

Shattered Ravings

Excursions into Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Horror...and everything in between...

Movie Review – Rudyard Kipling’s Mark of the Beast (2012)

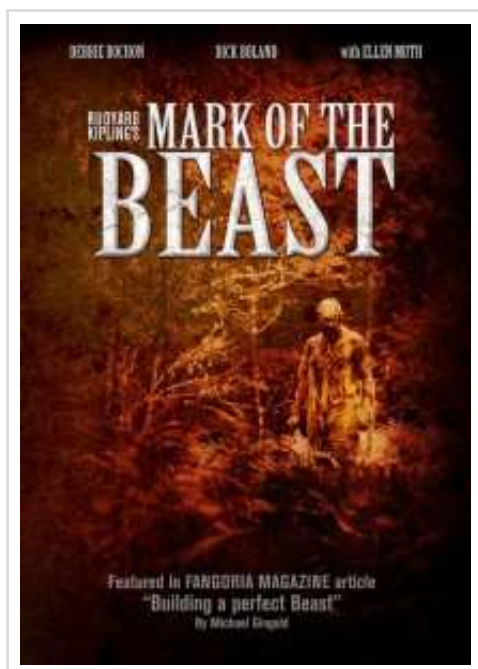
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[Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast](#)

Directed by [Jonathan Gorman](#) & [Thomas Edward Seymour](#)

Courtesy of Blood Bath Pictures & [MVD](#)

Release Date: October 23, 2012



When I was about halfway through MARK OF THE BEAST, I paused the movie for a moment to reflect; I was having a hard time deciding whether or not the filmmakers were trying to make a serious horror movie or a spoof. Yes, as much as it chagrins me to say, this film is simply not very good. I had high expectations, too, because I'm actually a fan of Kipling's works; and although the film follows the story very well, the execution is unfortunately lacking.

If you are not familiar with MARK OF THE BEAST, here is the plot synopsis courtesy of the MVD press release:

For the first time ever the famous horror story by Rudyard Kipling comes to the big screen. Starring Ellen Muth and New York independent film legend Debbie Rochon, it is the tale of two heroes who lose their way fighting off a silver, faceless leper in the woods. The film has strong female roles. This moral tale shows the repercussions for the use of torture and has deep political and religious themes all bundled into a horror film that runs a festival-friendly 72 action-packed minutes.

First off, I'll start by mentioning the good. The film has an amazing score that accents it perfectly. It is haunting and melodious at the same time, which in turn sets an ethereal mood, a perfect backdrop in which to tell this story.

Also, the adaptation of the original short story is almost perfect. The filmmakers definitely did their homework and studied the source material in-depth before they wrote the script. This is, however, a good thing *and* a bad thing. It is impressive because they didn't take too many liberties with the original story; but because they followed it so much, it doesn't really work in a real-world setting.

Let me explain that last comment: part of the allure of Kipling's short story is that it was written in a time period when people didn't know much about foreign lands and the people inhabiting them. As a result, stories written in faraway lands like India had an air of mysticism about them. Such can be said for the story of the MARK OF THE BEAST. But trying to instill that air in modern day tales is more difficult. In this aspect, the film simply does not work for me; the air in this film is non-existent. It feels like a group of people went into the woods behind my house and shot this film.

I think it is this lacking feeling that overshadows the whole film. There is no tension nor threat in the air, and the lack of suspense is what hurts it to the core. Additionally, the acting is pretty bad, which completely omits the allowance of immersion into the film. The result is a lackluster film that becomes a test of endurance rather than a period of enjoyment.

MARK OF THE BEAST has its heart in the right place, but the final product is far from entertaining. Still, I have to commend the filmmakers for their ability to transfer a story from the page to the screen. This is not only difficult to do, it is rare to see in Hollywood. Unfortunately, this unique ability is not enough to save this film from itself. I would give this one a pass.

MSB

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