

until it's nearly over and we finally get to see the interior of the alien ship. But even that's an uneven display of nightmarish trauma reminiscent of the examination scene in *Fire in the Sky*, but set against an unfortunate anal probe sequence that's more laughable than frightening.

Though the final scene does have a good twist, it's far too little too late to make up for the first 100 minutes that abduct the viewers' time.

I don't know exactly where these guys went wrong – they appear to be competent directors with a firm grasp of the English language and the ability to edit good special effects into their narrative. If I had to guess, I'd say this is just another tired trope that didn't need to be resuscitated again – as this proved to be nothing more than a close encounter of the worst kind!

LAST CHANCE LANCE

THE PIG-MEN COMETH

THE BLOOD LANDS

Starring Pollyanna McIntosh, Lee Williams and Joanne Mitchell
Directed by Simeon Halligan
Written by Ian Fenton
Magnet

It's really hard to fuck up a home invasion movie – the concept of people invading our private spaces to harm us is so inherently terrifying. Yet *The Blood Lands* manages to squander that concept with a lack of tension and toothless scares.

The film begins with an eye-rolling “based on actual events” clause before opening on Sarah and Ed (McIntosh and Williams), a married couple leaving their busy lives in London behind for a secluded country home in Scotland. Ed, being a city boy, isn't warm to the idea of the vast countryside, but Sarah is absolutely infatuated with it, which convinces him.

Then, one night, they are attacked by men in pig masks. They kidnap Ed, and Sarah must find a way to escape before she too becomes captured.

Where do I even begin? The characters? The ending? How about the pacing, which is horrible; it takes

almost half the film's running time before the assailants show up – and when they finally do arrive, there's virtually no tension.

A major part of the problem is that the victims are not worth rooting for. Ed's a patriarchal douche and Sarah's a wimp who constantly whines to her husband to check on strange noises, or wakes him up to fetch candles from downstairs. She's redeemed somewhat when forced to fight back against the bad guys, but the previous 40 minutes of her insufferable personality makes it damn difficult to care.

I won't spoil the ending, but to say it's ridiculous is an understatement. I'm sure it derives from the film being a “true story” but it makes everything that came before meaningless, pointless and just nonsensical. Whatever you do, don't let *The Blood Lands* invade your movie library.

BRETT MCNEILL



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

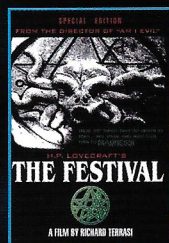
THIS ISSUE: LANCE LOVES HIS CRAFT

NOT-SO-GREAT OLD ONES

THE FESTIVAL

Dark Vision Films

H.P. Lovecraft may be nothing more than a lantern-jawed freak to some people, but to others he's one of the most important horror writers of the early 20th century. Adapted from a short story that first appeared in a 1925 issue of *Weird Tales*, *The Festival* follows a guy who visits his wife's seaside hometown to help out with their annual festival, only to discover that he's there as a sacrifice meant to appease the Elder Gods. It's a cool premise that suffers from wooden acting, brutal editing and extremely sparse dialogue that at times appears to have been inserted only as an afterthought. This was one of the first Lovecraft tales to mention the *Necronomicon*, but not even that dreaded tome could resurrect this sucker.



BODY COUNT: 5

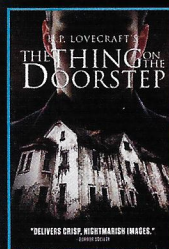
BEST DEATH: Guy killed with a toilet plunger

SHIFTY BEHAVIOUR

THE THING ON THE DOORSTEP

MVD Visual

What should you do when your bestie falls in love with a woman devoted to the black arts? Well, you could either warn him or enjoy the show as they tear each other to pieces. That's the quandary facing the main character in *The Thing on the Doorstep* when he discovers his friend's new wife has been shifting into his body so she can go for joyrides in his meatsuit. Shot almost entirely in soft focus with a greenish yellow tint reminiscent of bile, it's as boring as it is dismal. Despite the great title, it's based on a 1933 Lovecraft novel that's generally regarded as one of the author's weakest works. I'm sure even old Howard Phillips



would have been disappointed in this one.

BODY COUNT: 5

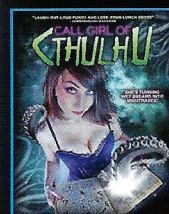
BEST DEATH: Woman drowns in her car

LOVE IS A MANY-TENTACLED THING

CALL GIRL OF CTHULHU

Camp Motion Pictures

Carter is a struggling artist who falls in love with a hooker. If that wasn't bad enough, she also happens to be the chosen mate for the ancient God Cthulhu, who's being summoned from another dimension by a group of cultists so she can bear him a child. Undaunted, Carter takes on the cultists in order to stop their tentacled deity from getting his slimy rocks off with the love of Carter's life. Loosely based on a short story from 1928, this cool flick is witty and packed with the gills with campy effects and lots of good, gory kills. Just remember to run the next time you're having sex with your girlfriend and she starts to chant *Ph'nghlui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'l'yeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!*



BODY COUNT: 34

BEST DEATH: Prostitute killed with a dildo and electric fan

LAST CHANCE LANCE