

# A Fun Movie; The Fearless Vampire Killers (1967).

As I stay inside my apartment while the coronavirus wrecks havoc all through China, I have little else to do but watch movies. Now, for various reasons, I have taken a shine to the older 1960's and 1970's movies. And in this case, a relatively unknown vampire-comedy. And this one is simply amazing!

I well remember watching it on television with my father. He was a big Sharon Tate fan, and now that I am older I can well understand why. But more than that, I loved how it carried me away and sucked me into the movie with the "atmosphere", and the story line.

My most memorable scene is where they are locked inside the parapet tower.

Brilliant movie - beautifully shot and with Polanski's eye for detail. Very funny/quirky and atmospheric. I loaned it to a work colleague who thought Polanski only made horror films like 'Rosemary's Baby', she was amazed when confronted with this one.

She thought it was great.

Everyone is always very impressed with the ballroom scene with all the mirrors and the vampires dancing. The colours are fabulous and the outside scenes remind one of a Christmas card.

If it's ever on t.v. it's always on around midnight or after, so I had to buy the DVD. Definitely one to watch late at night when you're alone!! It took me years to find it on DVD. I think the one I eventually bought was an import.

- funnybunny-7



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

Today, being much older, I have come to love Roman Polanski's "The Fearless Vampire Killers," which is surprising to me now because for most of my life I thought it was so-so.

You see, I missed the original release back in 1967, but I was only nine years old then. And the version released in the U.S. was a truncated travesty of what Polanski intended. It was a remake for American audiences by a jack-ass who thought that all Americans were simpletons bumpkins.

No shit!



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

When I think about R.Polanski the first thing coming to my mind is - "the master of fear and horror", and I knew it that "Fearless vampire Killers" is rare example of comedy by this great director. Yeah, I was worried before seeing this movie, not as much about "geting it", but more so about simple thing - could this movie be entertaining for "21st Century Boy".

First thing that striked me was beautiful music by Komedá. I was in total awe. The music was scary, but at the same time so light and funny - just like for a good fair story. And then the beautiful winter scenery that was so fake - almost cartooning. Few minutes into the movie, and I could say "that's what I call movie poetry".

The story is so simple. The old bat researcher, professor Abronsius and his assistant, Alfred, go to a remote Transylvanian village looking for vampires. They stay in house where no one speaks about vampires, but the garlic is hanging everywhere.



Sharon Tate.

Simplistic story is so right for this movie, because acting, scenery, music, cinematography are all in top shape here. For composition I think this is one of the best movie done by Polanski, next to "Tenant" for sure.

And this movie is also a rare occasion to see Polanski in comedic role. He and Brach make unforgettable duo. I was totally entertained when he came to comedy in this movie, but the thing that surprised me the most was the action factor. There is one scene that is a great example of that - when Polanski's character is looking through a keyhole and is so scared

of what he see that his face is screaming "terror". It's sure funny, but in a way mad-scary too. And when I think about this movie - this scene sums it up for me.

Its very funny, but little outdated movie. For me one a few really cinematic fairy tales, that keeps magic all the way to the end. Its up there with Repulsion, Tenant, and Tess when in comes to greatest work of this director.

And just think about brilliant ending, so funny, so mad. It's a shame Polanski hasn't made another comedy. Don't get me started with Pirates - the most unfunny movie in history. But "Fearless Vampire Killers " is movie magic - pure and simple.

- fidomax

And, I am not the only person that was upset with the hack-job on this movie.

I've read that the movie was considered an almost complete fiasco because the executive producer, Martin Ransohoff, best known for "The Beverly Hillbillies," wanted a very different film.

Yeah.

He wanted to change the film. He wanted to "improve" it to fit the bumpkin American mentality that he envisioned all Americans had.

So, in short order, he [1] cut 16 minutes out of Polanski's 107 minute cut (Just under 1/5 of the entire movie.), and [2] inserted a short screwy cartoon before the titles (so people would know it was supposed to be a comedy...)



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

Ransohoff thought Polanski botched it that badly, and [3] even re-dubbed some of the actors. You know, so that they would sound more "American". I'm sure that he wanted thick "bumpkin" Southern drawls and accents. He also [4] added the awful tag line to the title, "Or, Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck."

