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Dracula Vs. Frankenstein (1970) + Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter (1966) + She Freak (1967/Cheezy Flicks DVDs)

Picture: C-/C-/C Sound: C- Extras: C- Films: D/D/C



Sometimes you have to look at a group of obscure films in a genre to show where the genre was at a certain time or place. Take the Horror genre for example. Its last great golden period started in 1960 with Hitchcock's **Psycho** and Powell's **Peeping Tom** as The Hammer Studios kicked into high gear. By the end of the decade, hundreds of independent productions were being made, all with interesting results. To show this, we look at two of the worst Horror films ever made and one that was intelligently ambitious.

Al Adamson's **Dracula Vs. Frankenstein** (1970) is not only considered one of the worst films with either character, but one of the worst films ever made, Lon Chaney Jr. does what is his final film with B-movie survivor J. Carroll Naish and Anthony Eisley, but it is a flat bore. In addition, The Monster looks like they too a Gummy Bear face and squished it for an hour, while our vampire count seems like a Frank Zappa fan with a bad accent who nobody told the party was over to. That it got made goes to show how much affection both characters had at this point. Too bad this film did not know what to do with them.

William Beaudine turns out a howler about as bad with **Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter** (1966) showing the worst possible way to mix Horror and Westerns. In this one, James (John Lupton) escapes capture from yet another successful robbery, but instead of taking up with a friendly home, forcing himself into a moral one or finding a secret, private, empty space, he finds the castle of Dr. Frankenstein's surviving sibling. From there, it gets worse, believe it or not, but at least The Monster here is more convincing by default than the last outing. The Western would be dead in ten years.

Byron Mabe's **She Freak** (1967) wants to be the MGM classic **Freaks** crossed with a **Twilight Zone** episode as a small town waitress becomes interested in a circus that comes to town, but little does she know it will change her life forever. The film has loose acting, a free-style narrative and some interesting moments. I also liked the look of the film, but its twist ending does not have the payoff it could have, yet I found this somewhat atmospheric and at least ambitious. In addition, it tries to be intelligent in smart, cinematic ways, so it deserves to be thought of as more than just another silly genre work.

The full color 1.33 X 1 filmed image in all three cases is from rough transfers and prints, but it is hard to tell if some of the copies are the full

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frame shot or prints with the sides cut off. **Freak** has the best color easily. The PCM 2.0 16/48 Mono in all cases is rough and even brittle, as is typical for these old transfers and films, plus you can hear the limits of the low-budget recording. Extras in all cases include previews for other Cheezy Flicks releases and classic Intermission shorts, while **Dracula** adds its original trailer.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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