

SUPERNATURAL Always Gets Their Goatman



SUPERNATURAL

Season 12, Episode 18 "The Memory Remains"

Written by John Bring

Directed by Philip Sgriccia

With episodes like this it's good to remember that *Supernatural's* main mission is not what I watch it for. I watch for the characters, the stories, the brotherly moments, and the vast mythology that's been developed over the years. Its main mission is to scare the crap out of people. In that respect, it does a good job.

When the episode started, I found myself wishing that we would find that Mick (Adam Fergus) was alive and he and Ketch (David Haydn-Jones) had fooled Dr. Hess (Gillian Barber). It was a very small wish, because lying on a table with blood around your head and your eyes open looks pretty dead. They do use the excuse I thought they would. Mick was sent back to England in disgrace.



SPOILERS

A group of young people are partying in the woods, with beer and a fire. One of the guys heads home, walking alone in the woods, which is never a good idea. He gets got by a human trap. His buddy hears him and arrives in time to see a goatman (Bill Mikolai) knock him out with a rubber mallet.

Goatman looks a lot like Krampus. He's not, though, he's a man in a costume. This is obvious to us, the viewers, because he hits the guy with a rubber mallet. A monster would have claws or teeth or super strength or an archaic weapon. Also, who can go to the store to buy mallets and backpacks when you look like that?

Sam and Dean get a note from “Mick” about the case. It’s Ketch, trying to get them to leave the bunker so he can search it.

Sam and Dean go to Wisconsin and talk to the sheriff, who is working on a stuffed stoat, I think. Immediately he’s the main suspect for me, because who else but a taxidermist would be good at making a goat costume? He tells them the missing guy, Jared Hayes (Daniel Doheny), had a hard life and probably just bailed. They talk to the best friend, Daryn (Antonio Marziale), who tells them it was Black Bill, the local goat man. They talk to the missing guy’s boss. He worked at a meat packing plant, which isn’t the least suspicious. The boss is a jerk, not being the least bit concerned with the missing guy and chewing out Daryn even though he saw his friend get grabbed.



Oh Man. My job sucks, my friend got kidnapped by Black Bill the Goatman, and now the Feds catch me with reefer. (Photo: Diyah Pera/The CW)

Dean is distracted by a pretty blonde waitress (Aliasha Pearson) and is overconfident because of the Colt. If he had been seriously working the case, he might not have ended up as the damsel in distress.

Daryn gets got by the goatman, and ends up in a meat locker watching Jared get eaten by something we can’t see.

Sam and Dean find out that Sheriff Bishop owns the meat packing plant and used to own the town before he started selling things off years ago. They check out the family's abandoned mansion and hit pay dirt. There is a murder room in the basement, behind a door with many locks. There's a table that tilts towards a grate in the floor.

The sheriff catches them and tells them the story of his family. They made a deal with Moloch (John DeSantis) after catching and imprisoning him. This is the same god that plagued *Sleepy Hollow's* first season. The family invented Black Bill, the Goatman, to cover up the fact that they had been killing a person a year and feeding them to Moloch. Sheriff Bishop had been trying to make amends for the last twenty years and hoping Moloch would starve to death. Bishop is not the killer. Moloch's cage is empty.



Do I look like a Goatman? No, don't answer that. (Photo: Diah Pera/The CW)

They hear a sound upstairs and Dean goes up, alone, to see what it is. How stupid is that? They are assuming it's Moloch, and Dean has the Colt. He's distracted by an empty goatman suit and knocked out from behind.

It's Sheriff Bishop's brother, the jerk manager, who luckily likes to talk and thus gives us all the exposition. Pete Garfinkle (Ryan MacDonald) resented being born on the wrong side of the blanket and was angry because of Sheriff Bishop's disposal of the family property. Pete found Moloch and

was fattening him up, hoping he would make him rich.

Dean goes a few rounds with Moloch and Sam and Sheriff Bishop go a few rounds with the brother, who has stolen the Colt. Dean is getting the worst of it, which I'm not sure he doesn't deserve. Sam and Bishop defeat Pete. Sam bursts in and shoots Moloch with the Colt just in time. It kills the monster.

When Ketch was finished searching the bunker, he made two mistakes. One was that he took Dean's picture of his mother and himself from before she died. Dean may not look at those often, but it will be missed. The other is that he planted a big honking microphone under the table. The same table that Dean keeps a holster under. Don't the Men of Letters, London Chapter, have the newest technology? How long before that is found? When the boys check in, they find out that Mick is gone and Ketch is their contact. Making the old saying true, Ketch the eavesdropper hears nothing good about himself, leaving him staring at the picture he purloined.

This is a middle of the road filler episode. It makes it very frustrating because we don't know where Cas is, we don't know where Kelly and her devil spawn is, and we don't know if Eileen is okay. I am assuming that Mary is actually hunting a chupacabra in Mexico.

I suppose it's building tension that we took this little side trip but it also makes me a little crazed.

The bulk of the story was classic horror. Or, as Maia Ades said, they used every horror trope in the book. The basement, the murder room (and why do they need torture implements if all they are doing is feeding blood to Moloch?), the meat locker, and even walking in the woods. One of the things they did right is that we never see Moloch in his entirety. Just a clawed hand, or a silhouette through plastic. The imagination is much more frightening than a monster in daylight. Seeing it is the first step to accepting it. In contrast, we first see the goatman in the dark, and then increasingly in daylight until he is unmasked.



We have to use flashlights because the light bulb blew up. (Photo: Diyah Pera/The CW)

The goatman is taken from an urban legend of a goatman in Wisconsin. There's one in Maryland, too. *Supernatural* started out with urban legends before it developed its own mythology and has never left its macabre modern mythology beginnings.

I've seen this episode described as if they faced Pan, or a Greek god, or a faun or satyr. That's the false monster, the goatman made up by the Bishop family. The real monster, Moloch, is a Canaanite god from the old testament. He has a bull's head and is associated with human sacrifice. So yes, they did kill a god but not a Greek one.

There's a bit of humor but not as much as in say, the bunnyman episode, "Plush". Surely there are as many comedic possibilities with a goatman.

There is one scene that's a little deeper, and related to the ongoing story of the boys' heroes journey. Sam and Dean are talking about what they will leave behind, and they carve their initials in the desk along with flashbacks of the two of them carving their initials in the Impala when they were small. Too small to be handling those knives! It's almost too much but it's so cute I forgive them.



Little vandals. (Photo by Teresa Wickersham. Taken of Mary the Impala.)

Next week it looks like we find out what happened to Cas.

Supernatural airs on the CW at 8pm/7c on Thursday.

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