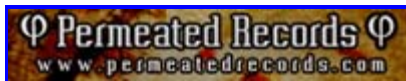


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Articles

witch, the

The Witch is an atmospheric but a slightly vague gothic suspenser from Europe that boasts some staples common to the genre: unexplained events, folks in big, spooky homes that behave strangely, alluring but untrustworthy spooky home dwellers, a protagonist whose strong mind begins to crumble under the pressure of all the weirdness, etc. (I should note that "slightly vague" could read "surreal" depending on how the film strikes the particular viewer, and considering I've enjoyed Jess Franco films with less coherence than this, I will allow for some subjectivity. You don't get into Eurohorror without developing some aesthetic appreciation for vague/surreal story flows. Just don't go into this expecting the most concrete resolution. You'll have to do some theorizing of your own.)

It's not the strongest example of its genre, but The Witch does boast some compelling aspects. I just wish it had been a little less sharp around the edges. The cinematography isn't as distinctive or gripping as you'd expect in top notch gothics and the story doesn't quite have the bite you might prefer, but fans of the style should still get some B-movie fun out of it.

A man decides he's being followed by an old lady and it turns out he is. Circumstances allow him a chance to speak with her in his house; she's run an ad, you see, seeking someone to put her large library of old books in order (it's a library that includes a multi-volume journal written by her late husband, a journal that's more interesting than someone's regular ol' diary). Turns out, the ad was basically aimed at him, as its specifics would turn up few qualified in the area, or some such. At any rate, it was meant to draw his attention; the old lady followed him, learned about him, and decided he's what she wants for the job (which requires him to stay there). At first he thinks she wants him as a lover and he balks, explaining that he really doesn't like 'em older than him.

But she argues otherwise and shows him the library. The library isn't as impressive a set piece as I'd have liked given the fact that it's supposed to be a central part of the creepy old building in this plot. But it's a minor quibble.

In the course of his visit to the house, he meets a young woman, Aura, with whom he becomes

enamored. Two problems: (A) She's one of these gothic characters that flows from hot to frigid from scene to scene, classic gothic neurosis (not to be confused with the annoying goth angst of today's youth, heh heh), and (B) the current librarian is still housed here.

In the course of one day, the man goes from being a self-confident character to one held in the sway of the old woman. He even ends up accidentally killing someone, which puts him even more in her hands. And, of course, there's the allure of the daughter (of whom no one outside the home seems to have heard).

I'll not lay out anymore details at the risk of getting too near spoiler territory. If you like classic gothics, you've hopefully heard enough to decide if you want to hear this. If you don't care for these, there are better to examine if you ever get curious.

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