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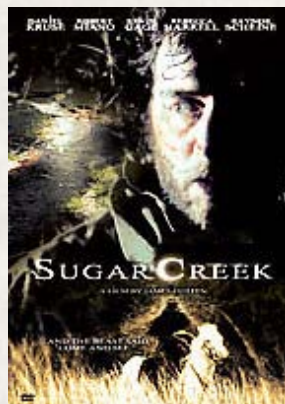
*For the best of the
Horror/Cult/Exploitation
film experience*



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Sugar Creek (2007)



This movie, set in the years right after the Civil War, starts off with a mysterious man being dragged into the middle of a field in a wooden coffin. After whoever had dragged him there leaves he breaks out of the box, only to discover he is shoeless and in the middle of nowhere. After wandering for a while he manages to find a couple of men working on a fence. Strangely enough as soon as they realize he isn't wearing any shoes they refuse to help him and leave quickly. He gets the same reaction until he meets up with a stranger that is passing thru the town who offers to help him. The two of them travel together for a while until the helpful stranger shows his true colors and tries to rob him at gunpoint. It is here that the horseman makes his appearance. The horseman is a large figure dressed all in black that first kills the man that was helping our shoeless friend, who we find out is named Adam, then proceeds to chase Adam thru the woods. After catching him and cutting on him for a while he leaves. Adam wakes up the next day bloodied but alive. It is here the more of the plot is revealed. This isn't the first time that the locals have found a shoeless man in the woods near their town. They are always brought by the horseman and kept alive for three days while he tortures them. The horseman also is in the habit of killing anyone who tries to help them. This is why everyone is rather unwilling to give Adam any assistance. The story also throws in an unstable and violent sheriff, a young missionary woman, a crazed man and his sickly son, a strange little girl that can see the future, and a grave digging elderly gentleman. Eventually Adam must own up to what he did to get the attention of the horseman and face his

judgment.

As you can probably tell from my plot synopsis above this is a very complicated and confusing movie. While watching the movie I went from being very interested to very bored as more and more characters were introduced while the plot moved along at a glacial pace. But in spite of being slow at points this is a movie that is really worth sticking with. The ending manages to bring what appear at times to be unrelated and unnecessary characters together nicely. Plus it manages to explain enough to satisfy the audience while at the same time leaving some things hanging. Additionally the cast in this movie is perfect. Each actor plays his or her character to perfection. Some of the characters are over the top, while others are very subdued. This is a credit to actors as well as the director. The movie also looks great. I'm fairly certain that the movie was shot on digital equipment, but the fact that I'm not positive of that should tell you how well the camera work was handled. Additionally the night scenes, of which there are many, are very well light. Without these scenes looking so good the movie would lose much of its atmosphere. Overall just a great effort by cast and crew.

Now the movie does have some issues and flaws. First of all in spite of bringing all of the characters and plot threads together nicely the movie is really too slow in the middle. The film had a 95-minute runtime and could of maybe afforded to have 10-15 minutes trimmed. This really wouldn't of hurt the plot and could have helped the pacing immensely. Also the effects in the movie are okay but not great. There are a few scenes with a knife and an axe that could have been much bloodier then they were.

Sugar Creek is a really interesting movie. It is part ghost story, part slasher, part revenge, and part western. Most films that I've seen that try and combine that many genres fall flat on their face. Sugar Creek manages to pull this off with some competence. I had the movie at a solid 2 or 2 ½ stars but the ending really surprised me in how well it fit the movie together. Because of that satisfying feeling I'm going to really recommend that everyone check this one out.

*Rating - ****

-John "El Juan" Shatzer