

# MOVIE REVIEWS

By: Pixilated Polly



**H**ello, Everyone! Leaves are skittering in the breeze, well, almost. As the nights get chillier, it's creeping up on Polly's favorite time of year. Autumn is here and Halloween is lurking right around the corner. Time for some good movies.

Maybe I'm in a funk, but I can't seem to find a movie I want to go see, even with my Fandango free pass. Where is all the scariness? The beasties and ghosties that go bump on the silver screen? Guess I'll have to grab a few DVDs and have a movie marathon of my own. This brings me to my subject. \* Insert long drum roll ending with a snappy snare. \*

The Ten Best Horror Movies to Watch During All Hallows Eve.  
(Here, in no particular order, are my choices.)

- 1) *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, along with *Dr. Phibes Rises Again* and *Theater of Blood*. Yes, I know I listed three, but these three movies all star Vincent Price in his prime, chewing the scenery with magnificent expertise. Each one shows Price taking revenge on those who wronged him, using imaginative, tongue in cheek cruelty. *Theater of Blood* even takes its cues from Shakespeare's plays. Enough said.
- 2) *The Nightmare before Christmas* and *The Corpse Bride*. Both are stop motion animation at its finest. Works of art; freeze the frame and take in the detail and personality of each finely crafted object d'clay. Story by Tim Burton, music by Danny Elfman, Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter in one, Santa and Jack Skellington in the other... what's not to love?
- 3) *I Walked with a Zombie*, *Cat People*, *Bedlam*, *Isle of the Dead*, *The Body Snatcher*, *The Seventh Victim* and *The Ghost Ship*. Okay, I've listed seven, but these are Val Lewton's movies and some of my favorites. I've reviewed them in TWoM before, so just let me say here that Lewton can do more with lighting and shadow than most directors do with buckets of gore.
- 4) *The Black Room* and *The Black Cat*. Karloff at his finest. Dear old Boris plays a dual role in *TBR*, brothers, one evil and one kind. The things that went on in that black room were truly chilling. And the flaying scene with Karloff and Lugosi scared me to death.
- 5) *The Bride*. Here's a little known retelling of *The Bride of Frankenstein* starring Sting, Jennifer Beals and Clancy Brown. You know Polly's a romantic. Here's a love story where the hero may not be whom you think. Look for the heartfelt friendship between Viktor and Rinaldo the Midget.
- 6) *Psycho*, *The Birds*, *Rear Window*, *Suspicion*, *Marnie*, *North by Northwest*, *Rope* and *Notorious*. Hitchcock was a genius. Dealing with adult themes, daring camera angles, and the best in actors, he left behind a legendary legacy.

7) *Constantine*. A wonderful, doomed character from a graphic novel that fights the forces of evil. Keanu Reeves shows off his acting chops, as does Rachel Weisz and the wonderful Shia LaBeouf. Tilda Swinton is great as the androgynous Gabriel, but the best by far is Peter Stormare as Satan. He must have channeled old Scratch.

8) Most anything Stephen King, except *Maximum Overdrive*, *Graveyard Shift*, *Sleepwalkers*, and I don't have a great affection for *Children of the Corn*. I might watch *Maximum Overdrive* again simply because the King directed it. That said, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *The Green Mile*, *The Mist*, *The Stand*, *Storm of the Century*, *Rose Red*, and *Desperation* are all great movies that I watch whenever they're shown. At his best, King's movies show the battle of good versus evil with compassion and honesty. He always tells the truth.

9) *Silent Hill*. A good movie based on a good game. This is an eerie story of what rage can do. SH has heart and empathy for its tortured heroine. The visuals alone are worth the viewing.

10) *Session 9*. I stumbled across this movie at the video store. A group of men work to remove asbestos from an old asylum. Strange things begin to happen. Is it haunted? Or is real life the horror?

11) *Alien* and *Aliens*. A very scary creature preys on the unsuspecting and fights against a kick-ass heroine. Sigourney Weaver does what the marines can't do, all in the name of a mother's love.

12) *American Werewolf in London* and *American Werewolf in Paris*. AWiL has such a sweet hero, it breaks my heart when he's bitten and becomes a monster. The humor and soundtrack tickle my funny bone, as it does when his victims visit said hero, begging him to commit suicide, while they endure in various stages of decay. AWiP isn't quite as good, but it is watchable.

13) *The Exorcist*. Okay, the special effects may be laughable now, but when I first saw *The Exorcist* I had to have my friend Margaret accompany me to the bathroom so the devil wouldn't get me. Try watching it from the angle that it's really the priest's story.

14) *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. I'm talking about the 1978 version starring Donald Sutherland, Brooke Adams, Jeff Goldblum and Veronica Cartwright. Who hasn't suspected that their neighbor is a pod person? Besides, it has a cameo by Leonard Nimoy. Who could resist? IotBS is genuinely scary with an ending not all sunshine and joy.

15) Universal's old *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy* and *The Wolfman*. These are the movies Polly cut her teeth on and they still hold up to the test of time. True, there are a few laughable moments (i.e. the armadillos in *Dracula's* crypt). Nevertheless, Karloff is a maestro at playing the sympathetic monster, as is Lon Chaney, Jr. as the doomed Larry Talbot. *Dracula* is Lagosi's best role, and Karloff nails it as another sympathetic creature in *The Mummy*.

16) *Monster Squad*. A group of kids have to save the world from *Dracula*, the *Mummy*, the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and the *Wolfman*. One kid yells, "Wolfman's got nards!" Need I say more? Isn't it funny how a list of 10 turned out to be a list of 16 or, really, more? I hope you'll make it a point to check out some of the movies I've listed. And I hope I'll be hearing from you with a few suggestions for my viewing pleasure.

Until next time, this is Polly wishing you and yours a very Merry Halloween.