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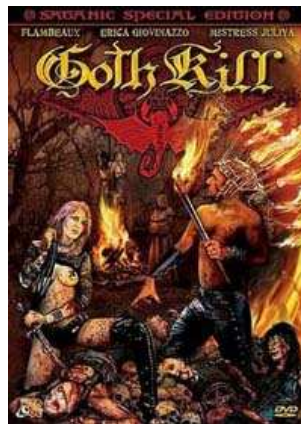
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 A NIGHT OF CONSPIRACY

## STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING

### GOTHKILL

DVD region 0. Wild Eye Releasing.



**Gothkill** is the sort of film I approach with some trepidation - I've seen enough amateur-hour home movie horror features to expect the worst from them - that is, poor production values, dreadful dialogue, bad acting and crappy FX. And in many ways, **Gothkill** is plagued with all these problems. But it has enough going on to at least lift it out of the glut of movies that make up those '50 Movies for \$10' collections.

Through flashbacks and lengthy narration, **Gothkill - The Soul Collector** (as the onscreen title has it) unfolds the story of Nicholas Dread, a Catholic priest who rebels against the injustices of the Inquisition and finds himself burned at the stake. Giving himself to Satan in exchange for 100,000 souls, he is reincarnated again and again, but

on finally arriving in Hell, discovers he's been stiffed by the shifty Devil, who has taken all the souls for himself.

In modern day New York, two wannabe goth chicks are invited to a club run by the 'exclusive' Scorpion Society, where lightweight fetish club action and half-baked vampire roleplay are the order of the day. The head of the club, the clownish Lord Walachia and his partner DJ Demon drug the girls and prepare to initiate them - though in reality, it's a scam to allow the pair access to free sex while impressing his gormless band of followers. Unfortunately for him, the book he is using in the ritual belonged to Dread, who is summoned up. Predictable havoc ensues.

There are many, many problems with this film. It's sloppily edited and has sound that is so bad, half the dialogue is pretty much incomprehensible. The acting - Flambeaux as Dread excepted - is pretty terrible, and the plot is riddled with holes. For instance - when the two girls meet, they act as if they hadn't seen each other in years - and are even surprised to be meeting - even though *they are moving in together!* And the film has to be pieced together with a voiceover - and sometimes onscreen narration - from Dread - yet still makes little sense until the flashbacks give it some sort of structure in the final third.



The good points? Well, Flambeaux pretty much holds the film together - his performance is better than the movie deserves, and he manages to make the ropery dialogue just about work as he convincingly presents a morally ambiguous villain - happy to commit mass murder but offended by the pathetic abuses carried out by the Scorpion Society. On a more basic level, the semi-naked devil girls are easy on the eye, the fetish club action is a little more authentic than you'd find in most movies and the costumes are nice.

The DVD has a video commentary that is as distractingly annoying as any other video commentary, together with footage from various **Gothkill** screening parties, all of which look much more entertaining than anything in the actual film, together with a Q&A with director JJ Connelly.

DAVID FLINT

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