Voting on the second battle is now closed.

Crystal Lake will never again be the same, as we bid another horror lady – farewell. Amy Steel (*Friday the 13th Part 2*’s Ginny) will move on to the semi-final round. But, with love and well wishes, Lar Park Lincoln (*Friday the 13th Part 7: The New Blood*’s Tina) moves on to other destinies. The final vote tally, from the site itself, the good folks on Facebook and Twitter – Steel: 60 Lincoln: 26

Away we move – far from Crystal Lake – but not too far, as we will return – to far-off Britain and the hot Florida sun.

Our next two contestants, now entering the ring – appear in two very different films. Their characters are equally opposite. One is a heroine, the other a villain (one of the handful of “bad egg” characters in the competition). One film is *dead* serious (ahem) and the other an over-the-top, almost comedy of manners – with pseudo-vampires. One character survives to the end of their tale. Sadly, the other perishes.

Join us, as the latest battle – entitled “Underground Flesh-Eating Zombies vs. Underground Flesh-Eating Worms” – begins. Based on this title, care to fancy a guess as to the films in question?

Too late!

First up is Ms. Lori Cardille, the sole female survivor in George A. Romero’s classic, *Day of the Dead*. Her character, Sarah, is a scientist, desperately trying to find a cure for the undead epidemic currently ravaging the world. It’s a dire, fire-cracker kind of situation in the mine/underground storage facility which she shares with several military men, a few civilians, her scientific team and hundreds of moaning zombies.

I once met Ms. Cardille at a convention, where I discussed her “Oscar” moment (we’ll get to that in a moment) and as we chatted, she revealed that she didn’t have a copy of the film to lend to folks who may ask for it. So, upon my return to the convention the next day, I gave her one of my many, many copies of the film – *and she asked me to autograph it for her*. The ultimate geek-out of the day before was clearly left in the dust. But I digress.

Cardille’s Sarah is a strong female character, and with one exception (McDermott coming to her rescue when the soldiers are having one of their tiffs and then subsequently offering her a couple of shots of brandy) she never falls into any sort of damsel-in-distress usual horror tropes. She’s got her s\*\*\* in order (despite her awkward, decaying relationship with Miguel – Antone DiLeo) and her emotions in check – for most of the film. That being said, Cardille gives us a character with balls. See below for her emotional release.

The reveal of the afore-mentioned “Oscar” moment should come as no surprise. Close to the end of the film, in a melee at the corral, several soldiers are killed, Miguel is bitten and basically, the s\*\*\* hits the fan. Immediately following is arguably the film’s most harrowing scene, as Sarah must chop off her lover’s arm to (hopefully) keep the zombie infection from spreading – thus keeping Miguel in the land of the living. With the help of McDermott (Jarlath Conroy) and John (Terry Alexander), she is able to do just that. But the angry soldiers are not far behind. It’s chaotic, frightening and bloody. Once the scene has slightly settled, we get our first moment which illustrates just how fragile the “strong” Sarah actually is. The soldiers have departed, Miguel is unconscious and the flaming stick (to cauterize Miguel’s wound) in Sarah’s hand is extinguished. She turns to a concerned and almost teary-eyed John and seeing his sympathetic face, breaks down. Oh that lovely first heave of breath as the tears come freely. And what sells it, making it Cardille’s “Oscar” moment? It’s the shaking. It’s the strong façade vanishing. You can see it in Cardille’s eyes. In a film with some serious scenery-chewing in spots, this is a true, real moment that gets me every time.

When I brought this up to Cardille – gushing about how much I loved this moment – she asked if I was an actor. Guilty. She signed one of my autographs to “Michael – a fellow thespian”. Squeeee! And that’s the point of that story.

Cardille’s other noteworthy acting moment is a more light-hearted one. As she and her fellow scientist Fisher (John Amplas) watch Dr. Logan (the late Richard Liberty) and Bub (Howard Sherman) interacting beyond the lab’s one-way mirror, they make note of how Bub doesn’t get worked up over Logan’s presence. “He doesn’t see Logan as lunch.” “Dinner.” “Breakfast.” And they share a laugh in an otherwise grim circumstance in a grim film. It’s another moment which Cardille gives us, further illustrating that Sarah is still capable of more than just being a hard-ass. It’s refreshing and true, as is Cardille’s masterful performance.

So who could it be that finds themselves in the ring with Ms. Cardille? “Underground Flesh-Eating Worms”, you ask? Still searching for an answer? I’ll save you the time-consuming Google search.

Welcome to the ring, Lady Sylvia Marsh herself – Amanda Donohoe. She’s the fanged, fashionable and fantastic villainess in Ken Russell’s crazy 1988 release, *The Lair of the White Worm*. A recent viewing confirmed why she belongs in this competition – a villainess with a sleek and sexy body, a fashion sense to rival the most well-dressed model and at her disposal – a wealth of dialogue with some of the most hysterical sexual (and snake-punned) double-entendres.

It’s a wonder why Donohoe hasn’t done more. This performance confirms that she has that “it” quality – a term often thrown around, but so rarely deserved. The complete film’s a hoot, but most of the time, when Donohoe’s not on screen, you will find yourself anxiously awaiting her return.

Strangely enough, you would expect the over-the-top greatness of the film to flourish in the climax, given the extra fun that Donohoe is nude and painted blue. But it is her introduction and early appearances in the film which will most delight you.

Lord Dampton (a very young and yummy Hugh Grant) pays a visit to Lady Marsh’s expansive property. Their exchange over a roaring fire, a glass of brandy and the tongue-in-cheek board game, “Snakes & Ladders” is fantastic! And here is where we’ll focus our love of Donohoe. Helped along in her case, is that drool-worthy accent of hers. The words fall from her mouth, and you find yourself dazed, much like the characters in the film under Marsh’s mind-control.

Donohoe walks away from Grant, feigning tears as they discuss her irrational fear of snakes. Without turning her head, she reaches her arm back to him, seeking comfort. He obliges, hugging her. There is a pause as he asks something along of the lines of, “If you’re so terrified of snakes, why do you play such a board game?” Her response, after a long pause and a caught-off-guard, blank look, “I don’t know.” Just brilliant! Every line she delivers is a gem – including her question in this same scene – when offering Grant a drink, “What’s your poison?” – all done with a devious (and absolutely engaging) smirk. And in this same scene, as she goes in for a passionate kiss, just as her lips reach Grant’s, a quick flick of her tongue. And we squeal.

Speaking of snake behaviors, a big part of Donohoe’s role as Lady Marsh involved some very snake-like and sensual physicality. There are several moments in the film where her body returns to her reptilian origins, but none so fun as when she hears the snake-charmer music from across the way – and she emerges from a large wicker basket, her head turning to hear the hypnotic music. Snake woman? Why yes, she nailed it!

It could have been a star-making performance, had it reached a wider audience (some of the film’s visuals could be construed as offensive). While Donohoe’s been continuously working – mostly across the pond – my run-ins with her work have been sadly scarce.

Donohoe was nominated for a Saturn Award for Best Actress.

Keep in mind, as you cast your votes – despite the title of this battle, we’re not voting based on hungry zombies or giant, ancient worms. We’re showing the love for the brilliant and lovely Lori Cardille, or the hysterical and beautiful Amanda Donohoe. It’ll be a tough one. I know who I’m voting for.

Cast your votes here on the site, over on our Facebook page, or on Twitter – using “Ultimate Horror Lady” and then either, #LoriCardille or #AmandaDonohoe.

I hope your favorite wins! See you in three days!