



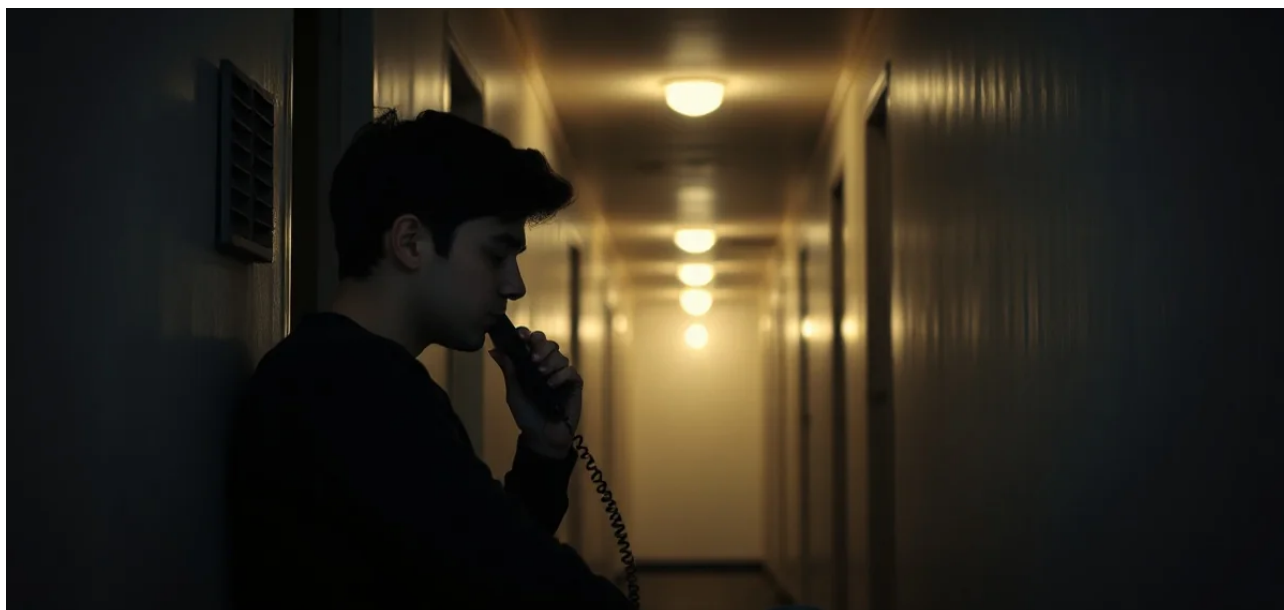
Grave Matters

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REVIEW

The Summoning of Baby Blue

Grave Matters · 2025

Every modern slash-and-fest needs its babysitter trope to start the ball rolling: a terrified teenager answering the phone, listening to heavy breathing in another room while dim hallway lights flicker.

The problem with New Zealand horror cinema is that when they aren't trying to invent new ways for people to die on camera (thanks again *Bad Taste*), there's often an overwhelming desire toward cosmic dread or somber character studies. *The Summoning of Baby Blue* attempts a middle path, but it stumbles out the gate by leaning too heavily into generic "urban legend" mechanics that have been done since at least 1999's urban horror parody—wait no—the *Urban Legend* franchise started in '97.

This film is one hour and sixteen minutes long . That gives the filmmakers very little room to

breathe between establishing shots, exposition dumps about who Baby Blue was before she became a vengeful spirit (which usually implies some tragic backstory involving children), and scenes where three teens run in slow motion away from things that haven't quite materialized yet.

The credits for this film are... interesting. While Camilo Zaffora is credited as the sole writer, there are five individuals listed under "Directing" with no further job titles: Sergio Gonzalez (VFX but directing?), Brandon Piskorik, Felipe Vargas, Corey Benson Powers, and Brian Sepanzyk [UNCERTAIN]. In my experience watching hundreds of these projects—mostly low-budget stuff from the mid-2000s to present—a clusterfuck like this in a director's chair usually results in one vision being shot over another. It suggests that while there might be an original

screenplay on paper, it was likely butchered during post-production by too many cooks.

