

Features

KISS Loves You (Just Be Careful How Much You Love Them Back)

by [Paul Hanson](#)

I am a KISS fan but I'm embarrassed if you think that the KISS fans in the recently-out-on-DVD film *KISS Loves You* are anything close to normal. The people in this movie are freaks. And stupid. No, they're freakin' stupid.

In this netherworld of over-the-top fandom, if you purchase and then plaster KISS patches on your jacket, you are given a higher status in the world. If you purchase KISS records and get tattoos with the band members' likeness on your body, that gets you points too. Somehow, these acts make these people superior fans of the band. This insane alternate-not-based-in-reality netherworld comes to light in this movie.

The fact that these idiots don't grasp how stupid they are is what makes this movie worth watching. You wonder why they don't get a grip on reality. Bill Baker, a KISS fan and collector, is the worst of them. He is sympathetically set up as being a collector of KISS paraphernalia and a friend of guitarist Ace Frehley.



It's revealed that Baker loaned Frehley money to get him through some apparent hard times. Then, after the reunion of the original four members, Baker throws himself a pity party, lamenting that after the KISS reunion, Frehley never called him and it made him wonder if he was being used in his friendship with Frehley.

"People call me and ask me how Ace is doing," Baker recalls, as if he hadn't proven to be a moron already. If no one has ever told Baker to do so, he desperately needs an intervention so that he understands he is a fan of the band, not a member.

The attitude from the fans and tribute band members that are interviewed throughout this movie is infuriating. They think they are better than me, a fan of the band who, like any of the other millions of fans, appreciate the chaos that surrounds the band but know they will never be rock stars. The way of the rock star world is that the band meets new "friends" every night of their touring life. They hear stories about how the music changed their life and, for that one night, the fans and the band have a connection. The next night, though, that connection is lost and will never be regained. That's reality and the fans in this movie don't get it.

It's painfully obvious with the fans you meet in this movie. There's Strutter, the tribute band whose members squabble about money and leave to form their own band. Each of these bands tries to outdo the other in terms of playing the songs of KISS and imitating the stage performances of the band members from the Gene Simmons spit blood / shoot fire gimmicks to the chero-graphed Ace / Gene / Paul stage antics. The clips of these bands in performance are terrible, often with poor acoustics or a crappy mix.

The KISS family is the pinnacle of stupidity and the main reason why watching this movie may be worth your time. You'll know it's the KISS family when you see the set of parents that allow their kids to dress up like the band in full-blown make-up. Got reality? Do they not understand that KISS is not a role model band? Their debauchery on the road -- namely Gene Simmons -- is not something for a 4 year-old kid to worship. Yet, here is this family that gets a plaque made with the proclamation that this kid "loves KISS" and is the band's "number 1 fan."

"I made these costumes - they're all homemade" brags the father. "I made the boots out of papier mache." Dude, be proud of anything else besides that.

And, to take it a step further, and think about it rationally. KISS is not a kid-appropriate band. Period. Their music from their make-up days mainly centers around sex ("Making Love"), drinking booze ("Cold Gin") or subjects that are otherwise not kid-appropriate ("Going Blind" comes to mind); yet, there is a family that is allowing their child to adore this band.

Then there's this whole KISS convention thing. Started by fans, the conventions were a collection of all these freaks and weirdos, dressing up like the band and trading mementos of the band's crazy costumes. There's a scene in the movie where members of the band actually show up at the convention to retrieve part of their costumes that were reported missing from a warehouse and that had shown up at a convention.

Maybe the most pointed scene in this movie is when they get Peter Criss on stage at a convention with a mic and ask him about a reunion. Criss rants a little bit about how if the four of them could get in a room together without all the lawyers and managers and work it out like men, he would be interested in the reunion.

This is a good movie in the sense that it brings to light a lot of stupid people. The purpose of this movie was to shed light on the KISS fans network but, unlike cockroaches, these people gravitate to the light and speak into a microphone. Rather than a tribute to fans, the movie inadvertently makes fun of them -- but moreover, it makes one wonder why there are so many rabid fans of a group that had, at best, only a few great releases.

The production quality of this movie is somewhere between home video and low budget but it doesn't really matter. You see, in this insane alternate-not-based-in-reality netherworld that I mentioned before, being a KISS fan doesn't pay a lot.

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