and to a house party with her obnoxious guy pals. She also casually undresses in front of Bastien as if he’s her kid brother, but Montpetit gives these actions a knowingly flirtatious glint. Chloé is teasing her repressed companion, bringing him out of his shell as she steps out of her own — Chloé gives Bastien a taste of adulthood’s pleasures while Bastien allows her the freedom to be a kid again.

“Falcon Lake” is a handsome, intriguing feature directing debut from Le Bon; a naturalistic teen romance spiked with mystique, thanks to its subtly menacing deep-woods setting and quivering [16 millimeter](#) cinematography by Kristof Brandl. Death and desire swirl around the film’s charged atmosphere, though Le Bon has trouble meaningfully bringing out these elements in the narrative itself, hastily throwing in ambiguities in the last act to create a weightier sense of drama. The effect falls flat.