This must have been the version I saw on TV in the early seventies that I thought was so terrible.

Thankfully this abomination doesn't seem to be in circulation anymore. Good thing. Let the rats in the film vault feast on that monstrosity.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

However, despite its flaws "The Fearless Vampire Killers" gained a cult following over the years, partially due to the morbid fascination with the murder of Sharon Tate, but also because the movie is really very, very good.

Paramount's Robert Evans recognized this back in '67 and thought Polanski the right director for "Rosemary's Baby."

He was right and the success of that film showed Hollywood what a master of the language of film Polanski actually is.





This is a wonderfully fun movie. It's got a lot of good stuff in it, and the critics can go try to make own luck at vampire comedy.

When I first saw this film on TV in the early 70s, I thought it was so cheesy I gave it very little attention.

Then in the early 90s it was released on laserdisc in a letterboxed version and I bought it on a lark. After I viewed in the first time I still didn't think much of it and thought maybe I wasted my money.

But then, as the years passed, I would look at it every so often and now I love the film.

It is an acquired taste.

You first have to love vampire films -- the old-fashioned, Gothic kind. Next, you need to appreciate Polanski's style and his understated approach. It's also best to watch this film late at night with the lights off, and especially with a snow storm outside. Give it a chance and this film will creep up on you. Hopefully it will come to DVD soon.

- stew100

Now, let's be honest. This isn't the best horror/comedy movie. The truth be told that Mel Brooks' Young Frankenstein holds that position.

However, second place has just got to go to this one, and there's no shame in being second here.



I don't know too much about Roman Polanski's career (I think I know more about his personal life): I've seen Rosemary's Baby and Chinatown, and this movie is the third of his that I know about that I've seen. maybe there were others, but I cannot recall them at the top of my head.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

I would never have imagined from those two movies that he could direct comedy. Because of that I came into FVK very skeptical. At first, I thought that the laughs were few and far between. I kind of took it as a light-hearted serious movie.

I also thought that Polanski's direction was too showy for a comedy.

But as the film went on, the comic moments began to build. And the showy direction ceased seeming showy and began to seem wonderful. If you find your-

self not laughing a lot, it's understandable.

Just sit back and enjoy Polanski's amazing direction. And the laughs, although, to many, they may seem too few, those that there are are enormous.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

I'd also like to praise the actors, including Roman Polanski himself. The set design, especially in the castle, is more than amazing. It's simply beautiful.

The title "fearless vampire killers" it's not so good as "Dance of the Vampires", outside U.S. this is the original title

I always will remember this film as "Dance of the Vampires"  
ALSO, CONGRATULATIONS to Mr Polanski for the Palme D' Or, he deserves it (without him just cinema "boring")

I enjoyed poetic scenes such as like moment in Sarah's bath comparing the textures of first soap bubbles, then falling snowflakes, and finally crimson blood. when Alfred (Polanski) carries his master across the castle battlements remind me of Polanski early short films.



This is a wonderfully fun movie. It's got a lot of good stuff in it, and the critics can go try to make own luck at vampire comedy.

Krystov Komeda's music has been acclaimed as "the most innovative and haunting score ever devised for a horror movie" by the heavyweight Aurum Film Encyclopedia.

Krystof Komeda's wondrous music, with its weird choral effects and little melodies Komeda's score communicates the Kafka-like isolation of the setting and the characters

Polanski chose some of the finest English cinema craft artists to work on the film: cameraman Douglas Slocombe, production designer Wilfrid Shingleton Polanski engaged noted choreographer Tutte Lemkow, who played the actual Fiddler in FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, for the film's climactic Danse Macabre minuet.

Sharon Tate as Sarah was delightful (we should remember her in a good way, as a decent actress and person, her scene with Polanski is really cool, especially "the bite scene") Jack MacGowran as Professor Abronsius is just great Polanski's films often deal in contrasts of master and servant, the empowered and the powerless. The supposedly benign Abronsius bullies Alfred for his own purposes, just as the vampires consider all of humankind a resource to be harvested.

The character called Shagal got the best lines in the movie, when a woman thrusts a crucifix in his face, only for Shagal - a Jewish rather than a Christian vampire - to go "Oy-yoy! You got the wrong vampire" and bite her anyway Count Von Krolock (Ferdie Mayne, who plays the Count) he looks really as a Nosferatu or a man that needs Transfusion!.

