

Grisly scenes may permanently scar child

This was a new one. A movie with a prize.

I found out through some friends at Wesleyan that "Faces of Death 4" was playing as a midnight movie at the Mall of the Bluffs Theaters in Council Bluffs, and that anyone who managed to stay for the entire length of the movie received some type of "Certificate of Survival."

I had seen the first two "Faces of Death" movies—all of which show mondo-graphic real-life deaths of both animals and humans. Of those two, I could only remember the stun line in a slaughterhouse, alligator attacks on human idiots and beheadings.

Should I make the trip? Would I survive? Oh, what the hell.

On my way up to the "Mall-oh-de-Bluffs" in preparation for the movie, I was trying to think of the grossest things I had ever witnessed, but I could only come up with the movies "Hellraiser 2," "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2" and virtually anything involving either Mario Cuomo or Pinto hatchbacks.

The true horror of the journey awaited me at the theater.

The incident that changed the evening for me completely wasn't even part of the film, but it was one of the most disgusting, twisted things I have ever witnessed.

Some sorry excuse for a father brought his 10-year-old son to the movie.

At least I think he was 10, but so what if he was 9, 10 or 11? What in the hell is someone bringing a child to a movie that's notorious for its graphic depictions of real-life death?

Granted, a great deal of the stuff they show in these flicks is faked, but they make it LOOK real, and that is what makes these films so sickening. I don't care how many different "Friday The 13th" or "Nightmare on Elm Street" movies he might have seen; this stuff is a step beyond.

Also, this is not an age where the kid won't remember much. Most likely this boy would remember every blood-filled moment of the film.

"What's with the kid?" I thought silently. "Did he do something wrong or is pop just an idiot?"

The movie started out mildly — with a human cremation while the credits rolled by. Unfortunately, the lump-of-a-father sat between the kid and me, so I couldn't see how the child would react to what he saw.

This child witnessed boating accidents, asphyxiations and one guy being drawn and quartered, just to name a few grisly deaths.

A magician's trick called "The Spikes of Death" turned deadly, sent three moviegoers out the door, and four more fell when the drunk bungee jumper used too much bungee.

"Beer and blood hardly make for hearty drink," says the narrator following the bungee incident.

Schmuck.

For the animal lovers, we had dolphin autopsies, maggots with the munchies and a

I SURVIVED

FACES OF DEATH IV

I, Gerry Beltz (first & last name), on April 3rd (month & date), 19 92 (year)

SURVIVED FACES OF DEATH IV

After viewing the horror epic:

I SURVIVED

Only time will tell if I will mentally be the same!

CERTIFICATE
of
SURVIVAL

Angel of Death
(signature)

pet crematorium where we get to see Spot and Fluffy get torched (two more empty seats).

I'm sure that this kid has always wanted to see what happens to a pet after it's dead. It doesn't go to doggie heaven or kitty heaven; your pet ends up looking like a charcoal briquette.

What really set the audience into motion was the segment showing a Korean family making dog stew . . . using all-too-fresh ingredients.

No anesthesia, not even a disorienting bop on the head. She slices into the pup, amid a few seconds of yips and yelps, and the only sounds after that were the squishes of the cook's hand removing the dog's innards.

That portion of the film caused lots of shifting and squirming and we lost five more moviegoers.

The segment was absolutely grotesque, but what disturbed me most was knowing that this little boy would remember the

sounds of death coming from that helpless puppy for the rest of his natural life.

The "genetically altered" leeches downed three more "suckers" and I was wondering how much more of this there could be.

Most of the audience sat through all 95 horrifying minutes of the movie, and surprisingly, the kid did, too.

Of course, what would he do if he did leave? Watch the carpet? Listen to the Muzak? Wax the floors?

Finally, it was over, and the audience filed out of the theater at the quickest pace I had ever seen. On the way out, as promised, all patrons that stayed the length of the show were given a certificate that read "I SURVIVED 'FACES OF DEATH IV.'"

I felt like taking this kid aside and giving him a certificate that stated, "I HOPE TO SURVIVE A CHILDHOOD WITH AN INCONSIDERATE FATHER."

I got home at about 4 a.m., and held my cat, Tigger, close and tight — trying to

forget the images of a dead cat being incinerated and trying to forget what that child's dreams will be like for the next who-knows-how-long.

The following day, I called the Mall-of-the-Bluffs theater information line to check on the rating of the movie, and I was told that it is rated "R," which states (verbatim) "Restricted — Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian."

Big surprise, but it's not like there's a movie theater that's really strict on that rule anyway.

As it turned out, that was the last weekend that the Mall of the Bluffs ran any midnight movies. However, to this day, it still frightens me that that man is allowed to be a role model for a young child.

In the movie "Parenthood," Keanu Reeves says, "You need a license to drive a car or own a cat. Hell, you need a license to catch a fish, but any butt-reaming asshole can be a father."

— Gerry Beltz



Polly Walker in "Enchanted April"

Unpredictable Victorian movie tells love story



"Enchanted April," an unpredictable romantic fable directed by Mike Newell ("Dance with a Stranger"), tells the story of two women breaking free from their crass husbands only to discover deeper love for that which they've longed to escape.

Set in rainy 1920s London, a point of awkward transition from rigid Victorianism to modern freedom, the story begins with the depressed Lottie Wilkins (Josie Lawrence).

Upon discovering a newspaper advertisement for the lease of a "small medieval Italian castle on the shores of the Mediterranean," Lottie becomes obsessed with the idea of a romantic springtime exile.

Lottie immediately pleads with Rose Arbuthnot (Miranda Richardson), a complete stranger, to come away with her for a retreat, and Rose gives in to Lottie's honest desperation.

Mr. Wilkins (Alfred Molina), an Industrial Revolution rationalist, and Mr. Arbuthnot (Jim Broadbent), a Victorian pornography writer, humor-

ously comply with their wives' wishes for a vacation.

Along for the ride are Caroline (Polly Walker), a beautiful actress who seeks peace and quiet from men's grabbing hands and incessant demands for attention, and Mrs. Fisher (Joan Plowright), an elderly snob whose interest in the trip comes from her desire to enforce the traditional rules of etiquette and decorum on apparently thrill-seeking young women.

The husbands do arrive, as well as the handsome veteran who owns the castle.

There everything is seen from a new light beneath the spell of their enchanted surroundings.

The film's gentle and intriguing pace comes from a decidedly feminine perspective, a refreshing change from most hero and damsel-in-distress flicks. The performances are mesmerizing as well — first the viewers are drawn in to the lives of the characters, then they get to watch them change, believably, for the better.

"Enchanted April" is showing at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater Thursday through Sunday and April 29 through May 2. Screenings are at 7 and 9:15 p.m. daily with matinees on Saturdays at 12:45 and 3 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30 and 4:45 p.m.

— Calvin Clinchard