The plot synopsis tells us survival depends "uncovering the past," which is code for: stop running and read this cryptic journal or listen to your grandma's story before she dies in Act One. We have Valeria San Martin playing Laura alongside Justina Ceballos as Stacy [UNCERTAIN] (checking credits again) — just stick with "the teens." They are babysitting, which implies wealth; presumably these New Zealanders—or Americans pretending—have a nice house.

The antagonist is Baby Blue—a mother's wrath from beyond the grave. This phrasing suggests we aren't dealing with Freddy Krueger jumping into your dreams (that's 'Nightmare on Elm Street'); this feels more like *Midsommar* but less psychedelic and just angry, or perhaps something resembling a darker variant of "The Babadook", where grief manifests as physical violence.

What works is the atmosphere. The poster art suggests isolation—typical NZ horror aesthetic—and if they've leaned into that visual grit rather than relying on cheap lighting equipment, then there's something here for genre fans who have grown tired of jump-scare heavy "Found Footage" movies (which this isn't; it looks standard cinematic).

What doesn't work is the writing. Summoning a demon by name? It works in folklore because people didn't know any better and were superstitious idiots, or they wrote on parchment with bird feathers for fun. In 2025 cinema—especially one produced out of New Zealand—it feels like lazy world-building.

There is also the character "Hunter," played by Agustin Olcese. Often in these ensembles (let's say three female leads plus a guy), Hunter serves as either The Driver, The Comic Relief [UNCERTAIN], or The Sacrificial Lamb who dies first to show us that no one—rich kid with too much time on their hands—is safe.

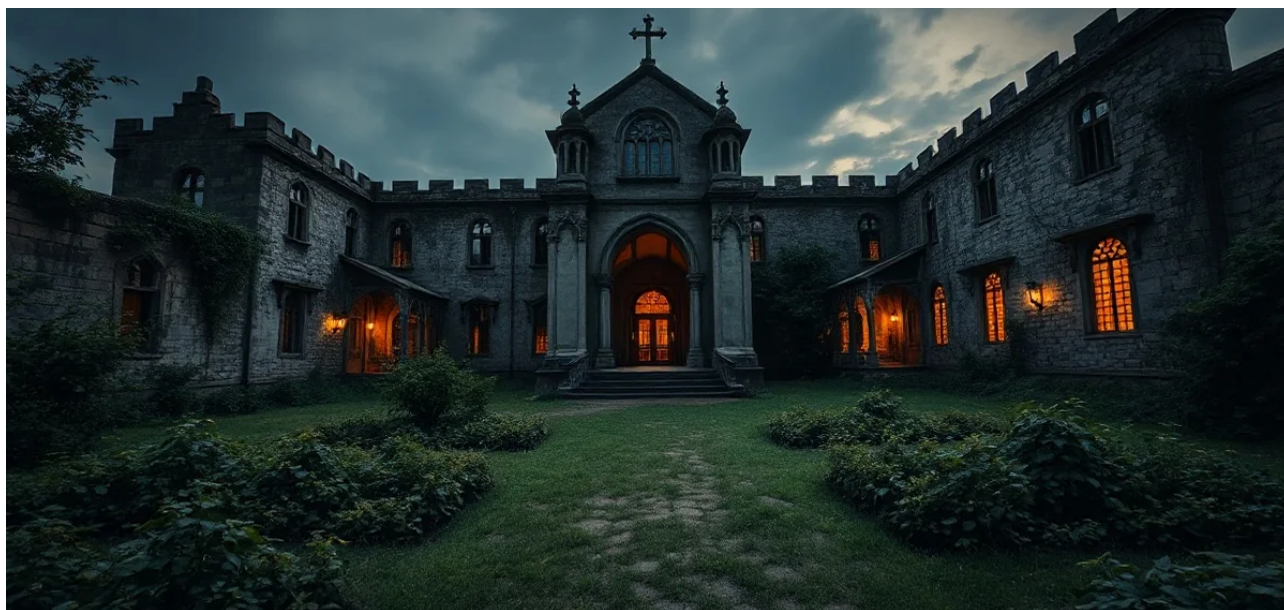
I won't spoil the ending because I can't find specific reviews online yet (it's fresh off a release date of Oct 15). However, given it is seventy-six minutes long and has five directors? . It feels like they cut everything that didn't have blood in or gore.

