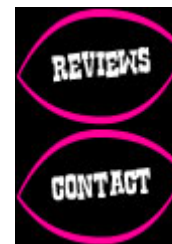


the B-Movie Buffet



The Witch

[[Sinema Diable/Eclectic](#)
[DVD](#)]

1966; b&w

Directed by Damiano
Damiani

Starring: Rosanna Schiffino,
Richard Johnson, Sarah
Ferrati & Ivan Rassimov

The Witch is a curious slice of mid-'60s Italian cinema that straddles the line between psychological thriller and modern gothic horror tale. Clocking in at a ridiculously long hour and fifty minutes—from which a good half hour could have been excised had it been paced a bit better—the film is often confusing but, almost unbelievably, has a reasonably rewarding payoff at the end. The central figure is Sergio, a cad of sorts, who stays with whichever woman he happens to be romancing at the time. Although he always has another girl, or two, on the ready in case the need for a quick change of scenery arises. And a quick change is just what Sergio wants when his girlfriend starts pestering him about getting married. As soon as she's off to work, he's outta there with his luggage in his car. As all this is going on, we learn that an older woman has been following Sergio for about a month. That or she just coincidentally shows up wherever he goes. As he's chatting up the girl whose home is about to become his new address, he sees the woman again and decides to follow her. He just misses her at a newsstand but learns from the vendor about an ad she'd placed in the paper. Upon reading the ad he immediately goes to the woman's house because the ad describes him to a T. They meet, and as he's learning about the job (cataloging the erotic manuscript / journals of her late husband) the woman, Consuelo, drinks something and collapses. As she's coming to on a couch, a young and beautiful woman appears. Identifying herself as Aura, Consuelo's daughter, she explains that she thinks her mother is taking drugs. Sergio finds Aura irresistible and, strangely, finds himself unable or too intrigued to leave the house so he takes the job. Sergio soon ends up in bed with Aura, but is as confused by her as he is infatuated with her. Eventually Sergio stumbles into the bathrobe-clad Fabrizio who, apparently, was the last guy hired to catalog the journals and also ended up involved with Aura and never leaving. Aura plays the two against each other and after some time, Fabrizio ends up dead on the railroad tracks courtesy of Sergio—who by now is fully freaking out and starting to figure out what's been going on. A few weeks later, Sergio finds himself in the position of being replaced. However, rather than meeting the same fate as Fabrizio, he turns the tables on Consuelo and Aura, eventually realizing Consuelo is a witch of sorts. And what do you do with witches? Burn 'em! Despite the aforementioned length issue, the fact that the transfer is frequently a bit out of focus and the atrocious dubbing, The Witch is not a bad movie. I wouldn't recommend this to newbies to '60s Euro horror, but for those already acclimated to the genre there's enough here that you'll probably walk away satisfied.

—the Kommandant

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