

REEL CRITIQUE



Uma Thurman (center) returns as the sword-wielding, vengeance-seeking fighting machine, The Bride, in the second and final installment of Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill-Vol. II." The film is Tarantino's fifth directing venture.

"Kill Bill - Vol. II" Miramax Pictures Starring Uma Thurman, Lucy Liu, Darryl Hannah, David Carradine

The Bride is back in "Kill Bill-Vol. II," the conclusion to director Quentin Tarantino's epic tribute to chop-socky Asian films. "Kill Bill-Vol. II" is a dialogue-driven character piece that, when combined with "Kill Bill-Vol. I," is possibly Tarantino's finest creation yet.

Picking up where the first film left off, audiences are reintroduced to The Bride (Uma Thurman), an assassin seeking revenge for her family's death. Driving a car down the highway, Thurman faces the camera and offers a brief rundown of the plot thus far in a stylish black-and-white scene.

The film then shifts focus to a full exploration into the wedding massacre that marked The Bride's revenge-driven actions. Discovering she was pregnant, the as-of-yet unnamed assassin fled from her boss, the titular Bill. Escaping to El Paso, the assassin makes a new life for herself. Now at her wedding rehearsal, The Bride is fully pregnant with her child and working at a record store with her soon-to-be husband, when her former boss comes calling. David Carradine plays the enigmatic Bill, with a sinister intelligence that hasn't been seen on the big screen with such power since Hannibal Lecter.

After the initial flashback, the film skips forward to where the original left off. Stalking the remaining two assassins before moving in to kill Bill, The Bride has come to kill Budd, a former assassin-turned-club-bouncer. Any sympathy audiences feel for the pathetic lug is quickly replaced with outright horror when Budd manages to knock The Bride unconscious. Unfortunately for her, Budd couldn't wait for her death and buries her alive.

Tarantino's handling of the scene is the biggest testament to his skill yet. He fills every scene with a feeling of claustrophobia and helplessness. While audiences know The Bride will find a way out, they have no idea how she will do it. The screen is completely black except for

the occasional glimpse of a frightened...
ered in shadows. The audio is...
shovelful after shovelful of dirt is...
coffin. Every second builds up the...
the tension begs to be cut with a knife...
If the first film was a violence-soaked...
bath with some dialogue, the second...
es gears 180 degrees. Featuring long...
of time filled with only dialogue, the...
balances out the first film nicely. What...
have been a more unified picture if...
had balanced out the violence and...
evenly throughout the two pictures, a...
complain too much. "Volume II" featu...
al hilarious bouts of dialogue and...
defining moments that make the film...
perfect technical feat.

"Kill Bill-Vol II" is not for every...
fans who loved the first film's gut...
action scenes, but found themselves...
through the exposition will be bored...
film. Tarantino takes his time getting...
he needs to go and stops at every...
along the way. While "Volume II" will...
not have the repeated viewing factor...
had, it ultimately may turn out to be...
the two films due to the spotlight on...
and the beautifully developed charac...
One thing is for sure - Tarantino may...
apex of his carrier on his hands with...
the epic that is "Kill Bill."



- Robert

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