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DVD review

I'm not sure I've ever seen a horror film where so little actually happens. The bulk of this film is almost a day-in-the-life faux doc about the world of carnivals with all the personality of a travelogue. Overlaid with pseudojazz, only-in-the-60s scoring, the footage meanders through various mundane fun-at-the-carnival activities.

There is a plot - of sorts - at work here, but it doesn't get much more screen time than the ho-hum day-at-the-fair footage. A selfish working class girl with ambitions to better herself by whatever means necessary (in this case, landing a man with some money) leaves her job at a diner (owned by an asshole proprietor) for work at a carnival, where she ends up in another shitty food service job, this time as the waitress for a diner on wheels food stand at the carnival.

While there, she befriends an exotic dancer (who gives us a disappointing "strip tease" during a segment showing off her act), draws the attention of a violent, hot-tempered carny and turns her attention on the owner of the freak show (her targeted man with money).

The few potboiling points of interest that pop up infrequently among the mundane carnival footage include: the carny's screwdriver attack on a fellow drunk carny, which results in a minor bit of 60s gore - screwdriver through a fake hand; a show-nothing sexual interlude between waitress and carny; the waitress' successful courting of the freak show owner; her infidelity to the freak show owner (the carny again); the carny's murder of the freak show owner; the subsequent inheritance of the freak show by the waitress-turned-show-owner; and - during the only really effective sequence in the film - a revenge against the bitch by the freaks themselves in a climax that totally rips off Tod Browning's much higher quality classic "Freaks."

However, the denouement of the film does offer a nice drive-in shock reveal following the admittedly creepy stalking of the bitch by the freaks.

This is a strange film and if you have a book to read during the copious pointlessness throughout the film, I can't say it's not worth a look-see for drive-in/grindhouse aficionados.



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Upchuck Undergrind listens to a little bit of a lot of things - just note the eclecticism of his reviews. He also reads voraciously and loves movies. He is a very open-minded Episcopalian (and student of Buddhism and Hinduism) who thinks Slayer is one of the greatest metal bands. Ever. In addition to his work with Corazine - for which he has written since its inception (he is a Fishcomcollective veteran) - he also writes for DJFix.com.

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