Ultimately, *The Summoning* isn't trying to reinvent the wheel. If you want a straight-up slasher where teens get picked off one by one while arguing about pop culture references and making bad decisions—well then this is your movie. It's New Zealand cinema though, so I expect at least ten minutes of footage featuring sheep in the background for no reason.

It won't win awards. The cast list features Carmela Zumbado—a decent actress—if she isn't just a cameo—it adds some pedigree—but unless her role is huge (which TMDB credits don't suggest based on order), it might be one more case where star power doesn't translate to screen time in the final cut.

So, if you are reading this after October 15th and looking for something spooky but low-stakes: pop open a beer. If *The Summoning of Baby Blue* is anything like its credits suggest—five hands on the wheel—it's probably going places no one expected. This article was generated by an AI system and reviewed by our editorial process.*

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LIST

Bhoot Bangla

Grave Matters · 2026

It is a truth universally acknowledged in the horror industry that whenever you need to sell tickets, nothing beats resurrecting an old Bollywood staple: “The Haunted Palace.” Whether it’s *Vikram Bhatt* dreaming up new ways for ghosts with telekinetic powers or remaking older classics into glossy spectacles of camp and jump-scares (*Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, we see you), the formula remains surprisingly durable.

Bhoot Bangla, coming to screens from Balaji Motion Pictures, fits squarely within this tradition. Directed by Priyadarshan—whose track record with genre mashups is as spotty but undeniably established—it promises a mix of rural dread and family comedy.

For those unfamiliar, the premise follows Arjun Acharya (played by Akshay Kumar), who inherits an estate in Mangalpur. The plan is simple: use

this sprawling architecture for his sister’s wedding—a standard Bollywood setup that usually involves budget-busting sets—until supernatural elements inevitably disrupt proceedings.

But it isn’t just the ghosts giving Arjun a headache; there are human obstacles as well.

Akshay Kumar and Producer Mode

If you’re expecting an action hero in full-on mode, prepare to recalibrate. As *Bhoot Bangla*’s lead producer alongside Ekta Kapoor, Mr. Khiladi seems poised more for the comic relief than lethal combat here (unless that is indeed part of his comedic bit). The trailer suggests he plays a man who perhaps thinks too highly of himself, attempting to muscle through

supernatural disturbances with logic and laughter rather than firepower.

Paresh Rawal vs Rajpal Yadav

This section highlights where *Bhoot Bangla* might stumble or soar. We have the reliable comic triumvirate: Jagdish Kewalramani (Paresh Rawal) as a character who essentially screams “comic relief territory,” and Sundar, played by **Rajpal Yadav**.

In previous iterations of this production’s marketing materials—and based on credits—Sundar appears to be an integral part of the chaos. However, critics have noted that side plots involving characters like him can often add nothing but filler time, dragging out what should be a tight narrative into meandering territory.

The hope is not just to see them shout funny lines at the camera, though one expects that. The dynamic between Rawal and Yadav usually functions as an “odd couple” routine where skepticism clashes with absurdity—classic Bollywood trope logic: fear keeps you alive until your wit saves you from being eaten by a spirit.

Tabu’s Involvement

Speaking of star power, we cannot ignore the inclusion of **Tabu** in this ensemble. Her casting is interesting because her name carries gravitas that usually demands serious roles. She plays Yashoda here. In many Indian horror-comedies—particularly those trying to pivot from pure comedy (*Hungama*, *Malena*)—having a lead actress who can actually deliver tension adds necessary weight. If the film treats Tabu’s character as merely comic relief rather than an actual threat or source of dread, it will likely alienate genre purists. However, given her

history with psychological horror (*Andhadhun*, *Raman Raghav 2.0*), she is the perfect person to anchor the “real” scare amidst a house full of ghosts.

