






Under The Raven's Wing

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Susan Adriensen made me do something that I normally don't like doing after watching a movie. No, nothing that requires a safety word...she made me think.

On the surface, "Under the Raven's Wing" is a slick film, the story told as a documentary about three girls who bash a dude's head in with big rocks. We learn that the girls have started their own quasi-religious sect, with Raven (Kimberly Amato) as their leader. She can cross 'dimensions' and communicate with denizens of other worldly realms, or at least so she's convinced her followers Angel (Kamilla Sofie Sadekova) and Jessie (Jessica Palette). So while the rest of the world may think they merely bashed some dude's head in, in their eyes they've 'sent him free' to live in the wonderful world of Dimension One. Looks like a bashing to me, but who am I to judge. I'm Catholic for Christ's sake (that's sarcasm for you stoic Canadians out there), and I'm sure a lot of our beliefs look odd to the outside world as well.

To ensure their story reaches the rest of the world, Raven allows the documentary to be shot. She very much wishes to stay in control, but the Director (Coy DeLuca) pushes the girls to talk about the murder, and open up about their pasts. Through these short interviews, we do see why Angel and Jessie would be so easily influenced by someone as manipulative as Raven, based on their screwed up childhoods. It's like a little version of the Manson Family, sans drugs/motorcycles/facial hair.

Now here's where the thinking came in. I thoroughly enjoyed the film at face value, but after watching it, all the deeper facets started to rattle around in my head. Such as; since this is a movie with religious undertones, and there are three girls in the Order, do they symbolize three different facets of the same woman...much like the Holy Trinity? You have the physical desires (Angel), the shy quiet girl (Jessie) and the manipulative control freak (Raven). Are the girls merely manifestations of different sides of "Woman"?

And another thing...we've got one male character here...the nameless/faceless "Director". He bounces between a submissive cameraman bowing down to Raven's vision of what the movie should be, to an actual investigative reporter digging at the truth behind the veil of religion, to a horndog just trying to get the girls naked on camera. Does he represent the typical "Man"? Is he a personification of how a director feels, being told what to do and manipulated every step of the way? Or is he just a character in a story and I'm reading way too much into it?

But I digress...the crux is, there's an abundance of stuff under the surface of "Under the Raven's Wing". It's a great story, and pretty nice looking for an indie release. Oh, and I think I saw a nod to "Silence of the Lambs" in one of the home movie scenes in Raven's room to boot. I freekin' love that film.

All in all, this is a kick-ass thought provoking movie that almost demands multiple viewings. It's not gory or horrifying or sexually charged or even macabre. It's more like a psychological profile of some seriously messed up chicks, and then people get stoned. The literal kind, not the "dude, I swear, if you fish lip that again I'm cutting you off" kind. There's a bit of a power struggle at the end between Director and Raven, and even though the girls do get a bit extreme at the end and make it easy for the Director to get the final say on what the movie portrays, does he really have final say when all is said and done?

I normally wouldn't give a 5 can score out to the first flick I've seen from a production company, simply because no matter how good it is, there's nothing I could ever score better, but "Under the Raven's Wing" was such an interesting and thought provoking tale it's hard to find fault with it. My one beef was that there were a couple of extraneous scenes of the girls dancing in the woods, but they were so short it didn't take me out of the story for an instant. 5 cans out of 5.

Added: Wednesday, October 24, 2007

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