

Short Review: “Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein” (1948) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948). Universal, b/w, 92min. Director: Charles T. Barton. Producer: Robert Arthur. Writers: John Grant, Frederic Renaldo, and Robert Lees. Cast: Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney Jr., Glenn Strange, Leonore Aubert, and Jane Randolph.

Three years after “The House of Dracula” (1945), Universal Pictures released this comedy spoof which finally hammered the final nail in the coffin of its long-suffering monster rallies. The loosely devised plot follows comedians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, as two railway porters, through a series of mishaps in a haunted house. After delivering two crates - containing the Frankenstein monster (Strange) and the Wolf Man (Chaney) - the comics are welcomed by Dracula (Lugosi) to his home and are invited to spend the night. The Count is anxious to revive the Frankenstein monster, and Lou's brain is slated for the unearthly creature. The film then degenerates into a moving comic strip (which is barely watchable today) with the monsters chasing Bud and Lou through the usual shenanigans. Lacking any originality or imagination, the film was none the less a popular success and paved the way for more entries in the series; subsequently, Abbott and Costello meet the Invisible Man, the Killer Boris Karloff, and others. Don't get us wrong. We love monsters and monster movies. But the only monsters here are the suits at Universal who thought we would buy tickets to this garbage. Think again.

Copyright 2016 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.