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Night of the Tentacles

REVIEWED BY: Kami Posted on 15/05/2013



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Our story starts with Dave (Brandon Salkil) a lonely artist living in an apartment block he rarely leaves whose life seems to revolve around walking his dog, listening to his next apartment neighbours have sex and beating off to the sounds of his downstairs neighbour Esther jilling off. It all changes though when Dave has a heart attack while jacking off on his floor listening to Esther. He survives the heart attack but knows now that life is precarious so when the Devil shows up to offer him a new heart, well of course he takes the chance and signs on the dotted line. His new heart lives in a box and needs to be "cared for." Dave soon finds out what that means - his heart needs food, live food and that's where his neighbours come into the picture. Soon enough we get blood, spew, tentacles going in and out of orifices and Salkil channeling Jim Carrey even better than Carrey himself can do it these days. There's also the burgeoning romance between Dave and Esther and some great dialogue 'tween Dave and Belial who keeps checking in to remind Dave of his obligations.

With a serious nod to Frank Henenloter's *Brain Damage*, *The Fly* (the Devil is very insect like, nothing like the suave chap we are used to and much better for it), *Little Shop of Horrors* (the heart's first words are "feed me"), HP Lovecraft (the tentacled monster in the box) and Roger Corman plus a witty erudite monster that when it is finally revealed is a pastiche of all those cheap low budget 50s monsters you used to laugh at, it's obvious that director, writer, actor, producer, tea lady Dustin Mills loves and respects the genre he's working in.

The dialogue between characters, especially the Devil and Dave, is great, the acting is actually good, hell Salkil is perfect, the claustrophobic feel, the angles and the clever use of colour (blues, reds, greens) all help to create a movie that works despite its limitations, hell because of them really. But the cleverest thing Mills has done is make you actually care for Dave. It's a nice change from the mentality of just having victims thrown up for the killer to destroy. That's the strength of this film, the fact that Mills has developed his hero, his heroine, he hasn't just gone "cookie cutter victims, masked killer with lots of inventive kills" - he's developed a storyline, he's given us people we care about, he's been creative in his dialogue, he's seen where his strengths and weaknesses are and used them instead of trying to hide them. Sure the monster is a strange looking no budget garden hose with teeth and googly eyes... what else could he do with the budget he had? Instead he's embraced it, he's built up the story, the characters, the claustrophobic feel of being trapped in a one bedroom apartment in a shitty part of town, Dave's loneliness and helplessness and made you believe in him and hope that he does get the girl and conquer the monster.

The lack of money doesn't matter in the end because they've managed to make a film that sucks you into the story that you want to see right through. Not just for the low budget gore or the naked women but because you actually want to see how Dave copes, you want to see if Esther will survive. This is what I love about low budget movies. Dustin Mills has taken the limitations of low budget (hell no budget) film making and turned them into a plus. His use of space, colour and angles give this film a beautiful feel and style and along with a sterling performance from Brandon Salkil he's come up with a movie that stands out amongst the pack. It is movies like this that make me go, "Fuck yeah!!! This is why I'm still a fan."

DISC DETAILS:

DIRECTOR(S): Dustin Mills | COUNTRY: USA | YEAR 2012 | DISTRIBUTOR(S): MVD Visual | RUNNING TIME: 90 minutes | ASPECT RATIO: 1:33:1 | REGION: 0 / NTSC | DISCS: 1

EXTRAS:

- Director Commentary
- Trailers - Puppet Monster Massacre, Zombie A-Hole

RECOMMENDED VIEWING:

- [Brain Damage](#)
- [Zombie A-Hole](#)

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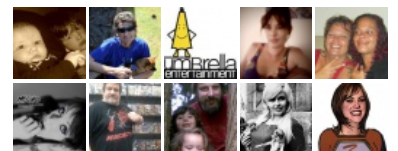
Release date has been set for The ABCs of Death. Blu-ray and DVD released July 17th
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