

## "[REC] 3: GENESIS" (Film Review)

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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This may not be what any serious fan of the so-far stellar [REC] series wants to hear, but the departure that is [REC] 3 is possibly the sweetest, most endearing film I've seen in quite some time; throat rips, chainsaws, gut munches and vicious possessed included.

Pegged as a prequel (though that's debatable, since it may have been going on concurrently), [REC] 3: GENESIS is very admittedly a shock to the system of anyone who's acquainted with the previous films. The first two entries are tightly knit siblings. They're perfect companions that craft a double feature to die for, but as the two directors split off to helm the subsequent sequels solo, audiences will come face to face with what seems to be an awkward cousin, or even the famous "red headed stepchild," or perhaps even more appropriately, the one who just married into the family. But GENESIS is blood relative, and deserves to be loved.

The film opens as families gather to celebrate the union of Carla (Leticia Dolera) and Koldo (Diego Martin), and through a camcorder clutching cousin, a professional wedding videographer and the security cameras on the grounds, the aesthetic is in line with [REC] 1 & 2, but the tone has radically begun to push away. Lighthearted and seeming to poke fun at the obvious visual gap between real consumer cameras and what we're asked to believe is such in popular found footage cinema, cousin Adrian and the hired documentarian host amusing exchanges (about cinema verite, no less, seemingly to set us up not to take everything so seriously) while letting the audience get to know the entire guest list, and it works amazingly. The entire first act is fun and earnest, adeptly and quickly welcoming Clara, Koldo and those they've invited to their special day right into our hearts— an aspect that keeps the film anchored once the inevitable happens, and GENESIS goes off the wall.



Once the infection, a most uninvited guest, crashes the reception, Plaza makes the (certain to be divisive) choice to cut off the POV we've become accustomed to. In a moment that plays out

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in almost every single film that utilizes the style, the question of "why are you still filming" is this time finally answered with a foot to the camera, and instantly we're off and running in a more classical narrative visual language; albeit one that's at times beautiful, visceral and deadpan.

This deadpan, over-the-top and widely grinning attitude that GENESIS wears will certainly throw viewers off. As Clara and Koldo are separated and spend much of the running time in search of one another, ultra splattery gags, literal knight's armor (a possible reference to medieval nature of ARMY OF DARKNESS, as this film certainly takes on that threequel's more buoyant tone), and dialogue levities ("I only invited you because I didn't think you'd come") are abound. And truth be told, it's all very crowd pleasing.

When Plaza and his co-writer Luis Berdejo (who penned the first film alongside Plaza and Jaume Balaguero) misstep, it's because the sudden shift in atmosphere is often their only surprise. Sadly, having thrown POV out the window, so flew the unpredictability and tautness of the previous films, leaving the macabre, boisterous deaths and scares telegraphed, and just a little less satisfying than they should have been.

Still, Dolera and Martin are *so good* as the heart of the film. Wholly believable and worth investing in, their love and determination to find each other, midst all the blood spew, makes [REC] 3 a treat. As a true scare story, a la its predecessors, it's ineffective. As a blackly comedic, astonishingly romantic Grand Guignol, it excels.

