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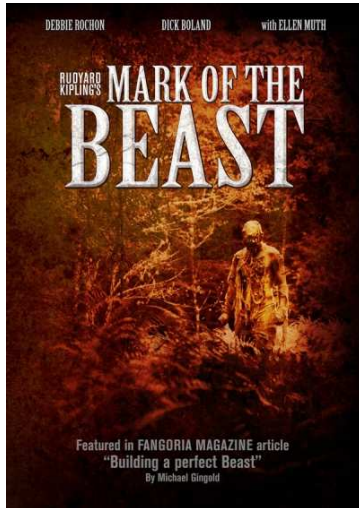
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"Mark of the Beast" Makes A Mark Review

by Anders Nelson

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Despite its obviously limited budget and resources, there's something about *Mark of the Beast* that remains difficult to dismiss. Taken from Rudyard Kipling's tale of colonial India, the story has been reimagined to take place in what appears to be the woods near the filmmaker's home, which barely looks as if it has squirrels, let alone the 'monkey Gods' the dialogue frequently refers to. Under most circumstances, this would register a sideways glance faster than horror, but to its credit, *Mark* commits to this set-up, and even if it never produces the aura it really wants, it's oddly compelling.

The mechanics of *Mark* are remarkably similar to those of a 'werewolf' story: group of friends go out on a holiday in the wilderness, one of them comes into contact with a bizarre creature, then begins to exhibit bizarre, feral behavior. In this case, the creature is a 'silver leper', whom they encounter at a shrine constructed by the 'natives'. The situation is as perplexing to our heroes here as they were to the

imperialists back in the 19th century, so they find themselves fighting it the only way that they know how: hunting down the silver leper.

Though the setting has obviously changed, much of the language of Kipling's original work has remained, intoned in an appropriately dramatic voice-over. The pine trees, however, are a dead giveaway that this was shot in North America (factor in the accents of the lead actors, and it's case closed). The disconnect, at first, is jarring, but given time, *Mark* sticks with, giving off an air that's more Lynchian nightmare than classic horror story. This is helped immeasurably by the excellent makeup design for the silver leper, which helps to compensate for shortcomings in the acting and direction. It may intrigue more than terrify, but *Mark of the Beast* is an appealing homage to modern horror's roots.

SPECIAL FEATURES

There is a documentary "Making The Beast", as well as a director's commentary and some trailers.

"Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast" is on sale October 23, 2012 and is not rated. Musical. Directed by Jonathan Gorman, Thomas Edward Seymour. Written by Sheri Lynn, Thomas Edward Seymour. Starring Ellen Muth, Thomas Edward Seymour, Debbie Rochon, Margaret Rose Champagne, Sheri Lynn.

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