

## Unlucky Days: A Tribute to the “FRIDAY THE 13TH” Series, Part Nine

Written by Professor A. Griffin  
Friday, 25 March 2011 14:16

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The home of Fred Krueger, New Line Cinema, had just done away with the dream killer in a so-so way in *FREDDY'S DEAD: THE FINAL NIGHTMARE*. When I read in *FANGORIA* that New Line was going to continue the *FRIDAY THE 13TH* series, I was overjoyed! Actually they couldn't use the title *FRIDAY THE 13TH*, for Paramount still owned the rights to the name, but no matter, New Line knows horror, so it should be great! Surely they'll treat the Sultan of Slaughter with some respect.

When *JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY* opened in 1993, I was there on opening night. Hoping against hope that New Line could make something magic happen in the woods again and that Jason's adventure in New York didn't ruin him forever.

The film opens in a way that thrilled me: gratuitous nudity (a beautiful girl in a shower) in a cabin in the woods and a familiar ki-ki-ki ma-ma-ma. Jason was home. How he GOT home is never addressed. Last time we saw him, he was dissolved in a wash of toxic waste (or somehow transformed back into a child), but here he was again in Crystal Lake in the person of Kane Hodder.

Jason looked a little weirder this time around. His head was bulbous and lumpy with strands of hair in various places (presumably a side effect of the toxic bath on his undead flesh). His new mask (that he got from *PART VIII*; see last Unlucky Days entry [here](#)) looked fused onto his face, with the skin around it settling over the edges. He still had only one eye and a bad temper. It seemed that New Line and director Adam Marcus decided to ignore *JASON TAKES MANHATTAN*, which is fine, we'd all like to do the same.



The opening continues in a classic fashion with our nubile honey running from Jason out of her cabin and into the woods, the Crystal Lake killer in hot pursuit, heck she even falls down during

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the chase for old times sake. Suddenly, THE FBI SHOWS UP!!! Searchlights, helicopters and hordes of government soldiers with machine guns and bazookas come out of nowhere. They descend on the very confused Jason (I knew just how he felt) and BLOW HIM TO PIECES!!!!

Uh...

"Ok, let's see where they go with this one," I thought to myself, squirming in my seat. Apparently the entire opening was an elaborate sting operation (with live bait) to trap, attack and destroy the infamous serial killer, Jason Voorhees. Jason was in pieces, and undead or not, nothing's going to make him walk again.

The body parts are taken away to the morgue and as the doctor conducting the autopsy examines Jason's heart, it starts beating!! Something very strange takes over him, a force beyond his control, and he PICKS UP JASON'S BLACK HEART AND EATS IT!

There is a sudden change in his stance and his look and he promptly butchers his lab assistants in brutal bloody ways before escaping out into the night. On the table, the body of Jason Voorhees, only son of Pamela Voorhees, that's been through so much, lies still and quiet. And in pieces. There is no more Jason.

The SPIRIT of Jason Voorhees, however, apparently lives on. The dark evil that kept him alive through so much abuse now possessed the body of the coroner (Richard Gant), and Jason is alive again. In this installment, the writers (Dean Lorey and Jay Huguely) obviously tried to infuse some new blood (sorry) into the tired old franchise by: 1) trying to explain Jason's invulnerability; 2) using the body-jumping theme from an earlier New Line film, THE HIDDEN; and 3) giving Jason the new goal of finding his sister. WHOA! Sister? Jason was an only child! That's what Mrs. Voorhees said in the first film, that was the basis of her rage and grief... What sister? Well, apparently sometime after Jason drowned, Pamela Voorhees had another child and apparently gave the baby up for adoption. THEN she went bonkers and vengefully butchered all the kids at the summer camp. Sigh, OK, we'll go with it. In addition, Jason also has a niece, Jessica Kimble (Kari Keegan), and she plays an important part in the highly mystical storyline.