Also funny is Herbert, the openly gay vampire who is interested in Alfred rather than Sara, the sexual deviations implicit in early Hammer



films like The Brides of Dracula (1960) and Kiss of the Vampire (1964) are brought out.

- patita-1

Right from the main title sequence this film is really quite wonderful.

Christopher Komeda's score is weird and haunting.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

The day-for-night shots of the snowy countryside are a bit distracting, but you know they kind of fit the fairy tale quality of the film's isolated, late 19th century Transylvanian winter never land.

The movie is extremely well-mounted with wonderful sets, especially the vampires' castle.



Oh, young love. Eh?

All the performances are excellent. Jack MacGowran's Professor Abronsius is an absolutely incredible characterization, unlike anything else MacGowran ever did on film.

The same is true of Alfie Bass' Yoine Shagal, possibly the world's first Jewish vampire, and a terrible lecher.

Sharon Tate was probably never lovelier than in this movie, and Roman Polanski is very good as Alfred, in fact amazing when you consider he was also directing.

It is a tour de force on his part.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

Finally, Ferdy Mayne's Count Von Krolock is a king vampire equal to any screen Dracula, while Iain Quarrier is also appropriately creepy as his gay vampire son, Herbert.

Well, what is this movie about? To begin with: although the vampire was best popularized in the modern era by English writers, it is really a myth of Eastern European Roman Catholicism. (I could explain that better - and why the English so well co-opted it - but obviously not here.)

This type of Catholicism (which finally produced a Pope in John Paul II) now only thrives (and none too well) in Poland - Polanski's home country.

During the Second World War, Poland was utterly decimated.

First, a large portion of its wealthiest citizens, who happened to be Jewish, were exterminated.

The Polish catholics themselves were split radically between anti-semitic nationalists (who also, mistakenly, thought the Nazis would save them from the Russians) and pro-Communists who, mistakenly, thought the Russians would save them from the Nazis.

Obviously, this was a no-win situation for the Poles.

And yet the first cinematic impression of this disaster arrived in the form of - a comedy - Ernst Lubitsch's "To Be Or Not To Be" (later remade by Mel Brooks).

Does the reader really need to know all this to appreciate this movie? actually, yes. This film is laughter at death's door.

The funniest and most memorable line in the film is from the Jewish vampire, responding to a threatened crucifix: "Oy vey, have you got the wrong vampire!" Funny? - Hilarious. Unfortunately, if this Vampire had any grandchildren, they all died in Auschwitz.

Why am I playing such a heavy hand here? Because this really is a great horror-comedy, far better and far more important than the studio hacks at MGM who released this film (after chopping it up) could ever have understood.

There is unfortunately no rumor that there's a director's cut in the vaults; it is well to remember that Polanski nearly disowned this film on release, and really only reclaimed it after the brutal slaying of his wife, who plays such an important role in the film.

But even as shredded as it is (pay especially close attention to the discontinuities involving the Professor), this is still marvelously written, directed, and photographed - truly frightening at moments, utterly hilarious at others, but always grounded in a particularly Polish sensibility which is now, alas, a thing of the past; - the preservation of a culture that, at its best, was among the best in Europe.

- winner55

Like the drinking of blood (I would imagine!), appreciation of "The Fearless Vampire Killers" is very much an acquired taste.

I don't know what to say to those that don't like it except, Why don't you try watching it again? It might grow on you as it did me.





The famous Ballroom scene.

This movie also has one of the best one-sheet posters from the sixties, with art by Frank Frazetta.

All in all, this is a great movie, and I cannot praise it enough.



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

It's sad to say, whenever people ask me for a good vampire movie, one I do recommend is The Fearless Vampire Killers, they always look at me and

ask "What's that?".

But the 3 people I've shown it too loved it and I think that has got to say something about this great vampire classic.

Writer, director and co-star Roman Polanski made the first real vampire spoof and what a great movie!

If you think about today's spoofs, everything is always a reference to something that's in pop culture. This movie is just pure comedy, taking what was so typical at the time of the weary travelers who happen upon a creepy castle with the even creepier host, yet act completely oblivious when strange things happen.



