

## Tales From The Dark Side ★★½

---

**Year of Release:** 1990

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** Skip It

---

Taken on its own merits, *Tales From the Dark Side: The Movie* is not a masterpiece, but it is a decent collection of horror stories, a la *Creepshow* and *Cat's Eye*.

*Tales From the Dark Side* takes its name from George Romero's low-budget TV series. The film version features three ghoulish tales plus a wrap-around story which connects everything together. Three of the four stories are worth checking out, including the wrap-around which stars Deborah Harry as a housewife preparing for a dinner party. For the main course, Harry plans to bake a ten-year-old boy, whom she has locked up in her kitchen dungeon. As she preheats the oven and chops up the vegetables, the boy tries to distract her by reading horrifying stories from a book called "Tales From the Dark Side."

The first tale, "Lot 249," is based on a story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and it's easily the weakest in the movie. Screenwriter Michael McDowell has prepared a woefully bland revenge thriller featuring a rotting mummy, who murders his vic-

tims by mummifying them. "Lot 249" is essentially a third rate *Friday the 13th*-style slasher movie.

The second tale, "Cat From Hell" (written by Romero and based on a story by Stephen King), is the most stylish and rousing. William Hickey plays a grouchy old millionaire who pays Mafia hit man David Johansen \$100,000 to ice an evil black cat. Johansen is wonderfully greasy as the overconfident thug who soon discovers he's no match for *this* cat.

The third tale, "Lover's Vow," is notable mostly for its dazzling special effects. Written by McDowell, "Lover's Vow" stars James Remar and Rae Dawn Chong in a gruesome and gory love story involving a monstrous gargoyle. The transformation scene seems kind of passé coming on the heels of last decade's werewolf and fly movies, but fortunately, the spectacular effects compensate for the lack of originality.

Taken as a whole, *Tales From the Dark Side* is fun but frivolous; like the television series, it goes in one ear and out the other.