

Tenacious D in the Pick of Destiny (2006)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-3; L-9; S/N-4 . Running time: 1 hour 33 min.

For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?

Matt. 16:26

Jack Black is back, as funny as Tenacious D in the Pick of ever, and definitely more Destiny raunchy, the film beginning with a fart joke and ending with one (at the end of the credits). But that beginning also includes a mini rock opera, the first of a series of songs created by Black and co-star Kyle Glass (and often other collaborators), which is what makes the film worth watching, despite its many flaws.

The film is a reworking of the road trip/quest genres, mixed in with the old blues legend of a duel with Satan. There's also a touch of Sasquatch, making this at times quite a freak show, especially when Tim Robbins' The Stranger joins the crazy plot. However, though probably popular with the young adult crowd, this film will not be used by many church film groups because of the predominance of one word in both lyrics and dialogue. I don't advocate counting the number of times the word rhyming with luck is used in a film, but if one were to do so during this film, I suspect it might come close to the record, whatever that is.

A young and chubby (and very foul mouthed) JB runs away from his religious parents after his father takes the strap to him and tears all his rock band posters off the wall. Having heard that Hollywood is the place for rock musicians, he lands instead in the Hollywoods of several other states (I did not realize there were so many) before making it to the one with the big sign. So he is grown by the time he comes across the guitar-playing KG (Kyle Gass) strumming bits of Beethoven and Mozart on a sidewalk of Venice Beach. JB is mesmerized, and although at first rebuffed, the two soon join together (after a scene paying homage to Clockwork Orange in which a gang of toughs come upon JB sleeping on a park bench and beat him up). Failing to impress with their music the jaded audience at a nightspot, they learn about the P.O.D., the Pick of Destiny, said to be formed from a tooth of Satan's and now housed in the Rock and Roll History Museum. The Pick reputedly will enable its owners to become the best band in the world.

There are some side diversions (KG attending a frat party and JB eating mushrooms that send him on a head trip), but the pair wind up at the Museum where JB's male organ is put to unusual use, this time not connected with sex. Later, with the Pick of Destiny in hand, the two return to the nightspot to enter the Best Band contest. Before they can go into the building, they are confronted by Satan (Dave Grohl), and the musical face off begins, culminating in an act of grace by one of the friends on behalf of the other. Not for everyone, this film is a good showcase of Jack and Kyle's considerable musical talent.