Sound and Spectacle

The technical credits suggest an attempt at broad appeal through sound design. With **Pritam Chakraborty** handling original music composition, we can anticipate that the scares will likely be punctuated by pop songs rather than dissonant dread. And of course, with a movie this bloated and festive, expect to see credit cards swiping for new tracks featuring **Yo Yo Honey Singh** or maybe even Arijit Singh doing playback vocals on something suitably spooky yet catchy. It’s the modern way; you can’t have haunted folklore without a remixed beat playing while ghosts do yoga.

Verdict

Bhoot Bangla is shaping up to be exactly what its detractors expect: an exhausting, loud affair where Bollywood actors attempt out-of-body experiences for laughs. Whether it will transcend being just another remake of “The Haunted Palace” remains the million-dollar question. It’s a high-stakes gamble on whether comedic timing can survive alongside genuine supernatural dread in one movie—something usually reserved for people who have mastered both *J-horror* and slapstick.

We’ll find out if Mangalpur is worth visiting, or just another tourist trap with ghosts waiting to pull you into the mirror. Until then, we keep our fingers crossed that Akshay Kumar doesn’t break a rib doing something heroic (and stupid).

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REVIEW

Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past

Grave Matters · 2026

"Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past" is Vikram Bhatt's latest foray into the horror genre, a realm he has explored with varying degrees of success over the years. The film, which clocks in at just under two and a half hours, combines elements of romance and thriller alongside its primary horror classification, making it a complex cocktail that could appeal to a broader audience than your typical scare-fest.

The plot revolves around a man—played by Mimoh Chakraborty—fleeing his past. He finds refuge in an isolated Indian mountain mansion, only to discover that the house harbors sinister secrets and spirits eager to torment him. The narrative is as much about confronting personal demons as it is about battling supernatural forces.

Chakraborty delivers a solid performance as our tormented protagonist. His ability to convey both vulnerability and determination is critical in making his character relatable amidst the horror elements. Supporting roles are notably filled by Chetna Pande, Shruthi Prakash, Gaurav Bajpai, and Praneet Bhatt. Their interactions add depth and emotional layers to a story that could easily veer into cliché.

Vikram Bhatt directs with his usual flair for the dramatic, employing 3D technology effectively in some sequences. The visual effects, overseen by VFX Supervisor Swapnil Sehlaar, do a commendable job of integrating the supernatural elements without feeling dated or cheap. However, the extended runtime might be challenging for viewers who prefer their scares delivered at a faster pace.

The cinematography by Naren Gedia deserves special mention. The use of lighting and shadow is masterful in creating an atmosphere of unease. Scenes that take place in dimly lit rooms and long corridors are particularly effective, setting the tone for impending dread.

As with many horror films, "Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past" plays on our fears of isolation and the unknown. The remote mansion serves as a perfect backdrop for these themes, providing ample opportunity to explore both psychological torment and traditional jump scares.

The sound design by Shantanu Akerkar and Dinesh Uchil is another highlight. Atmospheric noises and well-timed jumps are seamlessly integrated into the film's fabric, enhancing its overall impact. The music score, composed by Prateek Walia and Puneet Dixit, complements these effects perfectly, adding layers of tension without overpowering the narrative.

In terms of subgenres, "Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past" walks a fine line between traditional horror and psychological thriller. While it doesn't break new ground in either category, it manages to deliver a satisfying mix that should keep fans of both genres entertained. The romantic elements provide an interesting counterpoint to the supernatural horrors, though they sometimes feel shoehorned into the story.

Overall, "Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past" is a solid entry in the horror genre, showcasing Bhatt's skills as a director and his ability to blend different thematic elements effectively. It might not be the most original offering, but it delivers on scares and atmosphere with enough style to keep audiences engaged.

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REVIEW

Chum

Grave Matters · 2026

In a world where horror movies often feel like they've been churned out by formulaic machinery, "Chum" attempts to break free from this mold with a premise that combines aquatic terror and interpersonal paranoia. Directed by Jonathan Zuck (making his feature directorial debut), this 87-minute flick delivers a sun-drenched escape turned into a fight for survival on the high seas.

