

SCI-FI B-MOVIE PURGATORY [“Sci-Fi” Covers Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror]



RED LIGHT: STOP BEFORE IT’S TOO LATE! Here is a selection of sci-fi B-movies, in no particular order of atrociousness, representative of the worst, and yet at the same time, the “finest” that the genre has to offer. And by “finest,” we mean that these inadvertently preposterous and amusing paragons have developed a second vocation as fondly exalted, entertainingly laugh-out-loud funny movies, but for all the wrong reasons!

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| 1) The Killer Shrews (1959) | 11) Cat-Women of the Moon (1953) |
| 2) The Giant Gila Monster (1959) | 12) Attack of the Giant Leeches (1959) |
| 3) Invasion of the Saucer-Men (1957) | 13) From Hell It Came (1957) |
| 4) It Conquered the World (1956) | 14) The Brain from Planet Arous (1957) |
| 5) Robot Monster (1953) | 15) Mars Needs Women (1968) |
| 6) Bride of the Monster (1955) | 16) The Horror of Party Beach (1964) |
| 7) King Dinosaur (1955) | 17) The Monster of Piedras Blancas (1959) |
| 8) The Giant Claw (1957) | 18) Mesa of Lost Women (1953) |
| 9) Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959) | 19) The Astro-Zombies (1968) |
| 10) Killers from Space (1954) | 20) The Neptune Factor (1973) |

There are, of course, countless more, from every decade, a cavalcade of cardboard sets, foam-rubber monsters, silly science, and overwrought dialogue delivered by pedestrian performers, or those just in need of a paycheck!



YELLOW LIGHT: PROCEED WITH CAUTION! Then there are those flicks that are, for the most part, typical “B”-quality examples, but do boast some redeeming qualities—a clever idea or genre-defining concept, a smart script, well-executed direction, strong performances, or decent production design and special effects. In no particular order of noteworthiness, here are another 20 titles illustrative of this class of sci-fi B-movie:

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| 1) Cat People (1942) | 11) Target Earth (1953) |
| 2) X the Unknown (1956) | 12) Red Planet Mars (1952) |
| 3) The Man from Planet X (1951) | 13) Rocketship X-M (1950) |
| 4) The Blob (1958) | 14) The Monster that Challenged the World (1957) |
| 5) Caltiki: The Immortal Monster (1959)
<i>Italian title: Caltiki, il mostro immortale</i> | 15) The Magnetic Monster (1953) |
| 6) The She-Creature (1956) | 16) Willard (1973) |
| 7) Devil Girl from Mars (1954) | 17) Death Race 2000 (1975) |
| 8) Donovan’s Brain (1953) | 18) Swamp Thing (1982) |
| 9) Night Caller from Outer Space (1965) | 19) Q: the Winged Serpent (1982) |
| 10) Queen of Blood (1966) | 20) The Green Slime (1968) |



GREEN LIGHT: GO AHEAD, WATCH THESE AND ENJOY AMONG THE GENRE’S BEST! Finally, some genre pictures have risen above their B-movie roots to become classics or respectable cult films. These are well worth a look not as targets of derision or unintended sources of mirth, but as authentically good, and even superlative examples of sci-fi cinema, despite some silliness and a few technical shortcomings. By no means a comprehensive list, here are 20 titles, in no particular order of preference, to cleanse your palate after the above:

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| 1) The Thing from Another World (1951) | 11) Them! (1954) |
| 2) Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) | 12) It! The Terror from Beyond Space (1958) |
| 3) It Came from Outer Space (1953) | 13) The Monolith Monsters (1957) |
| 4) Invaders From Mars (1953) | 14) The Incredible Shrinking Man (1957) |
| 5) The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms (1953) | 15) Quatermass and the Pit (1967)
<i>U.S. title: Five Million Years to Earth</i> |
| 6) The Trollenberg Terror (1958)
<i>U.S. title: The Crawling Eye</i> | 16) Island of Terror (1966) |
| 7) Village of the Damned (1960)
<i>Paired with sequel, Children of the Damned (1964)</i> | 17) Planet of the Vampires (1965)
<i>Italian title: Terrore nello spazio</i> |
| 8) Five (1951) | 18) The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (1974) |
| 9) Night of the Living Dead (1968) | 19) It’s Alive (1974) |
| 10) The Fly (1958) | 20) A Boy and His Dog (1975) |



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