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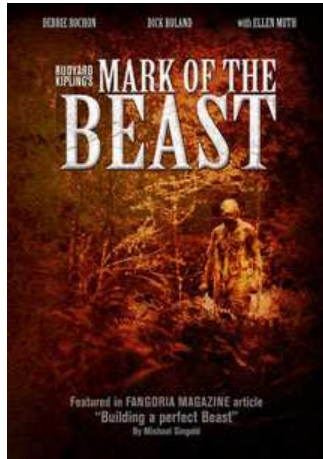
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# Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast (2012) DVD Review: It'll Make a Nice Coaster

Posted on Sunday, November 4, 2012, by [Mark Buckingham](#)

There are two kinds of good horror movies. The first is the one that offers genuine scares, relying on excellent use of pacing, cinematography, soundtrack, and acting to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. The other kind is so comically bad, it never takes itself seriously and the audience laughs along with it. The movie can mock established themes, play up to embellished cliches, or pride itself on having zero budget for special effects. *Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast* manages to be neither of these. It tries desperately hard to be a serious horror film, but lacks the chops in front of and behind the camera to make any part of it tolerable to watch.

A group of people get together at a lodge in the woods for a New Year's celebration, and after having several drinks too many, the character Fleete (Phil Hall) is too drunk (even the next day) to walk himself home. Debbie (Debbie Rochon) and Strickland (Dick Boland) try to carry him through the woods, and part-way through, he spots a religious altar with a statue of some monkey-god, and decides to stub out a cigar on its face. He's almost instantly attacked by a leper who appears to rub against him for a moment, then get tossed away. The next morning, Fleete starts to develop symptoms of who knows what. A half-hearted attempt is made to seek help, but...you know what? No. I'm not doing this.



This movie is terrible. Every one of its 72 minutes is worse than the one that came before it. The music is blaring and constant, literally constant -- it never stops playing through the entire film. This detracts from any sense of build-up or tension or sort of contrast from one scene to the next. The camera color filters are meant to demonstrate a shift in tone between the interior shots and the exterior, but they bring nothing to the movie beyond making it difficult to look at. The intro and ending credits are exactly the same, just played in slightly different order. Nothing ever happens to get excited about, and the acting is so cheesy and ham-fisted and inconsistent that you don't know which to hope for more -- that the entire cast will die, or that you will so you won't have to watch any more of it.

I recently attended a Rifftrax live event featuring the modern homage to Hitchcock's *The Birds* called *Birdemic*, and I thought that was the worst movie I'd ever seen, made slightly bearable by the Rifftrax commentary. *Mark of the Beast*, at least made the movie bearable. *Beast* would need similar help to begin approaching watchable status.

So anyway, Fleete gets sick, and with absolutely no expertise or higher brain functions apparent, Strickland and Debbie arrive at the ingenious conclusion that he must need to be exorcised to remove whatever demon has possessed him. After about five minutes of reading some random passage from the Bible to make it seem like someone here has any idea what they're doing, another five minutes of preparation, then about five minutes of actual effort to drive out the evil, Debbie interrupts everything to declare that "this shit

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isn't working." No kidding, Debbie.

They instead decide that if they can go back out into the woods and capture the leper, they might be able to coerce said leper into lifting this curse. Again, none of these people are scholars nor have any idea what the hell they're doing or saying, but sure, why not. The next chunk of the story involves capturing the leper in the lamest of fight scenes, carrying him back to the cabin, tying him to a chair, then faking furious anger toward him as they repeatedly burn him with lit gunpowder and hot irons, with no actual idea whether any of this nonsensical plot they've devised has any merit. I suspect the leper gives in to the remarkably lame special effects and shitty acting, and offers to lift the curse (or whatever) just so he can leave the house already and not spend another minute with these idiots. So he does.

Everybody's good, happy ending, yay! Then just as things are about to ride off into the sunset, a character we haven't seen since about halfway through the movie reappears and shoots Fleete dead, thinking he's still infected. Guess nobody else heard any of what happened earlier, nor did anyone think to mention that the problem had been resolved. They decide to cover up the whole mess, lie, lie, and lie some more (Fleete had a relapse, shot in self-defense, etc.), roll credits.

If any part of that sounded good, be sure that it isn't. The best thing about it is that it really is only 72 minutes long, so the suffering on the part of the viewer is short-lived. The montage where they rearrange furniture and then suddenly take pity on the leper they just got done torturing almost to death is a highlight, to be sure. There are trailers and a behind-the-scenes reel, as well as a director's commentary track, but I can't fathom why you'd want to subject yourself to any more of this.

I should have known when I could barely find the menu on the title screen amidst all the quotes smeared all over it proclaiming how great the movie was according to *Film Threat Magazine* and "Dave's Horror Reviews Online." Avoid it at all costs.

Tags: [horror](#) [rudyard kipling](#)

## BY MARK BUCKINGHAM



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Bring me your women.

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