



**BENEATH THE
PLANET
OF THE
APES**

CHRIS LEE in
His New
DRACULA Film

PLUS:- "Smash
Gordon"/"Buck
Rogers"/Movie
News; and the
HEADITORIAL

[Etc.]

CASTLE of FRANKENSTEIN





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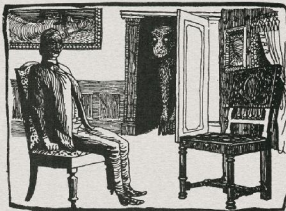
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AN ARTHUR P. JACOBS PRODUCTION

BENEATH ↓ THE PLANET OF THE APES



BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES

Cast & credits:

20th-Fox—APJAC Prods. Released mid-June/70. Running time: 95 minutes. Panavision; color. Produced by Arthur P. Jacobs; directed by Ted Post.

Starring Charlton Heston as Taylor; James Franciscus as Brent; Kim Hunter as Zira; Maurice Evans as Dr. Zaius; Linda Harrison as Rose; Paul Richards as Mendez; Victor Buono as Pat Mann; James Gregory as Ullus; Jeff Corey as Caspary; plus: Natalie Trundy, Thom as Gomez, David Watson, Don Pedro Collier, Tod Andrews, Greg Sierra, Eldon Burke, Lou Wagner.

ALL those moviegoers who wondered what were the fates of Charlton Heston and Linda Harrison after they headed into the Forbidden Zone at the end of *PLANET OF THE APES* two years ago will have a chance to find out this year in this fascinating sequel. 20th has created a follow-up which starts off exactly where the 1968 film ended. In fact, the final scene of the earlier film serves as a prologue to the present one.

As a rule, film sequels seem to bear the "sequel curse" and have been notoriously inferior to their originals; but the curse for the moment seems to have gotten lifted by Paul Dehn and Mort Abrahams (who both wrote the story, Abrahams scripting)—they used their imaginations aptly in dreaming up further adventures for the Pierre Boulle characters (Abrahams has a rich background in SFantasy work he's done over the years, particularly for TV, and goes all the way back to 1952-53 when he worked on ABC-TV's marvellous production of *TALES OF TOMORROW* every week).

Apparently not wanting to take a long role in a sequel but willing to do a short one (with special billing) to tie the films together, his Taylor character makes a mysterious disappearance early in the movie. He turns up again for an explosive climax, however.

Meanwhile Linda Harrison (actually Mrs. Richard Zanuck in her other life), as Nene, the human who can't talk, is sent out into the desert to discover yet another American astronaut whose ship has also crashed on the planet of the apes. James Franciscus as the 'naut plays her companion in a series of mishaps in which both are captured by the apes and escape with the assistance of the married couple of chimpanzee psychologists who were in the original (Kim Hunter plays her role again, but David Watson has replaced Roddy McDowell). Franciscus and Miss Harrison then make their way to the subterranean area referred to in the title, which is nothing less than the ruins of New York City after a nuclear war. It is inhabited by a weird race of mutants with superior mental powers whose domain the apes invade in a bloody climactic battle in which both sides meet up with horrible results.

A weakness is that *BENEATH* lacks the cover-tail novelty of its predecessor in its unique concept of a universe in which simians act like humans but rule over the latter while holding them in slavery. The sequel is also deficient in the droll humor of the original. There is also some obvious—not to mention obnoxious—proselytizing over the folly of war that sometimes threatens to turn the picture into a sermon.

Preducer-director Richard Zanuck's hold on luscious lovely Linda Harrison shouldn't be misconstrued if it is interpreted as overly affectionate. Harrison fans, do not grieve too deeply. Yep—she's also Mrs. Zanuck.



But most of it is fun. The sets, especially those of NYC's ruins, are exquisite; and the make-up designed by John Chambers for the apes in the first film is repeated with fidelity. Another *writer-carrying-over* from the first *PLANET* is Maurice Evans, and a new character — a militant ape general — is well played by James Gregory. Acting throughout is nevertheless no more than adequate.

Being yet another critique — this time: anepit the socio-esoterical SFantasy significance and metaphysical eroticism of
BENEATH
THE
PLANET
OF
THE APES
by the hon. resident critic at large:
Sir Buddy McWeiss

Taylor and Nova gallop through the Forbidden Zone and—Zoo? Taylor suddenly disappears, Nova rides bareback (and to some extent barefront) all by herself until, just by coincidence

she runs across Brent who just happened to cross the Time Barrier into the future to search for the missing Taylor. And so Nova and Brent ride off into the sunset to find Charlton Heston and brave the perils of Ape City.

The main problem with the film is contrivance. The first portion deals with Brent (James Franciscus) and Nova (Linda Harrison) being captured by the apes, receiving aid from simian do-gooders Zira and Cornelius, and finally escaping. We do have, however, a new element in what so far seems to be nothing more than a rehash of *PLANET OF THE APES*. James Gregory plays a power-hungry warrior-general called Ursus who believes in seeking territorial expansion for the ape empire through the use of warfare. All thru the streets of Ape City are seen groups of young simians carrying signs saying "Doom comes soon" and "Unite In Peace," which is supposed to be extremely relevant and timely. So far though, all we have is monotonous continuity and transparent contrivance.

When Brent and Nova enter the Underground city, the real merits of the film begin to take hold. The mat shots involving the ruins of Radio City Music Hall and the N.Y. Stock Exchange are quite effective. The remains of the Queensborough Plaza subway station is also very good (even if it in no way resembles its real counterpart).

We also get our first look at the underground mutants who use non-visual thought projection to inflict pain upon Brent and Nova, and yet not harm them physically. It is a weapon of illusion, just as their visual deterrents (the pillar of fire

and curtain of rain) to help keep their enemies away. Because the brains of the apes are so small, they are unable to hold the mental suggestions of the mutants, leaving the creatures basically defenseless. On top of all this, these underground creatures worship a cobalt bomb, responding to it as God's instrument on earth.

All of this leads up to an eventual confrontation between the mutants and the apes, and a reunion among Nova, Taylor and Brent.

So we have basically a film with good special effects, devoid of blatant sexual excitement (a la G rating), and is generally always interesting, at the very least. But it's certainly hardly at all as memorable as the original of '68, and what bothers me most is that its basic source of inspiration seems to have sprung from a dollar sign rather than an idea. The production will undoubtedly make money on the strength of *PLANET*, but I'm sure most people will be somewhat let down after seeing this new effort.

The ending will not be revealed, but you can be sure there won't be a sequel to *BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES*!

— Sir Buddy McWeiss —

