



ORLOK THE VAMPIRE IN 3D (DVD) – QUALITY CHEESE

60/100

Watching the silent film Orlok The Vampire was a puzzling experience. There were several incongruent anomalies, but first let us delve into the film itself. Orlok is a rerelease of a 1922 German Vampire knock-off or inspiration that was reportedly deleted after being the subject of an infringement lawsuit by the widow of the author of the original Dracula book, Bram Stoker. The film has now been rediscovered and reissued and packs a scary wallop some 90 years later.

The story revolves around the desire of the vampire – or Orlok of Transylvania – to move to the West and procure a house in the city. A naïve real-estate agent employee is sent to cater to the whims of the fanged creature and facilitate the sale. Little does he know that he will be haunted and his wife targeted upon return – all the while laughing at the simple country folk's superstitions the closer he gets to his destination. Orlok is different from modern day vampires. There is nothing debonair about his outward appearance He is gross and repulsive. His move to the city coincides with the prevalence of evil and the bewitchment of the unfair maiden who is the wife of the said agent, who now have the misfortune to be the neighbours to the Dracula.

With many outdoor shots the film has a realistic look. The grimness, the make-up and acting lend it a quality rarely approached this century, which brings one to the incongruity of it all. Originally a German production, this DVD comes with English titles woven through the footage. The music, as well, must have been added later if not for this specific DVD release. The shots, whether in day or night, are exceptionally clear. Speaking of which, the DVD contains two versions of which one is a 3D rendering, which is amazing for a restored 1922 film. The package not only has TV tuning and calibration advice for those who wish to watch the film in 3D – not being a fan this was not me – but also two pairs of 3D glasses. Quite amazing really and an obvious sign that Quality Cheese has invested time to create a bona fide restoration of the release as opposed to throwing a product into the marketplace without any care. That is why the production company's name is a misnomer as related to this film. This film is serious in intent. Incidentally, a new introduction by a Lloyd Kaufman, the creator of Toxic Avenger, is hilarious. Hear the laughter in the background and on film for proof.

Orlok is entertaining to watch, forbidding in its own right and a salute to the early filmmakers who were willing to undertake such a project. The film is directed by F.W. Murnau (Faust, Phantom, etc.) and features the ugly Max Schreck whose name 'Max Terror' says it all.

– Ali "The Metallian"