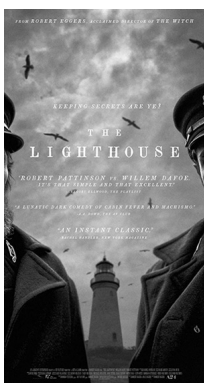
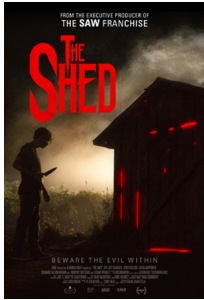


Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for January 10, 2020

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 17 January 2020 02:37



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The New Year is here. While one might expect a slowdown in the number of new Blu-rays and DVDs, there are actually quite a few arriving on store shelves, including some big Hollywood flicks and interesting independent fare. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

Depraved - Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* gets a fresh update in this independent horror flick. A disillusioned Brooklyn field surgeon with PTSD (caused from his time serving overseas as a medic), decides to fashion a man out of body parts and bring him to life. Despite being initially successful, the creator finds it increasingly hard to teach his creation how to survive in the modern world. The press was quite positive about the finished results.

A few wrote that the movie didn't add enough that was new to really earn it a recommendation, but almost all others thought it did add a bit of emotional heft to the story and called the film a clever and effective modernization of the famous monster tale. The cast includes David Call, Joshua Leonard and Alex Breaux.

Girl on the Third Floor - Why do people keep attempting to live in haunted houses? This horror film tells another tale that follows a troubled husband who decides to make up for past mistakes with his family by buying a home with a violent history and renovating it. He begins tearing down and rebuilding the property, only to find the home fighting back in unexpected ways. Notices actually weren't half bad for this little creeper.

A small contingent did comment that the twists and turns were obvious, as well as its attempts to deal with the story's central themes. However, the majority thought that it was a moody and unsettling film that handled the lead character's issues in an interesting manner. It features CM Punk, Trieste Kelly Dunn and Sarah Brooks.

Joker - The week's biggest release is this new take on the iconic Batman villain. It's an origin story that follows the unhinged, aspiring comedian as he struggles while working as a clown-for-hire. As his life spirals downward and he is disregarded by co-workers and celebrities, the man begins to take drastic and dangerous actions to change his life. The movie was a huge hit and has even earned awards, but has received widely varied reactions from critics.

Just about all of them praised the lead performance. However, a good portion found it superficial and didn't think all of the elements worked. But in the end, more thought this dark examination of the character was intriguing and disturbing. It stars Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro, Zazie Beetz, Frances Conroy and Brett Cullen.

The Lighthouse - A pair of lighthouse workers in the 1890s arrive for a long stay on an isolated island and are forced to deal with unsettling events. As the weeks extend, the men begin witnessing odd things and even battling local seagulls. The pair eventually become antagonistic toward each other and struggle with their mental health. This unique psychological horror film was shot entirely in black and white.

It earned strong reviews, although they did come with something of a warning. A few critiqued it for being beautiful, but little more than that, stating that the pacing would eventually wear on the patience of viewers. Yet others were so impressed by the two leads and cinematography that they enjoyed simply soaking up the atmosphere. Robert Pattinson and Willem Dafoe play the lead roles.

The Shed - This independent horror picture follows two teens who are abused and mistreated by both caregivers and schoolmates. When a monster arrives and takes up residence in a shed behind the house of one of the kids, the two begin to plot how they might use the new arrival to their advantage. This involves luring various bullying forces to the creature in the hopes of it ridding them of their problems. Reaction toward this effort was reasonable.

Almost half did complain that the characters followed all of the genre tropes and made unbelievably poor decisions, taking viewers out of the film. Still, slightly more thought there was some subtext to the story, and believed it would entertain horror fans. It features Jay Jay Warren, Cody Kostro, Siobhan Fallon Hogan, Frank Whaley and Timothy Bottoms.

Blasts from the Past!

Here are some older titles arriving on Blu-ray this week.

Shout! Factory has *The Final Programme* (1973) aka *The Last Days of Man on Earth*. It's a British science-fiction flick about a scientist and computer expert searching for a man with a self-replicating formula that could bring about the end of the world. The disc includes a commentary track with the director and lead actress, as well as a U.S. theatrical trailer and TV spot.

Kino has a Special Edition of the entertaining cult film, *Brick* (2005). It's an effective neo-noir

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about a high school student (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) investigating the death of a loved one that takes him into the strange underworld within his own educational institution. The Blu-ray includes a new 4K restoration of the film supervised by director Rian Johnson (

Knives Out

), as well as an audio commentary and eight deleted and extended scenes.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that kids might enjoy.

Highlights: Holiday Fun!

Wild Bunch on Ice

On the Tube!

And these are the week's TV-themed releases.

American Masters: Rothko – Pictures Must Be Miraculous (PBS)

Big Little Lies: Season 2

NATURE: Okavango River of Dreams (PBS)

NOVA: Why Bridges Collapse (PBS)

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Vera: Set 9

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