



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

Van Helsing (Hugh Jackman) holds a creative meeting with Anna Valerious (Kate Beckinsale), who always listens to men with crossbows.

'Helsing' unable to rise from the grave

BY TANNER SLAYDEN
STAFF WRITER

When a bland movie such as "Van Helsing" comes out — infested with CGI money shots and marketing plays — critics and anal-retentive fans are in their element.

They say the movie has a weak plot, little character development and hum about how the film was a disappointment as if they expected strong storylines and complex characters.

Well, this "Monster Mash" movie lacks both. And if anyone thinks that these two aspects would be found in a summer blockbuster, let alone a Stephen Sommers one, then that is truly scary.

Sommers, whose other projects include "The Mummy" and the groundbreaking "The Mummy Returns," wrote and directed "Van Helsing" — or "The Mummy Returns Again."

Hugh Jackman plays Gabriel Van Helsing, a rugged, Byronic hero who rids the world of evil, supernatural beings with his courage and confidence.

Helsing also gains the love of the more conventional, endangered vixen — a fellow monster slayer named Anna Valerious (Kate Beckinsale).

They have different personalities and motives but find love through saving the world, as Rick O'Connell and Evelyn Carnahan did in the "Mummy" movies — just exchange Dracula with Imhotep and cameo persona Mr. Hyde with The Rock.

If this parallel is confusing, Kevin J. O'Connor's character should be an easier stake to swallow.

In "The Mummy," he played Beni, the comical servant of an undead master. In "Van Helsing," he plays Igor, the comical servant of an undead master. If someone sees one Sommers movie, they have seen them all.

MOVIE REVIEW 'VAN HELSING'

★★

The sad truth is this, though — original or not, the film will be seen and possibly even re-seen by movie-goers. CGI graphics and one-dimensional characters will sell and even be entertaining.

But don't be misled — the movie is horrible. But if readers need a clear, concrete reason, here is one: Sommers is a horror-movie moron.

And he demonstrates this in atrociously obvious ways.

According to the storyline developed by Sommers, vampires can terrorize in daylight, there are full moons every night and Frankenstein can shoot out lightning bolts.

Having someone like Sommers revamp old horror villains is like having Boris Karloff reinvent a character on "Friends."

"Van Helsing" will make critics say the typical "it is less painful to poke yourself in the eye" comment and horror-geeks whine about how their favorite characters have been desecrated.

But are our comments like a silver bullet and holy water?

The movie opened at number 1, grossing \$54.2 million. These types of movies are bulletproof monsters, so go waste your money on "Van Helsing" — just don't say no one warned you.

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

STAR SYSTEM

- ★ POOR
- ★★ FAIR
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★★★ EXCELLENT
- ★★★★★ CLASSIC

Double plays doom UNC in loss

BY DANIEL BLANK
SPORTS EDITOR

After Sunday's game, North Carolina coach Mike Fox spoke in a quiet, raspy voice that belied his team's frustrating performance in its loss to Maryland.

After taking the first two games of the weekend series 11-9 and 7-1, UNC fell to the Terrapins 3-1 in 11 innings at Boshamer Stadium.

Although the Tar Heels (34-12, 13-8 in the ACC) won the series, a sweep against the last-place Terrapins (20-29, 4-17) would have helped them keep pace with the rest of the conference leaders who have all swept Maryland.

"You can't afford to take any days off, and it appeared to me like that's what we did," Fox said. "We didn't deserve to win."

The loss was so frustrating for UNC because it had plenty of opportunities to win the game.

Freshman Andrew Miller had another solid start, striking out six while allowing one earned run in 6.1 innings of work.

But the offense could not come through with timely hits to get Miller run support.

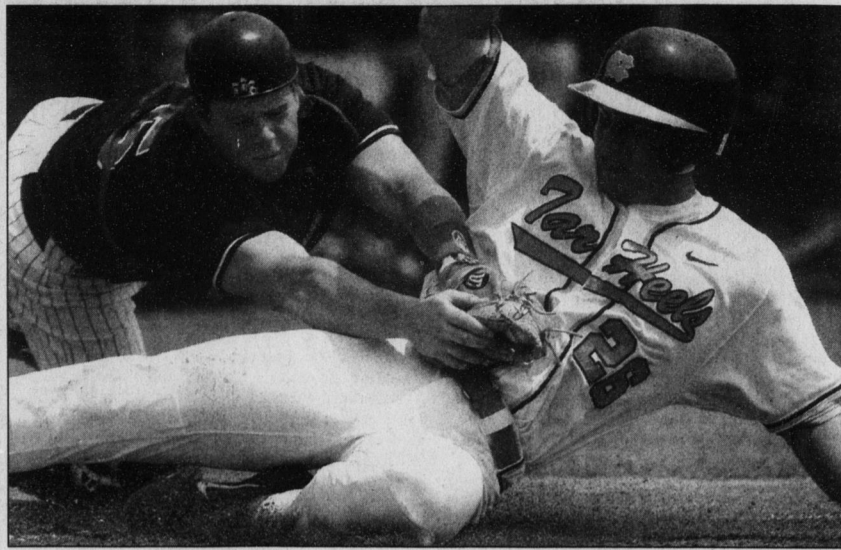
UNC hit into five double plays in the game, including one each in the ninth, 10 and 11th innings.

UNC scored its lone run when Mike Daniel hit into a bases-loaded double play in the fourth inning.

UNC had its best opportunity to win the game in the 10th.

With one out and leadoff hitter Greg Mangum up, UNC had runners on first and third.

But Mangum hit a soft ground



COURTESY OF THE YACKETY YACK/JOSHUA GREER

North Carolina junior Chris Iannetta (right) is tagged out at home by Maryland catcher Jason Maxey in the first inning of UNC's 3-1 loss on Sunday at Boshamer Stadium. The Tar Heels won the first two games of the series.

ball to second baseman Dan Melvin who turned the double play.

"We were one swing of the bat away, but it just didn't happen," Fox said.

In the top of the 11th, Maryland finally got to the Tar Heel bullpen, which had pitched 3.2 scoreless innings. Four of the first five Terrapins to bat reached base as they plated two runs.

UNC attempted a rally in the bottom of the 11th, but a Marshall Hubbard double play and a Sammy

Hewitt fly out to the warning track in right field ended the threat.

"It would have been nice to get one out of here," Hewitt said. "It seems like every time I hit the ball hard these days, it's going right at somebody."

UNC will need to put Sunday's result behind it quickly because the upcoming week will be one of its toughest this season although it won't face any ACC competition.

UNC lost to No. 7 South Carolina 9-4 in Fort Mill, S.C., on Tuesday.

UNC will travel to Miami for a weekend series with the third-ranked Hurricanes. The series will be a preview of how much tougher the ACC will be when Miami joins the conference next year.

"I think it's going to set the tone for next year," Hewitt said. "With them having such a good team, it will be a test for us to go down there and play well."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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