



Mark of the Beast

Rudyard Kipling's Mark of the Beast

USA 2012

produced by

Sheri Lynn, Chi La Bossiere Kulig (executive), Tim Kulig (executive) for Blood Bath Pictures

directed by Jonathan Gorman, Thomas Edward Seymour

starring Debbie Rochon, Dick Boland, Phil Hall, Sheri Lynn, Ellen Muth, Margaret Rose Champagne, Thomas Edward Seymour, Matt Ford, Mark Bovino, Isaiah Entsua Mensah

screenplay by Sheri Lynn, Thomas Edward Seymour, based on the story by Rudyard Kipling, music by Olen Gabriel

Fleete (Phil Hall) is, let's face it, an idiot - so when he after a party at some cabin in the woods desecrates some altar of a mysterious cult and is suddenly attacked and injured by a silver leper, even his friends think he's only gotten what was coming to him. But then Fleete starts behaving weirdly, as if he was somehow possessed - a situation that comes to a head when he attacks and wounds one of the other party guests. All the guests are soon evacuated while host Strickland (Dick Boland), his wife Sheri (Sheri Lynn) and their best friend Debbie (Debbie Rochon) stay behind with Fleete - now all tied up - and try to figure out what to do. Always knowing that the silver leper is still out there and might attack again.

Debbie and Strickland soon come to the conclusion that Fleete wasn't infected by the leper but cursed, and thus they try to perform an exorcism on him - that shows muted effect, but doesn't actually work, because, heck, they are no exorcists and hardly know any appropriate rites. Ultimately, the two come to the conclusion they have to capture the leper and force him to lift the curse.

But will they catch the leper? And how will they force/torture him to cooperate? And what marks will it leave on their conscience? And will there be a happy ending for Fleete?

Based on a short story by Rudyard Kipling (and the story's age deliberately shows time and again in the movie) - with the plot transplanted from India to rural USA though -, Mark of the Beast is a truly enjoyable old-fashioned horror/monster movie, that, not only for budgetary reasons, limits itself to only a few locations and a handful of characters, and puts its emphasis on atmosphere and suspense rather than sudden shocks and excessive violence (though there's plenty of both in the finale). Add to this some really interesting characters and a solid ensemble cast, and you've got yourself something ... pretty good, actually.

Recommended.

review © by Mike Haberfelner

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