

Movie Review

# "My Bloody Valentine" Delivers Suspense



A horror-stricken Lori Hallier attempts to knock out a "miner" who has turned a night of revelry into terror in Paramount Pictures' "My Bloody Valentine."

By RON STANG  
(Staff Writer)

Ah! The heart - that great symbol of love and romance. And Valentine's Day? Why, a celebration of the romantic, of course.

But then there's the other heart. The heart of your darkest nightmares - the horrible, bloody heart of a terrible death.

Combine the two and you have "My Bloody Valentine", a story about a sleepy, little mining town with a legacy rich in both celebration and nightmare.

Valentine Bluffs, "The Little Town with a Big Heart," as its highway welcoming sign proclaims, always celebrated its namesake's feast date in a special way.

For years, come February, townsfolk would prepare a special festival, bedecking streets and buildings with decorative hearts and banners topped off by the Valentine's Day dance.

Every year, Valentine Bluffs celebrated, that is, until that fateful day 20 years ago when one of its sons, Harry Warden (Peter Coper), deranged from his cannibalism after being

trapped six weeks as the sole survivor of a mine cave-in, returned to seek vengeance.

Incarcerated in the State Mental Hospital, he was released one year later, only to stalk the foremen on duty the night of the disaster. Dressed in a miner's uniform, he returned to the town and pick-axed them to death. Then, carving out their hearts, he delivered them in heart-shaped candy boxes to townspeople with a note warning never to hold a Valentine's dance again.

But it's now twenty years later and the horror which shocked the town has all but been forgotten. Once again Valentine Bluffs celebrates and the streets are adorned with heart-shaped decorations.

However, just when the inhabitants seem to have put the tragedy behind them, Mayor Hanniger (Larry Reynolds) receives an anonymous box of Valentine candy with a message reading, "A warning filled with bloody good cheer." The mayor unwraps the box, opening it to find a blood-soaked heart.

Alarmed, he contacts Police Chief Newby (Don Francks), both wondering if the long-ago

tragedy is repeating itself. They ask: has Harry Warden returned to town once more?

No sooner has this happened than Mabel Osborne (Patricia Hamilton), a pleasant, middle-aged woman who heads the town's decorating committee, is found bludgeoned, her body stuffed into the dryer of the laundromat she owns, a hideous cavity in her chest from where her heart's been ripped.

With her body is another note, demanding the Valentine's dance be cancelled "or I shall strike thrice."

Chief Newby acts quickly and cancels the dance. But to keep the town calm while police search for the killer, he says the reason for this is out of respect to Mabel.

However, some of the younger, rougher miners are put-off anyway and hold their own party. They head for the mine and down the shaft for an evening of revelry. Until...

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Last night's world premiere of "My Bloody Valentine" in Sydney was, of course, an honor to area residents because the film was shot on location in Sydney Mines (Valentine Bluffs) last fall.

The movie was shot and edited quickly. Production wrapped up in early November with producers telling the press to expect a North American opening date in time for Valentine's Day.

But many who witnessed the film's shooting thought those deadlines tight and wondered, given the short time frame, how good a movie would result. After seeing "My Bloody

Valentine", however, it's apparent everyone involved in this film project knew exactly what he was doing.

While not the most horrific of murder stories, the film offers enough suspense and chilling moments to make it a moderate success.

The story runs smoothly and, like all good murder pictures, holds the audience by injecting the right amount of scares at the appropriate moments (i.e. when you least expect them).

In movies like this, you don't care about the fine subtleties of acting or plot. Nor do you worry about any hidden symbolic meaning. Rather, it's gripping entertainment you're after and that's what "My Bloody Valentine" delivers.

But being Cape Bretoners, you probably won't be sorry even if murder movies aren't your particular forte. It's enough to see your own home and haunts up there on the silver screen.

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