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Night of Bloody Horror

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DVD reviews

Surprise, surprise! It's kind of a bad movie, but it's kind of good, too. OK, this horror flick/psychodrama is an exploitation film and it's got some undeniable camp elements, cliches and general over-the-topness. But there's too much verve and style to write it off as a bad movie. Golden statue material, it ain't, but for what it is, it's head and shoulders among several of its peers. I guess what I'm getting at is, if you want a movie to satisfy your bad movie party night, this will fit the bill. But if you want a pretty good grindhouse/drive-in pic, it's that too. How can it be both? I don't feel like analyzing it. But let me tell you about the movie. First off, quick plot synopsis: Our hero Wesley has some mental problems. His brother died back when the both of them were kids. That kind of background always means something bad, to one degree or another. Wesley's spent time in the Home for People Who Are Kind of Funny in the Head, but - supposedly - he's better now. I reckon that's why they let him out. He's still under a bit of stress, though. Living with a pushy, strong-willed mom can do that to you.

But things aren't all bad; he gets laid a lot, and by different women. The first one we see is his wife-to-be. No, Wesley's not a slut, because the next time he gets laid, wife-to-be is already dead. She went to confession about the whole doing-it-with-my-sweetie-before-marriage thing, but she got a helluva penance - not too terribly long after Wesley had one of his tweak-o moments (which is conveyed through Wesley gripping his head and looking all upset and by a swirly spiral effect layered over the picture).

His next conquest is a nurse who happens upon him in the midst of a mugging. She takes him home (!) and they end up hooking up, the development of their relationship being conveyed in abbreviated fashion by way of a stylized photo montage overlaid with romantic music.

But the sex doesn't stop there (just for the record, some boobs appear but nothing particularly graphic sex-wise); and, hey, Wesley's still not cheating! Nope, nursey gets the axe, too. Literally.

It's no wonder the police start getting all suspicious of Wesley, though they're a little verbally abusive in the interrogations and what-not.

This time, a reporter lady gets interested in Wesley and - bang-o! - he's in another relationship. (Seems to me he gets over his grief pretty quick for a guy who's still lamenting the death of his brother 13 years ago.) He's landed a great dame, see, and he likes her! Of course, her life is in danger and the cops are still sniffing around.

It doesn't help Wesley's cause any that he gets in a brawl at a nightclub. Incidentally, the nightclub gives us one of the more style-heavy scenes in Night of Bloody Horror. Featuring music by The Bored, an actually fairly groovy psychedelic rock band (based on this scene, anyway), the scene employs some cliched but effective visual nuances to jack up the party-hearty vibe.

Anyhoo, things obviously aren't looking very good for Wesley, who keeps having episodes, who's got the cops on his ass, who's old shrink has shown up (though in the doc's defense, he stands up for Wesley) and whose mom is, well, still around being his annoying mom. There's a lot of pressure ready to boil over here and his latest ladyfriend stands to get caught in the crossfire.

Night of Bloody Horror elevates itself above what this same movie might have been in another's hands. It makes the material better than it is with visual flair, an effort at some psychodrama and not just making segues from one kill to the next and some nice plot unraveling at the end.

Definitely a worthy drive-in flick, even if it's not quite as bloody as the title suggests. But for 1969, it's still got some decent gore. Hell, I've seen modern fright flicks outta Hollywood that ain't got the grit and gore this one has. It's not blood-soaked but it's no pansy flick, either. Plus, there're boobs. Win!



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Upchuck Undergrind listens to a little bit of a lot of things - just note the eclecticism of his reviews. He also reads voraciously and loves movies. He is a very open-minded Episcopalian (and student of Buddhism and Hinduism) who thinks Slayer is one of the greatest metal bands. Ever. In addition to his work with Corazine - for which he has written since its inception (he is a Fishcomcollective veteran) - he also writes for DJFix.com.

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