The ballroom scene is amazing. It is just one of the great things that I really enjoy about this movie.

Instead, how about we have two vampire slayers, one who is calm and experienced vs. the inexperienced and nervous? While we're at it, why not add a ball into the mix? Dancing vampires, it just doesn't get any better than this.

In the heart of Transylvania Professor Abronsius and his apprentice Alfred are on the hunt for vampires. Abronsius is old and withering and barely able to survive the cold ride through the wintry forests, while Alfred is bumbling and introverted.

The two hunters come to a small Eastern European town seemingly at the end of a long search for signs of vampires.

The two stay at a local inn, full of angst-ridden townspeople who perform strange rituals to fend off an unseen evil. Whilst staying at the inn, Alfred develops a fondness for Sarah, the daughter of the

tavern keeper Yoine Shagal.



The environment is amazing, and can take you away to another time and place. You can feel the cold wind on your face, and the pack of wolves snapping at your heels.

After witnessing Sarah being kidnapped by the local vampire lord, Count von Krolock, the two follow his snow trail, leading them to Krolock's ominous castle in the snow-blanketed hills nearby.

They break into the castle, but are trapped by the Count's hunchback servant, Koukol. Despite misgivings, Abronsius and Alfred accept the Count's invitation to stay in his ramshackle Gothic castle, where Alfred spends the night fitfully.

After finding Sarah the next day, they come up with a plan to destroy the count and save Sarah, but with a midnight ball in the mix of vampires, the plans might be a bit harder than they realized.

I think one of the funniest scenes in film history is when Roman Polanski is being chased by Count Krolock's feminine vampire son, Herbert.





Frozen stiff. Poor fellow, but then again it's actually pretty funny in a dark comedic sort of way.

The seduction scene before that was too funny, but let's add Roman running around in a circle oblivious that he did just go around in a circle and runs right back into Herbert!

The comedic timing was just gold!

Sharon Tate is also in this film and she is just beautiful, you could see how Roman would fall in love with her on and off screen so easily. It's really sad that we lost her so young and so tragically, you see the talent that could have been.

I also love Jack MacGowran, he's calm exterior to Roman's scaredy cat routine was the perfect balance the film needed.

I nearly die laughing each time I see the scene where they are in the Count's bedroom about to stake him, but Jack gets stuck in the window and Roman chickens out on killing the count.

He has to go around the castle to pull Jack out but gets distracted by Sharon Tate and when he finally realizes that he left Jack in the same room with blood sucking vampires, he just reeks with the "Oops!" face.

The ballroom scene is so memorable, again, the comedic timing is great. Another thing about this film is that it also has some great scares in it too, some great make up effects with the Count.

I highly recommend this film; I've been watching it since I was a little girl, I still love watching it all these years later and can't

wait to show it to others as well.

- Smells\_Like\_Cheese



Scene from the Fearless Vampire Killers. It's a great flick and does help to carry you away to another time and place. It is, thus, great escapist viewing.

## Conclusion

This movie is a bit dusty and not something that you would turn to automatically. However, it is a great little gem of a movie and well worth a nice visit. It will carry you away to a different time and place and it is rather charming in it's own sinister comic way.

For me, it took me away for the germ warfare, the masks and goggles, and the latex gloves. It took me away from the disinfecting and the isolation and being cooped inside as the beautiful day with blue skies and lush green trees beckoned to me outside.

I am sure that it will take you too to a nice place far away from your normal life.

---

I hope that you enjoyed this post. I have other posts regarding movies and you can view them in my movie index [here](#)...

MOVIES

# Articles & Links

*You'll not find any big banners or popups here talking about cookies and privacy notices. There are no ads on this site (aside from the hosting ads – a necessary evil). Functionally and fundamentally, I just don't make money off of this blog. It is NOT monetized. Finally, I don't track you because I just don't care to.*

- You can start reading the articles by going [HERE](#).
- You can visit the Index Page [HERE](#) to explore by article subject.
- You can also ask the author some questions. You can go [HERE](#) to find out how to go about this.
- You can find out more about the author [HERE](#).
- If you have concerns or complaints, you can go [HERE](#).
- If you want to make a donation, you can go [HERE](#).

