

from shadowy figures that stalk the forest. She's injured, so Crawford goes for help while Killian waits with her. The next morning, the pair discovers corpses hanging from the trees around them and realizes they're doomed if they don't try to sneak away. They painstakingly make it to a farmhouse, but – as these things often go – it turns out to be the last place they wanna get caught.

Director Michael G. Bartlett (*Zombie Diaries*, *The Paranormal Diaries*) gives us some realistic, likable characters to root for, genuinely frightening and savage antagonists, some brutally effective kills and constant tension as Killian and Elizabeth narrowly escape the killers' clutches before being forced to fight.

And then he goes and fucks it all up, thanks to a contrived *deus ex machina* ending that's pretty much a shotgun (well, assault rifle, technically) wedding between Jerry Bruckheimer action movie stupidity and some good ol' fashioned Bible-thumpin', reactionary vengeance – neither of which fit the previous tone of the movie. It's a shame to pan the *Treehouse* because of the last five minutes, but what the pickup truck were they thinking?

There's stupid, and then there's full redneck, dang it.

DAVE ALEXANDER

THE OMEGA NERDS

SOS: SAVE OUR SKINS

Starring Chris Hayward, Nat Saunders and Hannah Spear
Directed by Kent Sobey
Written by Chris Hayward and Nat Saunders
BBC

It's a grand old time to be a nerd, ain't it? Well, unless you're one of the hardcore British nerds Ben (Nat Saunders) and Stephen (Chris Hayward), who travel to New York for a sci-fi fan convention only to wake up on their first day to discover that everyone's vanished – fans, guests... in fact, everyone in the world, seemingly. With the phones out and the power running down, Stephen wants to find out what's going on and find a way to get home. Ben, on the other hand, mostly wants to find a burger.

Promising set up, right? It should be: as the geeks themselves observe, the "last man/men on Earth" has been the starting point for a host of more-acclaimed movies, and the comedy zingers in the first ten minutes fly thick and fast. But although the opening

dialogue is snappy, the characters never progress beyond tired stereotypes that make the lads from *The Big Bang Theory* look like profound character studies in counterculture.

SOS tries to play some of the established tropes



Attack of the Morningside Monster

of sci-fi and horror for laughs (the ravenous monster, the creepy guy who has a plastic-lined room with your name on it), but it doesn't work: the nerds are so deeply disconnected from the real world that even in a comedy you expect them to have a much better idea of how to handle adventures and terrors directly out of the fantasy worlds they obsess over – or to be brought down to Earth with a bump that would need a lot more character development and insight than the writers have managed to imbue them with. In addition, the ending is utterly asinine: a one-liner that leaves our glorious heroes in the same position as they were at the beginning. Sometimes comedy needs to progress beyond the merely skin deep.

CLAIRE HORSNELL

YOUR AVERAGE KILLER

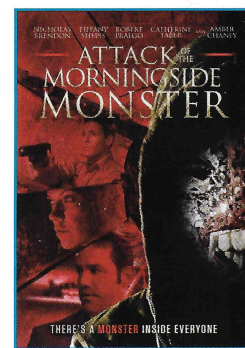
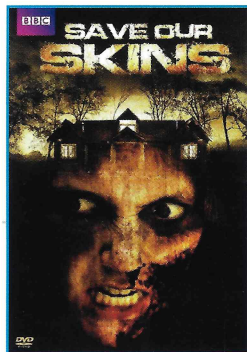
ATTACK OF THE MORNINGSIDE MONSTER

Starring Nicholas Brendon, Tiffany Shepis and Robert Pralgo
Directed by Chris Ethridge
Written by Jayson Palmer
MVD Media

Between stellar must-sees and horrible failures, a good chunk of our genre's real-estate is populated with the so-so. They're middle-of-the-road films that provide a bit of entertainment and are forgotten as soon as the credits roll. Add *Attack of the Morningside Monster* to that list.

A series of ritual killings in the sleepy town of Morningside NJ, perpetrated by a killer best described as Ghostface-does-Mardi Gras, has the town sheriff (*Vampire Diaries'* Robert Pralgo) and his faithful deputy (scream queen Tiffany Shepis) working hard to solve the crimes before the murderer strikes again. It's a straightforward plot, told with straightforward direction and camerawork. There are a couple of subplots – one involving dumb-as-rocks drug dealers, another involving the sheriff's best friend (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* Nicholas Brendon), and one featuring a history teacher tending to his terminally-ill wife – meant to add colour and drama to the narrative, as well as provide some necessary red herrings for the plot. There's no real mystery to the mystery here, though; if you have had any kind of exposure to slasher cinema, you'll see the twist from miles away.