A bounty hunter character, Creighton Duke (Steven Williams), is introduced and claims Jason is

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still alive, jumping from body to body. Apparently, he’s been hunting Jason for quite a while. Remember what happened to the last Jason hunter in THE FINAL CHAPTER? Not a safe occupation. He tells Jessica, “Through a Voorhees he was born, through a Voorhees he will be reborn and only through a Voorhees can he be destroyed.” All very confusing.

The Voorhees house is searched and a startling find is unearthed, the NECRONOMICON. Yes, the Book of the Dead written by the Mad Arab Abdul Alzar and made famous by Sam Raimi in THE EVIL DEAD. Even THE EVIL DEAD dagger makes a cameo appearance.

The biggest problem in JASON GOES TO HELL is that is NOT a FRIDAY THE 13TH movie both in name and in theme. We see a recognizable Jason Voorhees only in the beginning (before he is blown up) and then throughout the film only in mirrors that show him in his traditional hockey mask-wearing glory when the possessed victims are reflected in them. Jason’s exposed spirit by the way looks like a fanged snake or slug.

So, Pamela Voorhees’ little special boy was possessed by a slug-demon? Was she involved in black magic? That would explain the finding of the NECRONOMICON. Was it a curse? A family trait? The film was hurting my head.



The spirit of Jason jumps from body to body, brutally killing whoever gets in his way until he can find his sister, Diana. Apparently, if the little slug-demon possesses a body of a true Voorhees, the last living Voorhees, then Jason will be reborn and immortal again. So, we’ve got a little of THE EXORCIST, EVIL DEAD, THE HIDDEN and HALLOWEEN, but very little actual FRIDAY THE 13TH. The real shame is that the special FX in this entry were great! The gore was cranked back up for some really gruesome kills, and Jason (or whomever he was possessing at the time) was really piling up the bodies. Twenty kills total this time, including the bodies of the people he possessed, for after he uses them up, they fall lifeless. He even kills himself (in a way) as Hodder, who actually had little to do in the film as Jason proper, also plays a FBI agent

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who is killed by one of the Jason-hosts.

Jason does eventually find Diana Kimble (Erin Grey) and possesses her body. Problem is, she is already dead as the creature enters her (between her legs in a very tasteless moment), and the Jason that is reborn is the exact same toxic-waste-scarred, mask-fused-on, rotting Jason we saw at the beginning. The rebirth scene is handled in a very exciting way, and the appearance of the Sultan of Slaughter in full regalia is almost a relief to diehard Jasonophiles. Of course it was the end of the movie, so we knew we weren't going to have him for long.

The reborn Jason then crushes the life out of Creighton Duke and turns his attention to his sister's daughter, his niece. However, using the mystic power of the NECRONOMICON, Jessica opens up a pit into hell itself, and Jason is grabbed by some very large and slightly Muppetlike demon hands and dragged into the Abyss.

What happened? Where's my Jason who stalked unwary teenagers engaging in premarital sex? Where's the rage and brutality of the Killer of Crystal Lake?



I left JASON GOES TO HELL with mixed emotions. Yes, it was better than PART VIII, and it had lots of gore and some excellent gross-out scenes, but it just didn't feel right. It didn't thrill or excite me. If the movie was about an unknown serial killer/evil spirit who went jumping from body to body in search of rebirth, it would have been a fantastic fright flick, as a FRIDAY THE 13TH, it just didn't work.

At the very end of JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY, we see Jason's mask lying on the ground where the pit closed up after him. The camera pans slowly toward it. The audience jumped and then cheered when a familiar razor fingered glove burst out of the ground, grabbed the hockey mask and pulled it back down into the underworld. It was though Fred Krueger, Jason's archrival, was confirming the fact that the reign of the slasher film was dead. In 1993, Beavis and Butthead ruled pop culture and slasher films were only curiosities, a vestige from a bygone era. I was certain that JASON GOES TO HELL was the true end of my favorite slasher.

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Rest in peace, (again) Jason Voorhees.

But wait...what's that? Can you hear it? Getting louder and stronger. Screams. Screams in... space! 1979's ALIEN told us, In Space, No One Can Hear You Scream, but if you listen very closely, you can hear...ki, ki, ki, ma, ma, ma.

TO BE CONTINUED