So bad, they’re good

The Sword & Sorcery Movies of the 1980’s

- The Sword & Sorcery Movies of the 1980’s
- Not covering other films like Kull the Conquerer because it was 1990’s
- Super cut of S & S movies
- The posters tend to depict a movie much more interesting than what actually turned out.
- Lots of exposed flesh.
The Riddle of Steal

- Magic & monsters
- Swordplay & Violence
- Shirtless muscular males
- Scantily clad women (and sometimes gratuitous nudity)
- S & S Timeline & sub-genres
Barbarians
Conan the Barbarian (1982)

- **Director**: John Milius
- **Writer**: John Milius
- **Stars**: Arnold Schwarzenegger, James Earl Jones, Max von Sydow

- The one that started it all
- Milius (Red Dawn 1984)
- Max Von Sydow in new Star Wars Ep 7
- Arnold had to tone down workout to wield a sword correctly
- Arnold’s own hair, did all his own stunts
- Conan the Barbarian (1982)
- Swordplay after recovering from being crucified
The Beastmaster (1982)

- **Director**: Don Coscarelli
- **Writer**: Don Coscarelli
- **Stars**: Marc Singer, Tanya Roberts

- Director: The Phantasm series, Bubba Ho-Tep (Bruce Campbell)
- Marc Singer: V TV Series
- Painted panther (white mouth from drinking)
- Eagle dropped from trapdoor of hot air balloon
- The Beastmaster (1982)
- Pregnancy (cut baby from his mother)
Fire and Ice (1983)

- **Director**: Ralph Bakshi
- **Writer**: Ralph Bakshi, Frank Frazetta
- **Stars**: Randy Norton, Cynthia Leake

- Bakshi best known for LOTR animated & Wizards
- Films live action, then animated over
- Thomas Kinkaid one of the background painters
- Content shocking for a “kids film”
- Fire and Ice (1983)
- Weird orgasmic ice explosion
Deathstalker (1983)

- **Director:** James Sbardellati
- **Writer:** Howard Cohen
- **Stars:** Rick Hill, Barbi Benton, Lana Clarkson

- Director: Second unit on Frailty (2001)
- Deathstalker (1983)
- IMDB notes that actor: Rick Hill “wore a wig” during production.
Conquest (1983)

- **Director**: Lucio Fulci
- **Writer**: Gino Capone
- **Stars**: Jorge Rivero, Andrea Occhipinti

- More caveman than barbarian
- Smoke & fog (dark cave scene)
- Conquest (1983)
- Bone fighting and “my enemies call me...”
Conan the Destroyer (1984)

- **Director:** Richard Fleischer
- **Writer:** Roy Thomas
- **Stars:** Arnold Schwarzenegger, Grace Jones

- Director: 20,000 Leagues, Fantastic Voyage, Red Sonja
- Milius unavailable to direct. Studio saw success of E.T. and wanted something more family friendly
- Conan the Destroyer (1984)
- Sword fight with comic relief
The Devil's Sword (1984)

- **Director:** Ratno Timoer
- **Writer:** Imam Tantowi
- **Stars:** Barry Prima, Gudi Sintara

- Indonesian film
- Ultra-violent
- Obvious heavy Asian influence
- The Devil's Sword (1984)
- Fighting alligator people
Deathstalker II (1987)

- **Director**: Jim Wynorski
- **Writer**: Jim Wynorski
- **Stars**: John Terlesky, Monique Gabrielle

- More comedy. Doesn’t take itself seriously and low budget works for it. Really a lot of fun.
- Dungeons and Dragons feel
- Deathstalker II (1987)
- Opening fight sequence
Heroines
Sorceress (1982)

- **Director:** Jack Hill
- **Writer:** Jim Wynorski
- **Stars:** Leigh Harris, Lynette Harris

- Roger Corman produced
- Harris twins: Playboy bunnies
- Director: Disowned the picture
- Winged lion: Hand puppet
- Sorceress (1982)
- Monkey attack
The Warrior and the Sorceress (1984)

• **Director**: John C. Broderick
• **Writer**: John C. Broderick
• **Stars**: David Carradine, Luke Askew, Maria Socas

- Roger Corman produced
- An S&S adaptation of Akira Kurosawa's classic Yojimbo
- David Carradine at his most bored
- Maria Socas in Amazons
- The Warrior and the Sorceress (1984)
- Bored fighting
Barbarian Queen (1985)

- **Director**: Héctor Olivera
- **Writer**: Howard R. Cohen
- **Stars**: Lana Clarkson, Katt Shea

- Writer also wrote Deathstalker
- Lana Clarkson - murdered by creepy music producer Phil Spector
- Barbarian Queen (1985)
- Wedding day
**Red Sonja (1985)**

- **Director**: Richard Fleischer
- **Writer**: Clive Exton
- **Stars**: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Brigitte Nielsen, Sandahl Bergman

- Director: Conan the Destroyer
- Robert E Howard character
- Arnold did film as “cameo” for De Lorentis but they tricked him with camera angles to make him co-star
- Sandahl Bergman as villain (from Conan)
- Brigitte married to Stallone at the time
- Red Sonja (1985)
- Fighting sorceress
Amazons (1986)

