Written by Bekah McKendry
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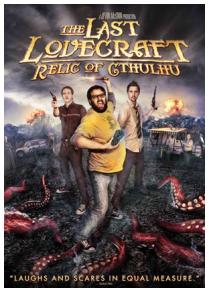
Out on DVD today from Dark Sky Films, THE LAST LOVECRAFT: RELIC OF CTHULHU, directed by Henry Saine, is yet another filmic portrayal of the late H.P. Lovecraft’s Cthulhu mythos. Cthulhu has been chilling snug in his sweet R’lyeh pad for far too long, and thanks to his loyal cult of devoutly fishy followers, he is about to be called to the stage for an epic battle royale.

The cult of Cthulhu finds a relic that could bring the elder god back if united with a second relic stashed at Miskatonic University. When the Miskatonic staff gets word of this, they give the relic to Lovecraft’s last living relative for safe keeping. But that descendant, Jeff, is a mundane office worker played by Kyle Davis (who I immediately recognized as the iconic Lil’ Kevin from IT’S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA, but he was also in the FRIDAY THE 13TH remake). Jeff teams up with comic-book fan Charlie (played by the film’s writer/producer/editor, Devin McGinn) and Lovecraft supergeek Sheldon (Edward Flores) to stop the forces of evil. Together they journey to find the notorious Captain Olaf (Gregg Lawrence), who is rumored to have had a DELIVERANCE-esque prior encounter with the Deep Ones. It’s up to this group of mismatched miscreants to save the world from tentacle-ridden insanity.



Lovecraft-devoted nerds are probably lining up now to bash this one. Sure, there are some interpretations in this flick that the nerd side of me wanted to disagree with, but who the hell cares? This is a fun little flick that let me flex the Lovecraftian side of my brain, but it really doesn’t require any background knowledge of the author to be enjoyable. Plus, it’s a rare portrayal of his mythos in a comedic yet intelligent light. One of the most noteworthy elements of Lovecraft’s writings is that many of his tentacled beings aren’t exactly given detailed headshots in his original stories. There are endless ways to interpret the star-spawn and shoggoths, but the people behind LAST LOVECRAFT obviously took great care to follow the author closely and were able to effectively showcase his imaginings on a microbudget. On a personal note, I loved the sucker-faced monster that attaches itself to the heroes’ car. It’s a hilarious, awesome effect,

and a fine example of how Lovecraft can be updated for the modern day.

Saine comes from a heavy art/design background, including work on programs like THAT ’70s SHOW, ENTOURAGE and THE OFFICE, and his artistic skills bubble through via comic-book-style graphics that are seamlessly woven into the film, adding a strong visual quality and geek-style edge to the piece. The humor is steady throughout, and while the jokes are sometimes a little sophomoric or just plain goofy, other moments are laugh-out-loud hilarious. I’m a bit torn about the creature FX, though; some are quite effective and pretty dang creepy, while others come off a bit cheesy. The mix of latex and digital FX doesn’t always mesh well; in most scenes, it’s very clear which one is being employed. I was also a tad confused about the choices they made regarding digital vs. physical gags in some instances. There are beautifully detailed creature masks throughout the film, yet stuff like a simple pile of intestines and gunfire is digitized. Even so, the filmmakers seem to have been aware of their limited resources and had fun playing with the different techniques, and overall they play rather well, making a kind of “Syfy but a f**kload better” impression.

The one thing this film has in abundance is passion. It’s very clear that THE LAST LOVECRAFT was a labor of love, and it comes across on screen. The actors are terrific, and the movie was shot with a keen eye for detail. Without blowing a major plot development, the end feels rather abrupt—like our heroes have spent the entire movie working toward a goal, but then reach a resolution within seconds, leaving a “Well, *that* seemed rather easy” taste in the viewer’s mouth. Don’t expect a CLOVERFIELD-like ending where Cthulhu rises from the depths and busts up a city or two; this is completely understandable considering the budget, but damn…I’m still sitting and waiting for the big GODZILLA-style Cthulhu movie where the leviathan god smacks up all those non-believers. Someone start on this one pronto, please.

The DVD’s special features are the standard fare, including a commentary by Saine, McGinn and Davis. While it provides a good deal of detail about the artistic motivations behind the scenes, at times it grows annoying as the trio continue to chew over key elements they’ve already addressed. There are also several extended scenes which didn’t add much to the what’s in the final cut. The best extra by far is a segment in which Saine shows off a pencil version of his animation sequences and discusses their creation. A behind-the-scenes still gallery and trailer round out the supplements, though I would have loved to see some additional outtakes/bloopers added to the mix. It seems only natural that with such great actors, fun dialogue and latex monsters, some additional hilarity must have occurred behind the scenes.

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DVD PACKAGE:

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