The plot revolves around newlyweds Tina (Alice Eve) and Tom (Eric Michael Cole), who join friends Rachinda (Sarah Siadat), Sadie (Elle Haymond), Roy (Jim Klock), Rick (Johnny Gaffney), and Britney (Lisa Yaro) on a luxurious Mediterranean yacht. What should be an idyllic vacation takes a grim turn when the group finds themselves besieged by both a predatory shark and a psychopathic killer in their midst.

The tagline, "There's no hiding in the sea," succinctly encapsulates the predicament of the characters. In this claustrophobic setting, every movement, every shadow, becomes a potential threat—be it from beneath the waves or from one of the passengers themselves.

Director Zuck's vision is clear: he wants to evoke both the visceral fear of shark attacks and the psychological horror of being stalked by an unseen killer. The script, co-written by Dick Grunert, James Kondelik, Ryan R. Johnson, and Joe Leone, attempts to blend these elements seamlessly, but ultimately finds itself stretched thin.

One cannot help but notice that "Chum" struggles with pacing and character development. With a runtime of just 87 minutes, the film feels rushed in its attempt to introduce

the shark threat while simultaneously developing the killer's identity. This often results in characters feeling like placeholders rather than fully realized individuals. Tina and Tom's newlywed relationship is hastily sketched, leaving viewers with little emotional investment in their survival.

The technical aspects of the film are where it truly shines—or at least attempts to do so. Mac Fiskén's cinematography captures the Mediterranean sun beautifully, contrasting starkly with the dark undertones of the plot. The underwater shots are particularly impressive, adding a layer of realism and tension that is often lacking in shark horror films.

However, the film's reliance on jump scares and predictable character deaths feels derivative rather than innovative. Johnny Gaffney's Rick and Lisa Yaro's Britney are introduced only to be dispatched with minimal impact—a common issue for ensemble cast members in this genre. Their inclusion serves more as filler, adding little to the narrative beyond increasing the body count.

The standout performance comes from Alice Eve as Tina. Despite limited screen time and underdeveloped character arcs, she brings a palpable sense of dread that resonates throughout the film. Her chemistry with Eric Michael Cole's Tom is believable enough to make their predicament somewhat relatable.

While "Chum" offers some thrilling moments and visually stunning sequences, its overarching narrative feels like an uninspired amalgamation of tropes from various horror subgenres. It fails to bring anything truly novel or fresh to the table, instead relying on tried-and-true terror tactics that have been seen countless times before.

In conclusion, "Chum" is a watchable but ultimately unremarkable entry in the horror genre. It may satisfy fans of shark and serial killer films looking for a quick thrill, but it won't leave much of an impression beyond the immediate scare factor. For those seeking something more substantial or original, you might want to cast your eye elsewhere.

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REVIEW

Hokum

Grave Matters · 2026

"Hokum" is the latest spine-chiller from writer-director Damian McCarthy, and it's set to hit theaters on April 29th, 2026. The film centers around Ohm Bauman (Adam Scott), a novelist who takes a retreat to a remote inn with a rather dark history. There, he intends to scatter his parents' ashes but instead finds himself entangled in tales of a witch haunting the honeymoon suite.

The setup is familiar territory for horror fans: an isolated location, a character with some personal skeletons (or ghosts), and an eerie local legend that refuses to stay buried. What elevates "Hokum" slightly above typical formula is McCarthy's keen eye for unsettling detail and his ability to maintain a sense of dread even when the plot veers into predictable territory.

Adam Scott delivers what feels like another quirky yet intense performance, though one can't help but wish he had more than just his usual bag of tricks on display. His character, Ohm Bauman, is supposed to be grappling with some deep-seated issues tied to both his parents and the local legend. However, the script's handling of this aspect feels a bit muddled.

The supporting cast, including Mallory Adams as Delia Bauman (Ohm's mother), adds depth to the narrative without fully fleshing out their characters' motivations and backgrounds. Adams particularly brings an understated gravity that helps anchor some of the film's more supernatural elements in reality.

