

Indie Horror Films

All genres of suspense, terror, and horror will be reviewed by Richard Gary. His address to send preview copies supplied upon request to rbf55@msn.com.

Sunday, December 29, 2013

DVD Review: Jug Face

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Images from the Internet



Jug Face

Written and directed by Chad Crawford Kinkle.

81 minutes, 2013

www.jugfacethemovie.com

www.ModernCine.com

www.Werenevco.com

www.modemdistrib.com

www.MVDvisual.com

This film has had quite a number of festival selections, won some awards, and is listed on quite a number of Top 10 lists of the year. I can certainly understand that, as the acting is superb, the direction well handled, the tension palpable and the story is engaging through most of it. But for some reason it left me cold.

In the deep backwoods of Tennessee, there is an ancient creature living in a relatively shallow hole in the ground (called "the pit") that has a few inches of water in it that trades good health in exchange for a sacrifice of its choosing, in a relationship similar to the Morlocks and Eloi. Whoever's face appears on a potter's jug (inspired by the unnamed being), they must have their throat cut and the blood spills down into the hole, satisfying the bloodlust until the next jug face.

We meet Amy (Lauren Ashely Carter, looking younger than her years), who is a teenager in trouble in many ways, including an affair with someone close to her, a friendship with a much older man (the potter, played excellently by Sean Bridges with just the right amount of pathos and innocence), promised to a rotund and boring neighbor nearer to her age, is pregnant (it says it right on the box, so I'm not giving anything away) in a society that demands virginity, and now she had found out she's the next jug face. To make matters worse, if that's possible, she's stolen the jug before anyone sees it, causing death in her wake.

Because the thing in "the pit wants what it wants," the community will do whatever it takes to keep it satisfied, due to its "taking" others until its chosen wants are met. On top of that, those who die by its hand that have not been chosen are cursed to wander the woods for eternity.

This sounds like it could be a hoot, but it fails in my opinion. Why? For many reasons, not all of which I will tell because of giving away too much, but here are some thoughts. The tentacle being, which we only see in extremely quick edits and blurs of motion – to keep the suspense, I'm sure, but

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2014 (10)
- ▼ 2013 (36)
 - ▼ December (3)
 - DVD Review: Jug Face
 - DVD Review: Caesar and Otto's Deadly Xmas
 - DVD Review: Eyes of the Woods
 - ▶ November (2)
 - ▶ October (6)
 - ▶ September (3)
 - ▶ August (3)
 - ▶ July (1)
 - ▶ June (5)
 - ▶ May (3)
 - ▶ April (3)
 - ▶ February (4)
 - ▶ January (3)
- ▶ 2012 (27)

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c'mon – is supposed to be a religion of sorts, perhaps being an analogy of the fanaticism of those who follow Jeebus, in some way. Well, with the exception of what was written and rewritten and transcribed and rewritten and transcribed, religion is based solely on faith that something had happened a long time ago, can happen now, or will happen at a later point. The being in the hole, however, is now and visceral, its effects immediate and destruction by its figurative hands a real consequence. This is not religion, because there is no faith in the unknown. It's desires are made known and you damn well better obey.

Due to this, I wonder why this community is committed to keeping its number small. I mean, the more who live there, the better the odds of survival. If you live in a community of 20 and every couple of years someone has to go, well, I don't like the odds. Why they don't all leave is another question. Is it a matter of "my land, my honor"? Screw that. If there was a creature living on my block that demanded that someone from the block has to be fed to it, well, I'm not staying in that neighborhood, never mind the city. It defies logic to me.

Everyone in the area treats every day like its normal. I'd be shitting bricks wondering if it was me, my partner, or my kids who were next. In a community that small, I would be heartbroken if *anyone* was chosen. These people are poor as dirt, Amy's father sells moonshine to store owner in town to make any money.

Perhaps I'm reading this wrong. Maybe it's not about religion, but politics. I mean, poor people – especially in the deep south, it seems – tend to vote against their own best interests (i.e., Republican) so maybe it makes sense they would stay around, even if it means the possibility of self-harm. That could be why I was so frustrated by the relationships in the film.

There are some decent gore applications, including a dismembered hand here, an unconnected intestine there, and especially some throat slicing, but much of the action is a whirl of motion and editing that leaves much of the actual attacks as wanting, for me.

Lastly, I found the ending to be unsatisfying, and an easy out. I'm not going to say what it is, but surely there could have been a more going against the grain, rather than... well, what it is.

As a side note, I think it's cool that the central character's parents are played by Larry Fessenden and a frumpy looking Sean Young, who also played the parents of the central character in the 2005 film, *Headspace* (reviewed [HERE](#)).

As for the extras, there is an interesting albeit standard "making of" documentary that lasts for 30 minutes so you get to hear the origins and meet the cast / crew, the trailer, and a short written and directed by Kinkle called "Organ Grinder." That was fun, even in its six-minute length.

Pay attention to what I say, or listen to the others, it's all good. I have no ego in this, as it's not my film. Considering that more have liked it than I have, it may be worth your checking it out. Actually, listen to no one and make your own choices, unlike the people in this film.

Posted by **Robert Barry Francos** at 6:01 PM

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