



This Week: Special Post-Hallowe'en Movie Edition

Skeletons walk. The Dead rise. Vampires wake to feed. Werewolves arch their backs and howl. Mad scientists cackle over slowly-moving hunks of dead flesh sewed into human form. Movie reviewers start talking in short, horror-ific sentences that drip with cinematic cliché. Hallowe'en is come and gone, but it's still a good time to review a few horror flicks of the B-movie persuasion.

First in line is a choice little film about a little kid who thinks that maybe... just maybe... his parents are cannibals. *Parents* is a delightfully sick movie, full of classy one-liners and high-brow gross-outs.

See, there's this kid. He's very smart, and very imaginative, but he's *just a tad* morbid. For example, when asked to tell the class about himself, he gives them the recipe for a spell. Part of the instructions, if I recall correctly, call for the mutilation of a cat.

This vivid-but-eww-gross bend in his imagination also causes him to suspect that his dad brings home more than just bacon. His reasoning: My father hates me. My mother is a ditz. We never eat anything but leftovers. The fact the neither Pater nor Mater will tell him just what supper is left over *from* merely adds weight to the theory.

You have to be careful who you watch this movie with. The script and acting are great, full of the dual-meaning lines and body language that great horror movies rely on. All the characters seem like perfectly normal people, yet they manage somehow to seem perfectly monstrous. The camera work is so great that everything also looks creepy. Everyday objects and people appear to be sick parodies of themselves. So why do you have to be so careful about the audience?

Because *Parents* is almost *too* good at mak-

ing parents seem like monsters. It's a no-holds-barred attack on the everyday hypocrisy of "family life". Everyone looks and acts normal, and you're never really sure if the parents are really that bad or if the kid has watched *J.F.K.* one too many times. And frankly, nobody wants see the oldest cornerstone of our society attacked this effectively. In short, if Dan Quayle had seen this movie he'd never have gone after Murphy Brown. *The Wonder Years*, on the other hand...

Judgement: Great Hallowe'en fare. You'll feel like laughing and screaming at the same time. If

you've ever wondered what it might be like to see Clive Barker write *Family Ties*, rent this tape. I'd gush about it more, but I've got other movies to get to.

Stephen King movies get no respect. I've watched quite a few, and now I know why: they're too funny. *Maximum Overdrive* is a good example: how can you be scared when a teller machine tells Stephen King he's an asshole, or when watermelons take out AC/DC's tour van? C'mon, guys, you watch Steve for fun, not knuckle-gnawing terror!

In this light, I'd like to review the sequel to a movie I reviewed last year. *Creepshow 2* is, like all sequels, not as much fun as the original. But like most of Steve's films, it's a laugh riot. So let's spoil the thrill of discovery and summarize:

Old Chief Woodenhead: A small town hardware store owner and his wife are brutally murdered by a gang of local juvenile delinquents. Unfortunately for the thugs, they killed the old guy before he could finish putting the warpaint on the wooden Indian on the porch. The Indian comes to life and kills the thugs by giving them his special version of the Toma-

hawk Chop.

The sequence is funny for two major reasons. One: Old Woodenhead moves veeeery sloooooow, and all his motions are accompanied by loud, woody creaks. Two: The thugs are so stupid that they not only don't hear him, but never think to run away. At a fast walk, they'd leave Old Chief way back in the dust.

The Raft (based on the short story): A bunch of remarkably dense college kids go out for a swim in the middle of September in a deserted lake. As a punishment for their stupidity they are eaten, one by one, by a living oil slick. The survivors of the first attack are trapped on a diving raft, hence the name of the segment. This is a scary segment, actually managing to frighten in a couple of places. It also manages to improve on the original short story by adding not one, but two twist endings and a couple of world class gross-outs (the scene where one unfortunate is sucked into the narrow space between two boards is very nice). Worth the price of the rental.

The Hitch-hiker: A lady is having an affair and, naturally enough, doesn't want her hubby to find out. In her haste to beat him home, she accidentally runs over a hitch-hiker. That's bad enough, but she doesn't hang around to take

responsibility for either of her mistakes. The hitch-hiker is understandably miffed by this lax attitude towards his death, and comes back from the dead to give our adulteress a Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Other Side. As she continues on her way, she runs over him over and over again.

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This whole segment is hysterical and terrifying, which makes it the most fun of the three. Every time he ends up plastered across her hood, he mutters, "Thanks for the ride, Lady" in a voice that starts out husky and gets mushier with each successive squishing he receives. By the end of the story, he looks like Hamburger Helper and sounds like Homer Simpson with a mouth full of wet cotton balls and a slit throat.

Judgement: It's fun! Watch it with *Creepshow* and you've got a real romantic evening in the works.

Lastly, I'd like to return to werewolves. They don't get much respect in the movies, or anywhere else. Even I, a confirmed Lycanthropist, had to pan *The Howling: Part II* in last year's column. In fact, I recently saw *Howling IV: the Original Nightmare* and very nearly wept at how awful and boring it was. I even read the book, *The Howling*, in a desperate attempt to find something good about the series. No such luck.

So finally, I broke down and rented *The Howling*.

I got a nasty shock: It was good! Praise Lon