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THE LEGEND OF LUCY KEYES (DVD)



by Steve Anderson

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2006, Un-rated, 96 minutes

Okay, folks--it's October. This is prime time for horror flicks. We've got Halloween bare weeks away, and those early nights spent locked in the house aren't all that much farther off. Thus, what I'm gonna do for you is a godsend and a blessing--I'm gonna give you the line on one of the downright creepiest movies I've seen lately-- "The Legend of Lucy Keyes".

So what we have here plotwise is a couple moving to the country to get a fresh start. Few better places for a fresh start than the country. Except in this case, our young couple and their two young daughters are going to run afoul of a two hundred and fifty year old legend. The section of the country they've settled in has a long, storied...and dark...history. The family will therefore have to get to the bottom of the history involving the town and the land and discovering the horrific secret the town's holding.

And frankly, they really crank it up. From even the first minute, they'll bring out solid ghost effects, even better backup effects, and great background music that will really have you immersed in the plot right from the very beginning. In fact, the opening minute sequence is so good, you'll actually see it again later on in the movie. And not in a flashback. Dying for me to explain? Oh no...you'll have to see for yourself.

In other words, this is creepy and I'm just watching it from behind a television. This is perhaps the truest hallmark of successful horror. Can we, the audience, be scared just watching it? Without even having to consider how we'd feel in just such a situation? When you reach that point, you know you're in for a truly scary time, and "The Legend of Lucy Keyes" manages to do just that.

More interestingly, a small line of text within the first three minutes reveals that this is, in fact, based on a true story. And that's all the more unsettling. It was creepy enough just watching it--knowing that even a fraction of this may in fact be true is knowledge that doesn't sit well.

Even when they're just building atmosphere and plot exposition--like they will through much of the first half-hour--they'll do a good job of it. Because they'll also intersperse a healthy body of shock value through the narrative, as you'll see at more than a few locations throughout.

And, the plot will become significantly more complex than anyone saw coming. They'll be tacking on political intrigue (okay, small-town political intrigue, but still!) and some very shady business arrangements, which ramps this up past the realm of mere ghost story. Which isn't to say that "The Legend of Lucy Keyes" doesn't work as a ghost story--anything but! But what it does do is work as a ghost story, as a political thriller, as a corporate thriller (shades of "Boiler Room", anyone?), and as any combination of the above. This adds a note of quality that most movies struggle and ultimately fail to achieve.

The ending is an explosive intermingling of death and shocks, leading up to an incredible close. It's a spectacularly well-crafted ending to a spectacularly well-crafted film.

The special features include Spanish subtitles, audio options, commentary, a behind the scenes featurette, deleted scenes, filmographies, and a trailer for "The Legend of Lucy Keyes".

All in all, I'm seriously impressed with "The Legend of Lucy Keyes". One part ghost story, one part political thriller, and every part fantastic plotline, this is a legend that needs to be told.