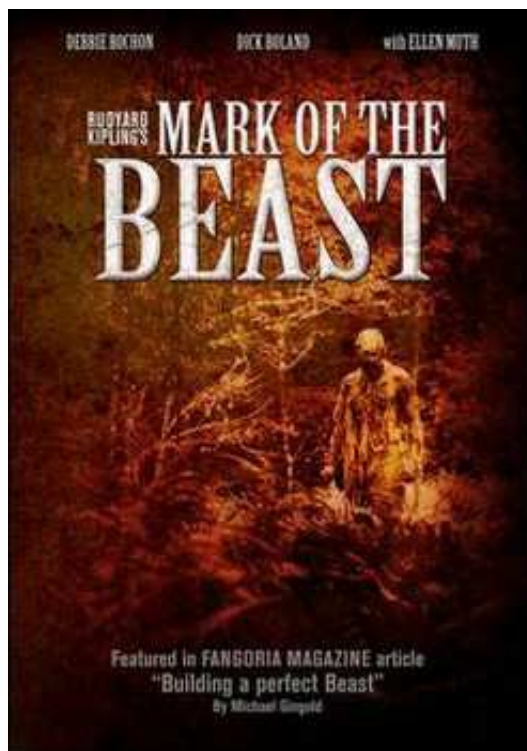


Review: Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast (2012)

MARK OF THE BEAST | NOVEMBER 4, 2012 | BY: BILL CASSINELLI |



Poster

Credits: 2012 Bloodbath Pictures

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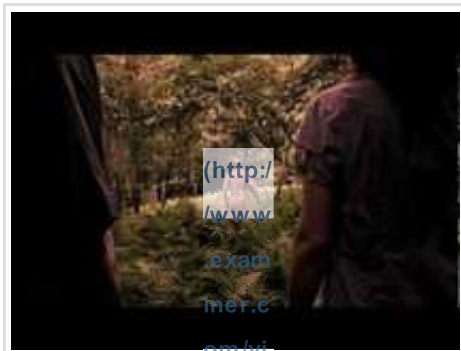
RATING FOR RUDYARD KIPLING'S MARK OF THE BEAST



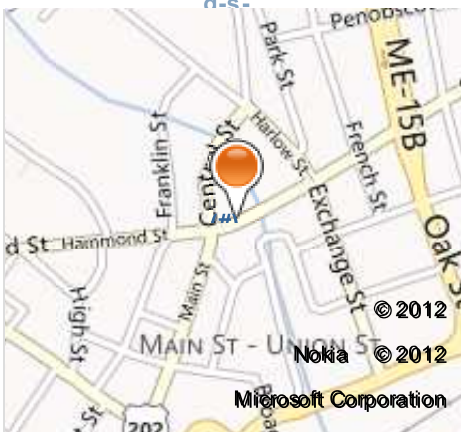
When most of us think of Rudyard [Kipling](http://www.examiner.com/topic/kipling/articles) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/kipling/articles>), we automatically think of *The Jungle Book* and *Captains Courageous*, but did you know that he had written a gruesome little short story involving demonic [possession](http://www.examiner.com/topic/possession) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/possession>), pagan monkey gods, and torture?

Directors Jonathan Gorman and Tom Seymour did, and they have succeeded in bringing to life a wonderful modernization of the story, complete with gorgeous scenery, excellent special effects, and stellar acting chops by scream queen goddess Debbie Rochon and *Dead Like Me*'s Ellen Muth.

Shot in Connecticut, [Mark of the Beast](http://www.examiner.com/topic/mark-of-the-beast/articles) (<http://www.examiner.com/topic/mark-of-the-beast/articles>) tells the story of a group of friends who get together for a New Year's Eve party held by Strickland (Dick Boland), when guest Fleete (Phil Hall) gets very drunk and desecrates the shrine of a cult of monkey worshippers who live in the nearby wood. This pisses off one of the cultists, a silver-hued leper, who attacks the man. The next thing you know, Fleete has an appetite for raw meat and a peculiar set of growths on his chest. It is up to Strickland, Debbie (Rochon), Natalie (Muth), Sheri (Sheri Lynn, who also adapted the story with Gorman), and Maggie (Margaret Champagne) to try and help their afflicted friend, no matter what the cost. And what a cost it is.



Video: [Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast trailer](http://www.examiner.com/video/rudyard-kipling-s-mark-of-the-beast-trailer) (<http://www.examiner.com/video/rudyard-kipling-s-mark-of-the-beast-trailer>)



Location: Bangor, Maine

The acting in this one is top notch. Rochon and Muth cannot help but be great. Sheri Lynn, whom I'd only ever seen before on The Sci Fi Channel's *Ghost Hunters*, is superb in the role of Strickland's wife. Dick Boland, who plays Strickland, is a lot of fun to watch, and he has a certain look to him where you cannot take your eyes off him; I'd love to see him in a role of a scientist in a '50s alien invasion flick. Phil Hall plays Fleete with so much energy, it's not hard to think that the actor is really a jerk in real life. A few times, I wondered why Debbie's character would even associate with an asshole like him. Great job, Mr. Hall!

The cinematography is very good, as they do not fall for the old independent film habit of leaving the camera on a tripod and not moving it, but this film is actually guilty of the opposite: of the very few gripes I have about the film, the camera moves too much. There is one scene that does not justify why the camera would move around in a handheld shot, as opposed to the nice, smooth dolly and steady scenes there are in the rest of the film. Still, it is a small gripe, and the scenes look great.

Another gripe is that some of the actors are under-used. Muth, for example: she brings such a good job to the table, and there's even a scene which shows that her character has a thing for Strickland, but it is never brought up again. I feel that they could have used her for a bigger role with an interesting

side-plot, but I understand that the original story didn't even have these characters, and were added in for flavor. Still, I feel that the movie was way too short, and could have benefited by adding more scenes of her and Champagne.

The special effects are very, very good. The leper makeup was top notch, leaving me wondering how the actor could even see out of what they did to him. The torture scenes were brutal and gooey, and I, the jaded horror fan, flinched more than a few times.

The writing is incredible. As someone who has read the original story, I can tell you that there are lines of dialogue lifted directly from the story, and I found myself mouthing them as they were spoken. Great job, Messrs. Gordon and Lynn; it did not go unnoticed.

The disc comes complete with four trailers, a making of documentary, and a director's commentary,

which more than makes up for the film's meager 72 minute run time. You can buy it directly from MVD Entertainment Group for a bargain at under ten dollars here:

<http://mvdb2b.com/s/MarkOfTheBeast/MVD5549D>

<http://mvdb2b.com/s/MarkOfTheBeast/MVD5549D>

I give this film 4 out of 5 stars.



Bill Cassinelli, Bangor Horror Movie Examiner

Bill has been a horror movie fan since the age of 3, when his mother took him to the movies to see "The Exorcist." Since then, he has written, done special effects makeup, and has acted in several feature films. He lives in Bangor, Maine, and can be contacted at Bill.cassinelli@gmail.com.