

Short Review: “The Monster Squad” (1987) by Dr. John L. Flynn



The Monster Squad (1987). Tri-Star and Taft/Barish Productions, 88min. Director: Fred Dekker. Producer: Peter Hyams. Writers: Shane Black and Dekker. Cast: Duncan Regehr, Michael McCay, Carl Thibault, Stephen Macht, Tom Noonan, Tom Woodruff, Ryan Lambert, Brent Chalem, Ashley Bank, and Andre Gower.

Lacking any common sense or insight into the genre, Dekker’s second film was supposed to have been a loving tribute to the Universal horror spoofs and the OUR GANG comedies, sort of a “What If the Little Rascals Took on the Famous Monsters of Filmland.” However, the film only succeeds in setting the genre back nearly forty years.

The overly-complicated plot concerns the struggle for possession of an ancient amulet which controls the balance between good and evil. Count Dracula (Regehr) owned the icon back in 1888, but Dr. Van Helsing (Gwillim) stole the amulet and hid it in a small, Southern town in the United States. Now, one hundred years later, the balance has become unstable, and Dracula intends, along with the Frankenstein monster (Noonan), the Wolf Man (Thibault), Gill Man (Woodruff), and the Mummy (Mackay), to use the icon to forever unleash evil onto the world. But a collection of child stars who act like refugees from a Steven Spielberg film (Gower, Bank, Lambert, Chalem, and Kiger) band together as the “Monster Squad” to fight them. During the climactic battle, which resembles more an episode of “Pee Wee Herman’s Playhouse” than a

horror film, the five children deftly dispatch the monsters one by one with wooden stakes, silver bullets, and other occult paraphernalia. Children under the age of 5 and adults with a really low IQ will enjoy this mess, but we'd recommend you avoid it at all costs.

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