



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE SEEKS REVENGE

PAYBACK'S A BITCH



THE RINGMASTER

MVD Visual

Revenge may be best served cold, but it's always eaten piping hot with the ire of a thousand paybacks! That's why it's a treat to daydream about the things we would do to those who've wronged us – the guy who stole your wallet, that girl who cheated on you, or the dick who hogged that last slice of pizza! This dish from Denmark serves up this baseline premise as a gruesome game show, where a young girl is kidnapped and subjected to a sadistic ringmaster who tortures and kills her friends

for the enjoyment of the dark web. Unfortunately, *The Ringmaster* follows the recipe of done-to-death cinema done better elsewhere so you might be better off dunking this particular Danish in a cup of tea and seeing what Jigsaw is up to on Facebook.

BODY COUNT: 6

BEST DEATH: Boyfriend pulled to pieces

VENGEANCE IN THINE



SCAVENGER

MVD Visual

Set in a post-apocalyptic world, this bizarre Argentinian offering follows Tisha, a no-nonsense anti-heroine who's searching for the gang that killed her father, raped and murdered her mother, and kidnapped her sister. After twenty years, she zeroes in on the villains... time for some payback! *Scavenger's* barren landscapes, souped-up hot rods and wasteland costumes may be reminiscent of *Mad Max*, but any praise I might have for it is curtailed by a storyline continually sidetracked by unnecessary scenes of vicious, prolonged rape. Apparently, the filmmakers are trying to unseat *Irreversible* as the most vile depiction of violation caught on film. And although I can't say they managed to take that tarnished crown, they should package their film with a bar of soap. You might want to scrub your soul after watching it.

BODY COUNT: 15

BEST DEATH: Bottle up the bum

REVENGE OF THE MANGLED



HANGER

MVD Visual

Birth defects are tragic for any family, but imagine finding out on your eighteenth birthday that the reason your face is so deformed is that you were brutally attacked while in utero? That's the lamentable back story facing the mangled hero in this truly sick flick – a young man whose father has finally tracked down the brutal pimp who killed his prostitute mother and horribly disfigured him during a botched backroom abortion. Featuring memorable performances by Debbie Rochon (*I Spill Your Guts*, *Slime City Massacre*) and Tromaville's own Lloyd Kaufman as a transvestite hooker, this non-stop gorefest delivers copious amounts of boobs, blood, and more raunchy gross-outs than you can swing a used tampon at. If you wind up loving *Hanger*, may I suggest a Sunday screening for the entire family? Let your freak flag fly!

BODY COUNT: 10

BEST DEATH: Hooker car door head crush

LAST CHANCE LANCE

find the courage to enact a ritual dance for his former classmates.

But *King Knight* isn't just a Wiccan take on *Romy and Michele's High School Reunion* (although it's frequently just as funny); it also offers some genuine visual pleasures, occasionally bursting into trippy animation. Gubler throws himself into the role with gusto, chewing just enough scenery to keep spirits high. He's well matched with Sarafyan, who tends to play a sultry straight-(wo)man to his antics. Barbara Crampton is a delight as Thorn's horrified mother, and there's even a crazed supporting turn by Ray Wise as the legendary Merlin.

If *King Knight* runs out of steam once it reaches the reunion, it still possesses enough quotable lines and jabs at conformity to cast its own special spell.

LISA MORTON

MY SECRET FIEND

SLAPFACE

Starring August Maturo, Mike Manning and Libe Barer

Written and directed by Jeremiah Kipp

Shudder

Young Lucas (August Maturo) and his adult brother Tom (Mike Manning) are orphans whose mental wounds from their parents' death still haven't healed. When they're not playing the mutually abusive game that gives Jeremiah Kipp's film its title, Lucas is getting into the kind of trouble that inspires serious warnings from the local sheriff (Dan Hedaya). The lack of stability in his life leads the boy to befriend a literal monster in this smart, sensitive, and scary study of domestic dysfunction and unearthly evil.

Set for a Shudder premiere in February, *Slapface* is suffused with well-caught rural atmosphere (courtesy of cinematographer Dominick Sivilli) as it trains an observant, unsentimental eye on the two siblings. While Tom evidently does the minimum of work required to support them, Lucas goes exploring an abandoned building and encounters a local legend called The Virago Witch (Lukas Hassel). Previously known as a child killer, the Witch now becomes the boy's sounding board and protector, and bloodshed follows. Yet Kipp, who expanded *Slapface* from his acclaimed short film, isn't after a prosthetics-and-gore show here; the Witch remains largely shrouded in shadows and darkness, which makes her presence all the eerier. Barry J. Neely's distinctive score further accentuates both the terror and poignance of Lucas' situation.

Things begin to look a little more hopeful thanks to Tom's new girlfriend Anna (Libe Barer), who tells Lucas she's a Wiccan – "a good witch" – though it'll be hard to compete with the female fiend who is taking over Lucas' psyche. Maturo (*The Nun*) brings depth beyond his years to the grieving child, while Manning bestows a core of decency upon the often immature Tom. Without straining for shock effects (there are no

