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[The Reincarnation of Isabel](#)

- [DVD review](#)

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- [Mark of the Astro-Zombies](#)
- [Cauldron: Baptism in Blood](#)
- [Embalmer](#)
- [Female Slaves Revenge](#)
- [Dimensions in Fear](#)
- [Dr. Jekyll's Dungeon of Death](#)
- [The Doll Squad](#)
- [Drive-in Massacre](#)
- [Blood Thirst](#)
- [Eerie Midnight Horror Show](#)

DVD review



If this movie made any sense it probably wouldn't be half as much fun. And fun it is, and for a variety of reasons. And variety is a good word to toss into the mix discussing this all-over-the-map bit of 70s Eurotica horror. I wouldn't have been surprised to see an actual kitchen sink come floating across the screen at some point, since *The Reincarnation of Isabel* has everything else.

Is it a vampire movie? A witch movie? A reincarnation flick? A Satanist movie? Art film? Exploitation? Pretty much all of the above. I don't know if they just couldn't decide what monster they wanted this to be about or if they were deliberately trying for genre-bending or what, but I'll give them this, the trippy mishmash of WTF comes together in pretty mesmerizing fashion.

This psychedelic bloodsucking Goth-erotica tale of black magic and reincarnation (how's that for a one phrase description of a nigh indescribably film?) brings us into the mind-fuck coalescing of repercussions from a witch burning/impaling. Some new folks 500 years later buy a castle somewhere in Europe and I'm guessing by heavy hints from the movie and the use of some of the same actors for scenes 500 years ago as well as in the present that a bunch of the people that end up in this castle are all tied to the witch murder centuries ago. Was she really a witch? Or was she murdered for no good reason? Is this revenge unfolding for the reincarnations of those involved? Or is it the curse of the castle? Both? Who the fuck knows. The film lobs a half-assed explanation toward you at the end but at that point, you've either enjoyed the surreal ride or it doesn't matter. The explanation doesn't tie a whole helluva lot together, though it does put a loose slipnot to the threads of the film's general themes (which are way more easy for the viewer to delineate than the "plot," since story was much further down the list of importance for the filmmakers than style).

But sometimes style over substance works, and this is one of those cases. Needless to say, I was one of those who enjoyed the ride. Gobs of deliriously engaging sequences flow acid-like from one to the next. Isabel apparent reincarnation trapped between metal grills, one of which has knives and begins to close in on her. A witch about to be burned at the stake being pierced through the heart. Cultists removing a girl's heart while the old, hole-in-the-chest Isabel is chained to a wall awaiting reincarnation. Random assaults by vampires. Lesbianism. Plenty of flesh. Lots of blinking colors. Furious back-and-forth editing to punctuate climactic moments in the film. Flashbacks. An out-of-left-field seduction of a goofy-ass bitch by another woman and a man with a facial tick. (This scene stylistically really kind of stands out because it lunges at you from the midst of more horror-themed sequences and has a score bouncing with frivolity that sets it apart from the rest of the atmospheric music, which veers from gothic booga-booga to psychedelic rock.)

The Reincarnation of Isabel is a contrary fusion of would-you-like-to-run-that-by-me-again wackiness that is artful, exploitative, erotic, beautiful, shameless and just plain over the top. It's like your third eye got mondo discombobulated and watched a horror movie that's half-gothic, half freak-out but all woolly weirdness.

A terrific and hypnotic journey into a terror-themed dream state.



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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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