That said, despite the pedestrian plotline and cinematography, the three aforementioned leads are solid, delivering performances above and beyond what the material calls for. Pralgo, in





OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE GETS GRAVE RESULTS

A COMEDY OF INNARDS



MY FAIR ZOMBIE

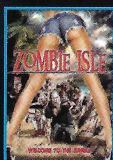
Camp Motion Pictures

When your city is overrun by zombies there's usually more running and screaming than dancing and singing, but that's not the case in this wonderful installment of the subgenre. Ottawa actor/writer/director Brett Kelly's take on the George Bernard Shaw play *My Fair Lady* hews fairly close to the original storyline about a Professor of phonetics who enters into a wager that he can pass off an ordinary cockney flower girl as an Edwardian era socialite – only this time the girl is a gut-munching zombie! Though the minimalist sets at times betray Kelly's miniscule budget, this is still an absolutely delightful film filled with witty dialogue, lavish gore and a memorable musical score. Just remember that the rain in Spain stems mainly from the brain!

BODY COUNT: 7

ZOMBIE COUNT: 19

ON UNDEADLY GROUND



ZOMBIE ISLE

World Wide Multi Media

Remember going on field trips with your high school science class and being dropped off in a forest somewhere so you could pretend to catalogue the flora and fauna while actually looking for a place to make out or get high? Me neither, but that's the premise of this flick about botany students on a trip to a remote island who are hunted by zombies. Made to look like a forgotten exploitation-era film, the washed out "print" is packed with kick-ass gore and topped off with the pre requisite Nazi mad scientist. The only thing missing is gratuitous nudity, but it gets by without it. Next time you go on a field trip you might want to steer clear of *Zombie Isle* though; can I suggest *Cannibal Cove* or *Bigfoot Bay*?

BODY COUNT: 12

ZOMBIE COUNT: 27

CRIMSON AND CLOVER



ABOUT A ZOMBIE

Revolver

Anyone who's been to Ireland may have thought that they were caught in the middle of a zombie uprising when the pubs closed down and the stumbling, moaning drunks spilled into the streets. This faux documentary from the Emerald Isle follows a family that has decided to take care of its infected son rather than turn him over to the authorities to be exterminated. Though plodding and dry at times, *About a Zombie* adeptly records the prejudice, fear and anger that the family experiences on a daily basis from their neighbours and co-workers, and raises intriguing questions about the roles of government and the Church during a zombie apocalypse. Never mind your Lucky Charms, it's your brains that Irish zombies find magically delicious!

BODY COUNT: 46

ZOMBIE COUNT: 74

LAST CHANCE LANCE

particular, has an easygoing, everyman charm as Sheriff Hauk. So, while *Morningside Monster* doesn't reach necessary viewing status, it also fails to be worthy of ridicule. File it under "O" for OK.

RON MCKENZIE

UNDEAD DUST-UP

FRANKENSTEIN VS. THE MUMMY

Starring Max Rhyser, Ashton Leigh and Robert MacNaughton

Written and directed by Damien Leone

RLJ Entertainment

Haven't we all been to a wedding where two old guys hit the bar a little too hard and start fist fighting? Sad, right? In the case of *Frankenstein vs. The Mummy*, we bear witness to a couple of dusty icons having a modern-day scrap, but whether they can still pack a punch remains to be seen.

Victor Frankenstein (Max Rhyser) and Naihla Khalil (Ashton Leigh) are young, hip professors at a medical school where, in addition to falling in love, they lead their respective fields. Dr. Frankenstein earns a living by delivering philosophical gobbledygook to classrooms of tired college students, and by night buys shady body parts from a pervy janitor (Robert MacNaughton) for use in reanimation experiments. Dr. Khalil has just returned from Egypt with the remains of a sadistic and possibly (OK, probably) cursed pharaoh. In fine Frankensteinian form, Victor creates a being from body parts, but since his brain comes courtesy of the evil janitor, his creation is just a big, undead asshole.

Meanwhile, Khalil's pharaoh has awakened and starts his campaign of global domination, one unsuspecting intern at a time. Oh yeah, he's also an undead asshole. And if you think that with two undead assholes on the loose, an epic, centuries-in-the-making monster fight must follow, kindly refer to the drunken wedding scrap analogy at the start of this review.

On the positive side of this clunker, are writer/director Damien Leone's monster makeups. The main baddies look pretty wicked (even if the Monster resembles comic book character Evil Ernie more than anything traditional), and the selection of throat slashings, brain removals and other bloodlettings are crafted as well as you could hope for. There just aren't enough of them.

To be fair, the monster rally films that dot horror cinema's history have seldom held up to any serious critique, so *Frankenstein vs. The Mummy* isn't interrupting an untarnished tradition of excellence. Still, it won't go down like when Uncle Mike punched out Uncle Rick for spilling beer on his blazer. That was at least funny.

TAL ZIMERMAN

