

"Return of the Beast From 20,000 Fathoms, Part II"

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Originally titled "Godzilla" (Dean Devlin & Roland Emmerich, dirs.), the 1998 TriStar big monster production was re-released on DVD today with three never-before-seen minutes added in its Director's Cut Edition along with its new title: "Return of the Beast From 20,000 Fathoms." And it is the new title and packaging that has the monster movie world roaring.

No longer trying to be a Godzilla film -- what proved to be a totally unsuccessful enterprise -- this more appropriate and true-to-story title redefines TriStar's big screen production monster-hero into a definitely more believable *Beast*. (The first "Beast From 20,000 Fathoms" was released in 1953, Eugene Lourie, director; interestingly, both films open with the same atomic bomb explosion, the "Baker" shot, 21-kiloton, Bikini Atoll, 24 July 1946.) Now, when the old Japanese man in the beginning of the film, the sole survivor of the destroyed fishing vessel, says, "Gojira, Gojira, Gojira," the audience will know he is speaking metaphorically, really meaning to say, "It was *like* Godzilla! It was *like* Godzilla! It was *like* Godzilla!" Godzilla fans worldwide applaud this admission of mistaken identity by one of Hollywood's most powerful production companies. Too bad the directors didn't cut the Siskell and Ebert caricatures along with the original title.

In related news, this summer's big monster movie sequel, "Beast II" (the second installment of the "Return of the Beast From 20,000 Fathoms" trilogy), will open on Memorial Day with its new series title, once and for all distancing itself from the misnomer *Godzilla*.

"Without the burden of trying to be a Godzilla movie, a Godzilla-revival monster," said TriStar's press secretary, "'Beast II' is free to stand alone on its own two feet, no longer seeking to be something it isn't! Now the Beast can take its place unpretentiously alongside the great monsters of moviedom, King Kong, Might Joe Young, Godzilla, Reptilicus, Rodan. Besides, Godzilla was always a more philosophical creature, mythic in proportion, symbol of our own self-destruction, omen of divine retribution. Our Beast is just the biggest scary *dinosaur* in the world."

One only wonders if, in this second installment, it will be some "Beauty" who kills the "Beast." If that is so, then, according to rumors, Beauty will be packing a grenade launcher, for, as in the original "Beast from 20,000 Fathoms," this gargantua will meet its end by swallowing a rifle grenade filled with radioactive isotope. Remember, in "Godzilla 1985," Raymond Burr made a wonderful cameo appearance, to the best music of the film. Maybe the producers of "Beast II" could get Lee Van Cleef (the shooter in the original "Beast from 20,000 Fathoms") to make a similar cameo walk-on -- as Beauty's grandfather.

In a brief interview with the directors of "Return of the Beast" and "Beast II," it was stated unequivocally, "We've decided to dedicate this second film in our trilogy to the great fantasy genius, Ray Bradbury, in honor of his marvelous art and his seminal contribution to the Beast in his classic short story, 'The Fog Horn' (1951). The third Beast film will be dedicated to the masterful special effects artist Ray Harryhausen and his mentor Willis O'Brien." If you recall, Harryhausen did the effects for the original "Beast from 20,000 Fathoms," while O'Brien did the effects for the father of all great big monster films, "King Kong" (1933).

Godzilla/Gojira fans the world over continue to send letters and e-notes of appreciation to the directors and producers of "The Return of the Beast" and its sequels. Words such as "bravery beyond compare" and "unprecedented integrity" fill these communications. Certainly, all this press will only benefit what has

become the third largest movie company in the world.

"We dishonored the Big Guy," explained the co-director, "and we want to make up for our overzealous love of the great Godzilla. We are sorry, Gojira! Please, don't step on us."

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Dino-saurce - [The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms](#)

