

MONSTER Brides

'Frankenstein' and 'Chucky' have gone the married route to add life to scary sequels

By Nicole Garton
Oregon Daily Emerald

Even monsters must succumb to the siren call of wedding bells.

Take Frankenstein. He coerced his creator into carving out a buxom, bloody bride. And Dracula? He's forever seeking his soulless mate.

The homicidal toy Chucky, on the other hand, wasn't so eager to bind himself in unholy matrimony. You

might say she dragged him to the altar biting and slashing.

Don't know why — she's such a doll.

But true love must prevail, and in Chucky's fourth feature film since the 1988 debut of "Child's Play," the toy killer finds a plastic playmate and joins the few but famous ranks of wedded horrors.

In "Bride of Chucky," the deadly doll is brought back to life by his ex-girlfriend, Tiffany, who cherishes hopes of settling down with her "sweet face." But Chucky has other ideas. Furious, he kills her and transfers her soul into a female doll.

As the two hack and slash their way toward inhabiting human bodies, however,

Tiffany's murderous tendencies finally win Chucky's heart and hand, making the dolls one of the few

pairs of monstrous mates since Frankenstein and his big-haired bride.

After the wild success of "Bride of Frankenstein" in the 1930s, surprisingly few movie monsters have actually followed in the green guy's footsteps, said English graduate teaching fellow Mike Arnzen. Die-hard horror fans may recall a few obscure monster marriages, but the icons — Freddy, Jason and Mike Myers — have all died again and again without finding that special someone.

From a business perspective, that's a little hard to believe, Arnzen said.

"'Bride of Frankenstein' is one of the most successful sequels ever," he said. By turning the monster into a romantic hero, the movie forged a new connection between Frankenstein and his audience, he explained.

The movie became a romance as well as a horror flick, and this combination has earned it the lasting reputation as one of the finest in its genre.

Of course, Frankenstein's marital life wasn't exactly blissful, so it's easy to see how his experience would dissuade succeeding monsters from taking the plunge. "Usually, the woman becomes even more of a monster than the real monster," Arnzen added. "I think there's a bit of sexism there."

Whether or not Chucky's aversion to marriage resulted from Frankenstein's failure, however, it was the patchwork predecessor who pushed the demonic doll into matrimony — or rather, it was the cover of "Bride of Frankenstein" in the video store.

With the recent revival of the horror genre, thanks to movies such as "Scream" and "I Know What You Did Last Summer," "Child's Play" creators David Kirschner and Don Mancini wanted to bring Chucky back with a bang, according to the Universal Studios Web site for the movie. When Kirschner saw the classic film sitting on the video store shelf one night, inspiraton

hit. "My immediate reaction was, 'Wow, wouldn't it be great if we were able to create a bride for Chucky?'" he explained. "By introducing another doll, we'd get to see a whole other side to Chucky."

The result is an odd blend of horror and romantic comedy.

"Tiffany represents Chucky's Achilles' heel in that his feelings for her cause him to be vulnerable, and when you think about it, that's really a pretty hilarious state in which to see this little Napoleonic tiny terror," Kirschner said.

Like "Bride of Frankenstein," the latest Chucky movie not only melds horror with romance, but it seizes the opportunity to comment on the societal aspects of marriage.

"These movies make fun of the whole idea of marriage, and they help us to deal with anxieties about weddings and sex," Arnzen said. In addition, they reflect the social conventions and changes of their eras.

"'Bride of Frankenstein' was a metaphor for the rise of women and their role in the home and in the culture at large," he continued.

And "Bride of Chucky"? Perhaps the plastic serial killers

offer a commentary on the disintegration of family values. Without giving away the end, it's safe to say the demonic duo doesn't live in domestic harmony. ("F-- Martha Stewart," Tiffany yells, throwing a plate of cookies at Chucky's head.)

As in many romances, although Chucky and Tiffany are clearly meant for each other — how many other dolls out there host human souls? — happiness isn't necessarily guaranteed.

"In every romance, there's always a problem where the couple can never seem to get together," Arnzen explained. "They don't always live happily ever after; they're destined to be together, but they can never be together."

By giving Chucky amorous feelings and marital problems, "Bride of Chucky," like its progenitor, humanizes the monster and allows the audience to sympathize more with him.

"There's the idea that these people are dead or inanimate objects and they suddenly have a sex life and reproduce. It makes them more human," he said.

Have sex? Reproduce? But Chucky's a doll.

"Anything goes in a movie where a doll can talk and kill people," Arnzen noted. "Anything can happen."



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