

'Memnoch' Tells Truth About God's Creation

Just when all the controversy about Tom Cruise playing Lestat had finally seemed a distant memory, along comes Ann Rice's "Memnoch The Devil." The fifth and hopefully final book in Rice's "Vampire Chronicles" by far pales in comparison to the first books in the series. In what could be her worst book to date, "Memnoch" is sure to create more outrage and comment than any of her previous novels.

Has Rice run out of ideas to write about? In past years she has done nothing but sequels to her vampire and witch series with the novels losing steam as Rice struggles with herself to find something interesting to write about.

Lestat is Rice's most coveted character of all her novels and she needs to put this character to rest. Admittedly, Lestat was interesting in the early books but as his ego grew and the focus steered away from more interesting characters, such as Armand and Louis, he has now become so obnoxious that he seems tired and bored with himself.

In the fifth installment of one of recent literature's most famous bloodsuckers, Lestat is up to his usual preternatural antics as a frustrated vampire who challenges everything on the planet.

The newest twist to the vampire series is big surprise, Lestat has finally met God and the Devil.

After centuries of not accepting religion at any degree, religion now stares Lestat in the face. Satan, or the Ordinary Man, is taunting and following Lestat and reveals that he wants Lestat to be his lieutenant. Rice then proceeds to take her audience on a tour of Christianity from Satan's point of view, from Satan's 13 revelations of the Creation to the Crusades.

OK. Rice proceeds to glorify Satan and make him more appealing than God. Satan is God's adversary but not necessarily evil as the majority of Christians have been made to believe.

Rice's gorgeous brat is hopefully on his last adventure before Rice decides to beat this dead dog further.

Not only is Satan, or Memnoch as he prefers to be called, made to be appealing but he is also portrayed as beautiful and angelic. Excuse me but I thought Satan lost



ANNE RICE releases her latest vampire novel 'Memnoch The Devil.'

all of his angelic beauty during his fall from grace. And not only that but Memnoch's sole purpose is to get people into heaven without making people suffer the sacrifice of life.

Heaven and hell are both described in requisite detail with beautiful prose which is what makes Rice's writing so appealing. However, what may be one of the main problems with her sequels is that she works them up to current day.

"The Witching Hour" and "Interview With the Vampire" go through seemingly hundreds of pages of details set hundreds of years in the past. This is what I believe makes Rice's writing so interesting. When she brings her characters to the light of current day, something is lost and left in the past that she seems unable to successfully transfer.

Not only does Rice seem to have moved her characters into the future she seems to delete the majority of the supporting characters and plots which made earlier novels so interesting.

The storyline to "Memnoch The Devil" can be seen coming a mile away if the reader has paid attention to her past books. Now hopefully Rice realizes she may have no where to go with her beloved Lestat.

The Lestat-theology would be hard enough to swallow by a die-hard Rice fan but with her latest addition, Rice has made it clear that blood is definitely thicker than water. Anne Rice has definitely gone to the Devil.

Arcand's 'Love and Human Remains' Suffers Detachment From the World

Denys Arcand's new film, based on a play by Brad Fraser, wants to investigate the feasibility of love in a landscape of confused and shifting sexual identities and activities. As such, it sets out to run the gamut of the modern scene and its subvariants: heterosexuals, homosexuals, heterosexuals playing gay because the other gender sucks, pedophilia, S&M, transvestism, classic hedonism and (for no good reason) rape and murder.

Based as it is on a play, however, this social statement has more of the tone of a drawing room comedy than of an epic: where it needs empathy, it has style. Where it needs scope, it adds characters. Where it needs emotion, it substitutes deduction.

The film never expands its borders far enough to tackle its subject. It does, however, have its own virtues, among them style, characters, and deduction.

The film is shot in a cold mix of whites, blues, and greens emerging out of pure black, and an unorthodox use of closeups and odd angles (note the intriguing use of mirrors in the heroin scene) works well in support of the chill at Arcand's story's heart.

As the characters despair, there is a palpable feeling of colorless nights and skies. The music is well integrated into the film, particularly the eerie jingling of bells which haunts the ultraclean apartment an eccentric prostitute, played by Mia Kirshner ("Exotica").

The characters are generally interesting, and though the acting varies between student-film bad and professionally passable, the people described are differentiated and captivating (largely as a result of dialogue).

Candy (Ruth Marshall), the heroine, is a distraught woman who loves a gay man because it is safe. She is a neat freak, uttering with amusing horror near the beginning of the film, "There's a spot on my futon."



Mia Kirshner delivers a standout performance as a psychic bondage queen in Denys Arcand's 'Love and Human Remains.'

She rooms with her now-gay ex-lover David (Thomas Gibson), who is so good-looking that everybody falls for him. He has a heart of stone, though: "He's in love with you," he's told, to which he responds, "Love doesn't exist."

David hangs loose with a civil servant going quietly insane who longs for the good old days, a ravaged homosexual nightclub addict, and a 17-year-old busboy named Kane. Kane has a girlfriend but falls in love with David.

Jerry, a self-sufficient lesbian, falls hopelessly for Candy, who in turn is taken in by a philandering yutz with a wife. To round it off, Kirshner (the only really good actress in the film) plays a psychic and S&M queen who seems like generally a decent babe.

It's a wacky cast that keeps the verbal sparks coming. They account for most of the interest and entertainment value of the film.

Finally, there is deduction, and it is here that the film yields its intellectual rewards. Once we settle in for a bloodless mapping of the sexual cosmology of the current day, it's a good ride.

The geometry with which the plot unfolds, the intercutting and juxtaposing of snippets of one world and another, is not so sharp as Egoyan or Pinter, but it's still sharp, and a lot of fun.

It leaves you feeling like you've seen either the whole world or the interior of a single soul, etched in acid, queasy at its own morphing.

But to return to theme (and to the film's shortcomings), it would perhaps be best to compare this movie with last year's "Savage Nights."

"Savage Nights" had an intense, pungent feel to every social stratum it covered. It allowed itself to sprawl, in length and plot, to truly epic dimensions.

And it felt like the gasping cry of a dying man, for whom the stakes of finding love are truly as important as the soul's salvation.

By contrast, the short, trim, antiseptic "Love and Human Remains" watches the world like a tourist and searches for love from a clinical and arbitrary interest, so that the resolution of the theme is predictable and indifferent.

Sperm Cream Hits the Street

STAFF REPORT

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