MAIN/NEWS
Archives

DVD REVIEWS
Horror
Anime
Animation
Asian Cinema
Disney
Movies
Television
Special Interest

BluRay

UMD

GAME REVIEWS
PlayStation 2
PlayStation 3
PlayStation Vita
PSP
GameCube
Nintendo Wii
Nintendo DS
Gameboy Advance
Xbox
Xbox 360
iPod / Android
PC
Codes / FAQS

MUSIC REVIEWS
Anime OSTs
Game OSTs
Movie OSTs
Metal
Misc Music

MANGA
By Author
By Title

MISCELLANEOUS
Books
Gadgets
Statues / Figurines
Interviews

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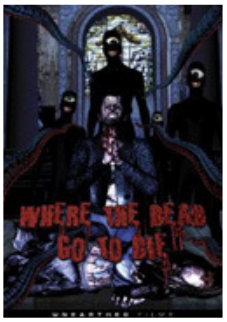

Where the Dead Go to Die

2012

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As computer animated feature films have grown in popularity I've often found myself wondering why someone hasn't attempted to go in a more adult direction. I enjoy what studios like Pixar has done and although Square-Enix has released *Final Fantasy*, both as a feature film and a direct-to-video offering that followed the characters from FFVII, there hasn't really been much that would truly be something that I consider to be aimed at a truly adult market. Horror in particular seems to be the right genre as science fiction would be a little too expected. *Where the Dead Go to Die* is in fact a computer animated film that just happens to be a horror film but this is also a case where my wish wasn't exactly met as I had hoped.

Where the Dead Go to Die is an anthology of different computer animated shorts put together by Jimmy ScreamerClauz using the application CINEMA 4D. The stories all interconnect and revolve around children who all live on the same block who have been encountering Labby, a talking dog who has mysterious connections into horrific realms and doesn't always have the best intentions. In the first short for example he convinces a young boy to murder his pregnant mother. There's a young boy who has the face of his dead twin on his face. He's also in love with a neighbor girl and ends up becoming unwittingly involved in the child porn tapes that her father is making.

While it might be good to finally see computer animation branch of into horror, and I'm sure that it's been done prior to this, *Where the Dead Go to Die* isn't a good example of what can be done. According to ScreamerClauz in his commentary on the film, he first put up a sample short that "quite a few people liked." I paid a visit to YouTube where he said he'd posted the short entitled Tainted Milk and found that it had been up since 2009 with, at this point, 155 likes. I don't know how many likes he had prior to starting production on *Where the Dead Go to Die*, but it probably wasn't near that total and I don't feel that the likely handful that did enjoy it would have been enough to really give a push into making the movie, at least not in my eyes.

Where the Dead Go to Die often feels like it's merely an excuse to see just how far the envelope can be pushed in terms of good taste. I'm no stranger to movies that would be considered fringe and things like Aftermath, Cannibal Holocaust, and Nekromantik are films that I have enjoyed quite a bit and own so having decency cast aside has never been something that bothers me. However it should be done in a way to where it at least is trying to be a part of something larger like a plot and while this might be an anthology of sorts, even the short stories rarely make any real sense. It feels

more like the ideas were thought up involving just how much is too much, and then there was a primitive script drafted around them.

The movie features things like bestiality, fetuses being torn from their mother's womb, mock pedophilia, physical disfigurements, amputees and just about anything else that you could think of to try and throw into a movie with the express purpose of getting criticism based on content. I won't find fault with *Where the Dead Go to Die* in this regard and honestly, I could find material that could be considered more offensive on a Cannibal Corpse album. The first fault in this movie is that it's merely gore for gore's sake, something that has long since outlived its cinematic usefulness. Perhaps it might be entertaining to a preteen who wants to secretly rent it and keep the film hidden from their parents, waiting to show it to all of their friends so they can get a giggle out of how "hardcore" they are, but the adult horror fans want quite a bit more. We demand it in most cases.

Then there's the quality of the animation. CINEMA 4D is capable of doing some impressive things, at least it is when it's in the right hands and *Where the Dead Go to Die* is not one of those cases. The character animations are too stiff, their movements unrealistic. At some points I was trying to determine if they were walking or trying to do the robot. Many of the times when there's supposed to be a continuous animation stream such as flowing blood or a series of waving hands is merely a loop that offers no real differences. It appears that the movie used quite a few stock effects without any knowledge of how to change them in ways so that they would actually have more life to them. A good example of what *Where the Dead Go to Die* looks like would be if you think back to the first Pixar short, The Adventures of André and Wally B. and then degenerate that by about ten times.

There are a few extra features included on the DVD. Jimmy ScreamerClauz has a commentary track and I attempted to listen to it but eventually found myself uninterested. There is a video segment of the audio recording of Liquid Memories. The voice acting in this movie is terrible and this feature really illustrates that. Not only is the actress bad, the method of recording didn't help matters as it was done in a living room with someone holding the microphone. I really doesn't take that much effort to put together your own, cheap recording booth. There's also a motion capture segment and while I've give some credit for this being an interesting use of the Xbox Kinect, the mocap apparently didn't pay off as well as hoped as evident from the movie. There's also a promo cartoon, a short film called Ice Cream Sunday, and a collection of deleted scenes.

If you read the reviews that are on Amazon right now, all three of them, you would believe that *Where the Dead Go to Die* is one of the greatest movies to come along but it's far from that. This is nothing short of being a computer animated nightmare with no sense of any real direction aside from trying to hit you with as much shock value as it can. I'd be all for that if *Where the Dead Go to Die* attempted to do something more but it never does. This is a film that's more intellectually insulting and the effort to be an artistic, surrealist nightmare result in it simply being a disaster.

-mike-

Directed by:
Jimmy ScreamerClauz

Written by:
Jimmy ScreamerClauz

DVD Features:
Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1
Audio: English Dolby Digital 5.1
Commentary with Jimmy ScreamerClauz
Deleted Footage Montage
Recording Liquid Memories

Voice Cast:
Ruby Larocca (Sophia / Tommy's Mom / The Hooker / The Lady in the Well)
Brandon Slagle (The Man / Daddy)
Joey Smack (Ralph / Tommy's Dad / Legless War Vet)
Jimmy ScreamerClauz (Labby)
Joshua Michael Greene (Tommy)
Linnea Quigley (Sophia's Mom)

Kinect Motion Capture Madness
TNI Tour Promo Cartoon
Ice Cream Sunday Short Film w/ Commentary

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