

“THE BLEEDING” (DVD Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman
Friday, 04 March 2011 17:36



Horror is a beautiful and broad universe, but after years of targeting arty intellectuals, outsider gorehounds and/or teenaged girls, a vampire film has finally arrived for a demographic often sadly overlooked: “bros who wear Affliction.” Thus, if you find yourself driving home from Club Karma, still buzzed off your Red Bull and vodka, craving a late-night meatball/Muscle Milk/movie combo but 2 FAST 2 FURIOUS has worn out its welcome, I give you THE BLEEDING.

Directed by stunt coordinator Charlie Picerni, THE BLEEDING (now out on DVD from Anchor Bay Entertainment) is a tale of vampirism run amok and the one bald, muscled, Mustang-driving, sleeveless bad-ass who will save us all: Michael Matthias. In his wooden (even his running is unconvincing) yet somehow wildly entertaining, one-liner-spewing performance, Shawn Black is a man out for answers. On the trail of his parents’ killer, he finds clues that only lead to a supernatural, centuries-old war between good and evil and the fulfillment of his destiny.



But, see, high mythology is a bit much to process for THE BLEEDING’s target audience, so screenwriter Lance Lane injects myriad relatable language and cultural points to better convey the stakes (incidentally, there are no stakes used in THE BLEEDING, as shotguns kick vampire ass way better). For example, Black’s narration throughout explains it all so that even minds clouded by Ed Hardy illustrations will understand. “This is good-and-evil shit, straight out of the Bible,” he says, elaborating, “It began when the good angels kicked the bad angels out of heaven and sent them down to Earth where they would wage war against mankind until the end of time.” When Lane feels those at home have begun to follow along, he ups the eloquence ante considerably: “This enemy has been personified in many forms of unrighteousness.”

Before the story gets moving, Lane attempts to give Shawn a real three-dimensional feel, but instead carves a broad stereotypical meathead outline. “My dad and I loved cars and collecting them was our passion. My poor mother, she never understood it, but hey, that’s mothas. What are you gonna do?” “She was Irish and my father, Italian. With that combination, I didn’t know

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what to do first—get revenge or get drunk. I needed to do both.” But the exposition surprisingly adds real weight to Shawn’s quest...no, it doesn’t. Early in the film, there’s a completely nonsensical visit (one that’s never referred to again) from Armand Assante as a filled-with-grit detective whose Southern accent is in direct contrast to Shawn’s Bronx-like vernacular and causes one to question just where the hell this film takes place. But never mind that, because there’s snappy Tarantino-esque dialogue from these devil-may-care cops. As Assante is taken by one of the trophy cars, he turns to his partner, exclaiming, “Wooo, whatchu think of that car?” His colleague can’t be bothered with such trivialities, however, replying, “What do I think? I think I’m not going to eat Mexican again, we had it yesterday.”

When Shawn butts in, he somberly explains, “That’s my father’s car. Waited a long time for it. He never got a chance to drive it.” Aha! His real mission hath been laid out. It wasn’t bad enough to kill a man’s father, but to take him out before he put the pedal to the metal. That’s a streak of vengeance we can all get behind.

As Shawn sniffs out his clues (a lighter and an address), he learns the true nature of his destiny from tattoo artist/vampire expert Tagg (hip-hop legend and god to the bros, DMX). In a remarkable feat of healing, THE BLEEDING introduces Tagg while a lady vampire impales his hands, and once he does [give it to ‘em](#), he manages to explain to Shawn the deep mythology of his fate, pointing and writing with the greatest of ease.

THE BLEEDING reaches absurd heights as Tagg lays out the vast backstory of the film’s vampires with the non-specificity and nonchalance of recanting a grocery-store trip. “Every 100 or 200 years, a king is born, hatched from the soul of a dying warrior, killed in battle. A beast rises to lead an army of vampires, that’s when shit hits the fan.” He also serves to enact the popular cliché of debunking prominent vampire-movie myths. “Most people think of vampires as Brad Pitt chasing Tom Cruise around in tights; that’s clearly not the case.” No, no it’s not. The case is very much Kat Von D in a plastic corset and Vinnie Jones in a leather cowboy hat. Douchebagery is the true nature of the modern vampire.

Sadly, after DMX is no longer needed, the film’s silly, more watchable qualities are few and far between. Michael Madsen is clearly having fun as a monster-hunting priest, and watching Matthias fight a mime gets chuckles, but the various supporting turns from untalented UFC associates and Shawn’s own insipid five-minute “finding myself while running in the woods” montage are tests of patience.

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The DVD contains the standard behind-the-scenes interviews where everyone talks each other up and nothing substantial is stated. THE BLEEDING has a moment or two of exciting action, but is otherwise flat and lifeless and often laughable throughout. Bros will probably like it though.

MOVIE: 🚫👤👤👤

DVD PACKAGE: 🚫👤👤👤

{jcomments on}