

Mark
HELAN

THE BEST FILMS OF THE DECADE:

**TUCKER & DALE
VS. EVIL**

Tucker and Dale vs. Evil (2010) went through quite an ordeal just to find a way to be seen. Had it not been for film critic Leonard Maltin's zealous championing of the film, I would've never come across this highly original and hysterically brilliant horror/comedy.

Years after its release, it's difficult to imagine in retrospect what exactly prevented this unique picture from being banked on by a distributor. Perhaps the two leads, sublimely played by Alan Tudyk and Tyler Labine, weren't established enough frontmen to persuade an audience, or the premise was a little too "out there" for mainstream moviegoers...or maybe the ravishing Katrina Bowden just wasn't pretty enough? Whatever the reason, I haven't met a single person who came away from this film disenchanted.

Now, a decade after its release, its obscurity may well be an asset, allowing this delightful escapade of mirth and mayhem to be appreciated on a greater scale as a "best kept secret" of the 2010s.

First things first, *Tucker and Dale vs. Evil* barely qualifies as a horror film but, to be fair, it never really tries. While the blood and gore flow steadily enough to placate genre enthusiasts, it seldom detracts from the film's seemingly organic way of maintaining the element of surprise. Where the film may fall short in the fright realm it more than atones with its own unique sense of wit.

As for Tucker and Dale themselves, I can't think of a more ideal pairing than Tudyk and Labine, who are utterly fantastic as the infectiously lovable hillbillies. It's also refreshing to have Bowden's character buck the trends of a hapless damsel in distress to an engaging supporting role.

It's worth mentioning that beneath all of the macabre and silliness there is an important more in-depth story to be told in *Tucker and Dale vs. Evil*. Below its blood-soaked exterior lies a thought-provoking parable as most of the horrific mishaps and grisly ends to its victims are the byproduct of miscommunication and prejudice. One can traverse hidden meaning if they're inclined to do so...at the possibility of robbing the film of its fun.

Tucker and Dale vs. Evil is a breath of fresh air. Smart, hilarious, and full of energy. While it's definitely hard to pigeonhole such a film, there's no denying its ability to shock and awe in the best sense marking it among one of the decade's most pleasant surprises.



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**TUCKER & DALE
vs. EVIL (2010)**

D: Eli Craig

C: Tyler Labine, Alan Tudyk, Katrina Bowden, Jesse Moss, Philip Granger, Brandon Jay McLaren, Christie Laing, Chelan Simmons, Travis Nelson, Alex Arsenault, Adam Beauchesne, Joseph Allan Sutherland.

