



by Trent Drake

This Week: *Krull*

For those of you just reading this column for the first time, greeting and salutations (slurp.)! For those of you who are both regular readers of the X-Press and fans of this column, welcome back!

We'll get to the review in a moment. But first, for the benefit of new readers (or anyone who missed it the first time around), I'd like to explain what I'm doing here.

This column is reserved strictly for grade B movies. Movies so obscure the CBC can't air them. Movies so intensely dumb the rain man could understand them. Movies filmed on the weekends in vacant lots or out-of-the-way meadows with cardboard sets. Movies with such small budgets that the actors packed their own lunches. In short, movies that are really, really bad.

Why review such mind rot? The philosophy is this: Out there, buried on the back shelves of our teeming metropolis' video stores, is a treasure of hilarity and absurdity. The purpose of this column is to bring some of those treasures into the spotlight one last time before they vanish forever, doomed to run forever on the MITV late movie. I believe that we have a responsibility to the art community to keep these wonderfully awful pieces of cinematic sonority alive, so future generations can watch

them and laugh.

To sum up, I review b movies because they are, for the most part, hilarious. Few things are more rewarding, for me anyway, than taking a chance on a video rental and being treated to some asinine dialogue or a ridiculous plot. Like the Three Stooges, these movies prove that stupidity is not just funny, but addictive.

Still with me? Good. This week, we're going to take a loving look at a classic amongst b movies. Picture a world where magic is real, where an omnipotent Beast enslaves whole galaxies, where beautiful landscapes are populated by fascinating oracles and sages. A planet where the magic of love (awwww...) can defeat the darkest evil a world can ever know. A world where every man, woman and hideous Beast is really stupid. This is the world of *Krull*, given life in a movie by that same name. It is the subject of this week's review.

Krull (Columbia Pictures, 1983... Hey, the same time *Yor* came out!) has almost everything a stunning fantasy classic like, say, *Star Wars*, should have. It has wondrous sets, soaringly beautiful panoramas of indescribable grandeur. It has spectacular, state-of-the-art (for 1983) special effects, with realistic stop-motion monsters and some great laser battles. The cinematography is lovingly done, transporting the viewer into the heart of *Krull*. You can see the attention to detail in every shot: The symbol of the Glaive is worked into the architecture of the sets, the insectile Slayers' costumes are very good, and the camera gets into some places you wouldn't believe.

Plot-wise, *Krull* has all the makings of an enduring pop-culture legend. It has a brave, strong, charismatic, handsome prince; a beautiful, wise, devoted, refined princess in peril; a hideous, power-hungry, near-omnipotent villain; mysterious, enigmatic, and highly original mentors and sages; and various oddball supporting characters to provide comic relief. It has a unique and beautifully crafted weapon that only the hero can handle, and a unique form of transportation to keep things moving. Everything a fantasy needs to make a killing selling action figures, except for one important element: a plot.

The storyline for *Krull* could have been ripped, whole and beating, from a Nintendo game. The prince Colwyn (played by Ken Marshall) and his bride Lessa (Lysette Anthony) are to marry in order to unite their warring kingdoms against a menace from another world (the aforementioned Beast) whose armies roam the countryside. But just as the marriage ceremony is about to be completed, BOOM! The Slayers (the Beast's army) attack and kidnap the princess. What a surprise! The attack leaves only Colwyn left alive to rescue his screaming bride. Strike up the band and play the *Zelda* theme!

In order save the princess, you must climb a treacherous mountain and find an ancient weapon called the Glaive. Dodge rocks and eagle poop until you find the cavern and retrieve the weapon.

Even with the Glaive, you can't beat the Beast if you can't find his house. And since said house moves to a new location every day at sunrise, you'll need a lot of luck to find it. So the next step, of course, is to visit the Emerald Seer and pick up some allies along the way. He will tell you where to find the Palace Of The Beast. But just before he tells you where to go, the Beast shatters the vision. So it's off to the Emerald Temple, where the Beast can't see you. But the Seer gets his fool self killed just as you reach the temple, so you must seek the cavern of the Widow Of The Web. To win an audience with her, you must find her true name... ask a member of your party for further information. Then cross a dangerous web and dodge a hideous Crystal Spider to get to the Widow. She tells you that the palace will move to the desert come morning.

But in order to cross the desert and reach the palace on time, you must locate the Fire Mares. Then you reach the palace and fight hordes of Slayers before the final showdown with the Beast. Win, and you get a stunning ending sequence and are allowed to enter your initials on the high score board.

But it's not all bad. I really loved this movie, partly for the great stuff, like the sets and the soundtrack, and partly for the schlock, such as the lame plot and the stupidity of some of the characters. Colwyn, who's supposed to be noble and charismatic, comes off as a complete innocent. His bare-faced wonder at all the weird-

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