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# CAPSULE: NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD: REANIMATED (2010)

**DIRECTED BY:** Mike Schneider

**FEATURING:** Karl Hardman, Duane Jones, Judith O'Dea

**PLOT:** An animated recreation of the classic zombie film, *Night of the Living Dead*:



*Reanimated* features a number of talented animators filtering Romero's original vision through their own artistic viewpoints, expressing the universal messages therein in their own mediums.

**WHY IT WON'T MAKE THE LIST:** While aesthetically intriguing and at times very eerie, there never was much that jumped out as being incredibly weird about Romero's zombie movie. Although it was the first of its kind in what is now a celebrated genre, *Night of the Living Dead* was always more of a message film than a meditation on the dead rising from their graves. This animated version does indeed add some visual quirks, but there is no real strangeness here.

**COMMENTS:** For fans of the zombie film, it doesn't get much more better than the simple-yet-satisfying claustrophobia of the grandpappy of them all, *Night of the Living Dead*. More than a horror flick, this grainy 1968 indie is a meaningful, smart work of art that pushes the boundaries of what the genre is capable of and what it can stand for. So above any horror I can think of, this one definitely deserves an animated homage that explores it from a stylistic point of view. And *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* doesn't disappoint in that department.

Using a cadre of young, experimental artists, this exercise explores the original movie nearly shot-for-shot with different styles of animation. The styles are incredibly varied: parts are simply still images, sometimes it's a comic book-style series of cels, while at other times it takes on an anime quality. One artist takes the real footage from the film and animates over it to generate an eerie reality that blurs the line between realism and otherworldliness. The different mediums at work boggle the mind; whether it's claymation, pencil sketches, Flash cartoons, or sock puppets, this project has something to evoke just about anyone's personal aesthetic. It's amazing what the creators do here to make you think of the movie in a whole new way. The different animators break from the stark reality of the original to steep the entire world in a haunting, eerie mood that was not there before. My favorite style, personally, is when they use the real life baby dolls to simulate some of the action scenes! It doesn't fit well with the other styles to create that perfect sense of dread and the unknown, but it's just too funny to leave out!



[Night of the Living Dead](#)

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*Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* is definitely a success in my book. The unsettling black-and-white animation combined with the oddly displaced archive voices of the original actors creates a mesmerizing experimental film that goes beyond the norm and pulls off something that few people have. The various styles of animation work fluidly together to pay homage as well as to press the boundaries of the original zombie survival template. My only complaint would be that the ending is the most clinical part of the film, when I thought it should be a bit more erratic in style. In those desperate moments before daybreak, *Reanimated* doesn't hit any crescendo notes that the original did not already sound, making the last few scenes almost redundant if you've already seen *NOTLD*. That caveat, compounded with this film's lack of utter weirdness, knocks *Reanimated* out of contention for a spot on the List, although it must be considered one of the more impressive movies released in 2010.

If you're a fan of the original, or just a lover of experimental animation, *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated* has something for you. It's a very strong feature that builds upon Romero's work with a love and a care that is both heartfelt and reverent. Despite its lack of general weirdness, it is still one of the better films in a year devoid of cinematic life, and a must-have for any fans of the zombie sub-genre.

### **WHAT THE CRITICS SAY:**

[“...an ideal midnight movie for film geeks who don't mind the animators occasionally taking some liberties or tweaking the material.”](#)—Rob Gonslaves, [efilmcritic.com \(contemporaneous\)](#)

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By [Eric Young](#) – August 20, 2010

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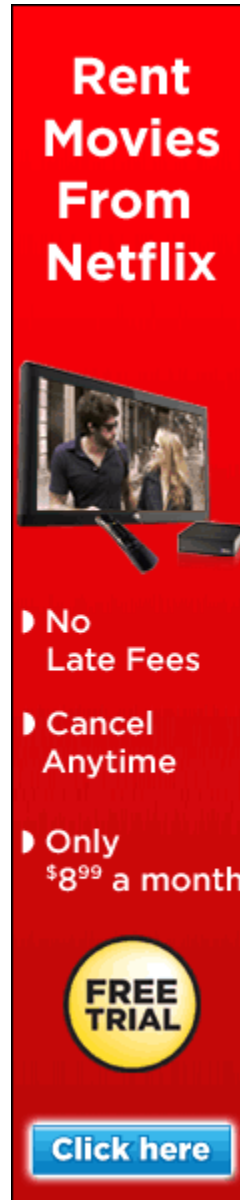
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