- **Director**: Alejandro Sessa
- **Writer**: Charles Saunders
- **Stars**: Penelope Reed, Joseph Whipp

- Cast of nobodies. Joseph Whipp best known for Nightmare on Elm Street (Sgt. Parker)
- Amazons (1986)
- Passing through the “wereways”
Medieval
Hawk the Slayer (1980)

- Director: Terry Marcel
- Writer: Terry Marcel
- Stars: Jack Palance, John Terry

- TV movie first
- Parallels to Star Wars (Giant & dwarf = R2D2 & C3PO, bad guy mask like Darth Vader)
- Actor: Gort (giant) plays Cyclops in Krull
- Hawk the Slayer (1980)
- Machine gun arrows
Excalibur (1981)

- **Director:** John Boorman
- **Writer:** Rospo Pallenberg
- **Stars:** Nigel Terry, Helen Mirren

- Director: Deliverance
- Helen Mirren (Red, The Queen, 2010)
- Excalibur (1981)
- Breaking sword
Sword of the Valiant (1984)

- **Director**: Stephen Weeks
- **Writer**: Stephen Weeks
- **Stars**: Miles O'Keeffe, Cyrielle Clair

- Sean Connery cameo
- Astoundingly bizarre opening with violent beheadings and comedy
- Sword of the Valiant (1984)
- Beheading
Ladyhawke (1985)

- **Director**: Richard Donner
- **Writer**: Edward Khmara
- **Stars**: Matthew Broderick, Rutger Hauer, Michelle Pfeiffer

- Donner: Superman, Lethal Weapon, Goonies
- Writer: Enemy Mine
- Synth soundtrack
- Ladyhawke (1985)
- Bird being shot
Highlander (1986)

- Director: Russell Mulcahy
- Writer: Gregory Widen
- Stars: Christopher Lambert, Sean Connery

- Medieval with fantasy elements
- Sean Connery
- Queen soundtrack
- Highlander (1986)
- Parking garage sword battle
Fantasy & Sci-Fi
Flash Gordon (1980)

- **Director:** Mike Hodges
- **Writer:** Lorenzo Semple Jr.
- **Stars:** Sam J. Jones, Melody Anderson, Max von Sydow

- Queen soundtrack
- Max Sydow 70 lbs costume
- Flash Gordon (1980)
- Spiked platform fight
Dragonslayer (1981)

- **Director**: Matthew Robbins
- **Writer**: Hal Barwood, Matthew Robbins
- **Stars**: Peter MacNicol, Caitlin Clarke

- A little medieval but heavy fantasy focus
- Peter MacNicol best known for Ghostbusters II
- One of first ILM effects films (done between Star Wars and Empire) [Go Motion Camera]
- Great dragon effects
- Dragonslayer (1981)
- Shield & fire
Clash of the Titans (1981)

- **Director:** Desmond Davis
- **Writer:** Beverley Cross
- **Stars:** Laurence Olivier, Harry Hamlin

- Laurence Olivier very ill during production
- Writer also wrote Jason and Argonauts
- Famous for Ray Harryhausen’s brilliant stop-motion effects
- Clash of the Titans (1981)
- Medusa
Yor, the Hunter from the Future (1983)

- Director: Antonio Margheriti
- Writer: Ray Collins
- Stars: Reb Brown, Corinne Cléry

- Yor, the Hunter from the Future (1983)
- Top 100 most enjoyable “bad movies” list of Razzies
- Prehistoric and Sci-Fi mixed together
- Only have VHS version so no clip
Krull (1983)

- **Director**: Peter Yates
- **Writer**: Stanford Sherman
- **Stars**: Ken Marshall, Liam Neeson

- Combines Medieval, Sci-Fi, & Fantasy elements
- Most famous for its “Glaive” weapon
- Bigger budget than many other films of the genre (most expensive film at the time)
- James Horner score - reused from Star Trek II Wrath of Khan
- Director: made “Bullitt” with Steve McQueen
- Young Liam Neeson
- Krull (1983)
- Fire mares (146 miles per hour)
Legend (1985)

- **Director**: Ridley Scott
- **Writer**: William Hjortsberg
- **Stars**: Tom Cruise, Mia Sara, Tim Curry

- Ridley Scott
- Tim Curry’s devil bad guy (Darkness)
- Ferris Bueller’s girlfriend
- Legend (1985)
- Darkness talking
Masters of the Universe (1987)

- **Director**: Gary Goddard
- **Writer**: David Odell
- **Stars**: Dolph Lundgren, Frank Langella, Meg Foster

- Meg Foster, EvilLin, Gorgeous eyes in They Live
- Writer - Dark Crystal
- Frank Langella as skeletor
- Masters of the Universe (1987)
- Sword fighting
Willow (1988)

- **Director**: Ron Howard
- **Writer**: George Lucas (story), Bob Dolman
- **Stars**: Val Kilmer, Joanne Whalley, Warwick Davis

- Famous for ILM fantasy effects
- Warwick Davis also played Ewok Wicket in RotJ
- Willow (1988)
- 2 headed monster