

Deliver us from the evil of tedious sequels

Deliver us from movies like this, when you know who's gonna get it, the soundtrack tells you when it's coming, and every other teen horror movie like it has already shown you how it's done.

Including the three other *Prom Nights*.

Yes, it's *Prom Night IV: Deliver Us From Evil*, tedious home-grown horror from some of the same mild-mannered Canadians at Norstar who brought you *Prom Night* (the 1979 hit that brought us Jamie Lee Curtis — gee, thanks — and them more than \$20 million).

And then made — surprise — a sequel called *Hello Mary Lou: Prom Night II* (1986), and in 1990 *Prom Night III: The Last Kiss*.

Except it wasn't the last anything because now there's this, which in an unprecedented burst of originality features four high school kids who don't go to the prom, but get picked on anyway. You can't win in this genre.

It's 1957. And yes, there are scenes of grinning geeks twirling to Bill Haley wannabees, but they're short, as is this priceless exchange from the pair panting and pawing in a backseat:

He: "Am I hurting you?"

She: "Shut up and take off

Movies

Catherine Dunphy



Prom Night IV: Deliver Us From Evil

Directed by Clay Borris. Starring Nikki De Boer, Alden Kane, Joy Tanner, Alle Ghabban, James Carver. Restricted (may offend some). At various Famous Playhouse theatres.

your pants."

Naturally, she is slashed to death forthwith. However, if anybody should be punished for this, I suggest the screenwriter, local boy Richard Beattie.

But then there would have been no movie because this occurs about five minutes into things and we've hardly had a chance to get into the bad guy. All we know is what we hear, and he sounds like an asthmatic Linda Blair.

Speaking of exorcising, he is Father Jonas (played by James Carver, who looks like Jeff Goldblum, only better, much better), who goes a little bit bonkers at the thought of sex and

therefore feels compelled to hang around teenage kids who think of nothing but — and then kill them.

But the church fathers discover Father Jonas's pastime and they keep him chained and drugged for 33 years in a cell deep down below a church until one day a sweet, young, okay dumb, priest (Brock Simpson) decides to skip the injection and talk some Christian charity into this ghoul.

Well, hey, Father Jonas has heard this Bible stuff before and the implication is strong here that he might be Satan anyway, so he's out of there and on his way back to the monastery where he was brought up.

Why would he go for a monastery when he's really after fornicating teens? Don't ask. This is not the kind of movie to entertain such questions.

The monastery is now the summer home of the wealthy parents of Mark (Alden Kane), who is taking Meagan (Nikki De Boer) there for a weekend of wine and seduction.

It is snowing outside; Meagan has told her parents she is camping. They and we are to believe this.

Tagging along are their friends Jeff (Alle Ghabban) and

Laura (Joy Tanner), which causes some confusion but not in the way you may first think.

Both guys are clean cut, dark haired and wearing cumberbunds (prom night, remember). Neither has any distinguishing characteristics, let alone character, so you need a program guide to the players. Here it is:

Jeff is the one who looks like Matt Dillon, and Mark has a resemblance to Tom Cruise. They both look like the guys in the jeans commercials, and maybe they are, but the press material on *Prom Night IV* is curiously not forthcoming about the players.

The girls are easier. Meagan is the dark-haired one, the virgin. She likes to cook and she goes to confession. Laura is blonde and therefore the tramp. She's been doing it a lot lately with Jeff. She hates cooking.

Both girls wear garter belts. Often. There are a lot of scenes of the girls in their garter belts. Meagan's is white, of course. Maybe director Clay Borris has a thing about garter belts. Maybe he thinks people who watch this kind of movie have a thing about garter belts.

Maybe he's right, but he's not a pro at these teen/screamers.

He's known for making *Rose's House* in 1978, a touching and funny film based on his own family and starring his mother, and three years later *Alligator Shoes*, which was invited to Cannes.

So maybe he knows all this heavy breathing, stalking and Gregorian chants aren't enough to really cut it, so he threw in a mock lesbian scene to get a few more pulses racing.

Then slipped in all those look-at-me-I'm-artistic shots of architecture so we will be impressed enough not start thinking about Father Jonas's sleek pony tail (wasn't it ducktails in '57?) or his youthful face (comas must be good for the complexion).

And, finally, gives up and gives in and sends up the very movie he's making. It's the scene when the foursome sit down to dinner in the old monastery. One of the cumberbund boys picks up his wine glass and proposes a toast.

"To Jamie Lee Curtis," he says.

"To Jamie Lee," the others echo, with guilty grins.

It's cheeky, all right. It's also the only good time they and we have during the long night of yet another prom.