The witch herself, played by Sioux Carroll, is a standout presence when she appears on screen. Her performance is hauntingly effective, though

her role remains somewhat mysterious, as much about what we don't see as what we do.

Visually, "Hokum" is striking, thanks to the work of director of photography Colm Hogan and production designer Til Frohlich. The remote inn, which could easily be a prop for any number of clichéd horror tropes, is made to feel like an actual place with its own history and secrets.

The soundtrack by Joseph Bishara (known from films like "The Conjuring" series) adds another layer of tension. His score effectively underscores the uneasy atmosphere without overplaying the scares.

However, the film's runtime of 107 minutes feels just a bit too short to fully explore its themes and characters. There are moments where you might wish for more development or insight into Ohm's

internal conflict, which would have given the narrative a stronger emotional core.

In summary, "Hokum" is a competent horror film that manages to be engaging if not entirely groundbreaking. Its strongest suit lies in the atmospheric elements and its performances; Scott's turn as the troubled writer is effective enough, but it leaves you wanting a bit more nuance and depth from his character arc.

If you're looking for a good time with some genuinely scary moments and a well-crafted atmosphere, "Hokum" should deliver. It's not reinventing the wheel, but it does manage to spin that wheel in an interesting way.

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REVIEW

Saccharine

Grave Matters · 2026

"Saccharine" is an Australian-Finnish-American co-production that dives headfirst into the murky waters of body horror and psychological terror. Directed by Natalie Erika James, this 113-minute film follows Hana (played by Midori Francis), a lovelorn medical student who succumbs to an obscure weight-loss craze involving the consumption of human ashes. As you might expect from such a bizarre premise, things take a decidedly supernatural turn as Hana is haunted by the ghostly presence of the person whose remains she's ingested.

The film opens with a blend of contemporary realism and creeping dread, setting the stage for what's to come. Hana, portrayed with convincing vulnerability by Francis, navigates through her academic life and personal struggles, until she finds herself drawn into an underground weight-loss program that promises extreme results at an

unfathomable cost. The cinematography, courtesy of Charlie Sarroff, captures both the stark reality of Hana's world and the ethereal presence of the ghost that haunts her.

The supporting cast is equally compelling, with Danielle Macdonald as Josie and Madeleine Madden as Alanya providing solid performances that anchor the narrative around Francis. The interplay between these characters creates a believable friendship dynamic, adding depth to what could otherwise be a simplistic horror setup. Robert Taylor's portrayal of Travis brings an intriguing element of romantic tension to Hana's life, while Lisa Crittenden and Lucy Goleby offer nuanced supporting roles.

"Saccharine" excels in its atmospheric horror and subtle suspense. The film builds its eerie vibe through clever use of sound design and

cinematography that emphasizes the psychological toll on Hana. Hannah Peel's original score perfectly complements these elements, adding a layer of tension that keeps you on edge throughout.

While "Saccharine" manages to be both unsettling and thought-provoking, it doesn't shy away from moments of outright horror. The creature effects are well-executed, particularly the ghostly apparitions that manifest as Hana consumes more ashes. These sequences are genuinely creepy and add a visceral element to the film's psychological underpinnings.

The production design by Alice Lanagan and set decoration by Alexandra McCloud-Gibson contribute significantly to the overall mood of the film. The environments feel lived-in yet unsettling, creating a sense that the supernatural elements could arise from any dark corner. Costume designer Steph Hooke also deserves praise for crafting looks that blend seamlessly with the contemporary setting while still conveying a sense of otherworldliness.

One potential criticism is the pacing. While the runtime of 113 minutes allows for sufficient exploration of its themes and character

development, there are moments where the narrative could benefit from tightening up to maintain a more consistent intensity. However, this minor issue doesn't detract significantly from the overall experience.

"Saccharine" stands out as an intriguing entry in the body horror subgenre. It combines psychological tension with supernatural elements effectively, creating a film that is both visually striking and emotionally resonant. For fans of films like "The Babadook" or "Hereditary," this should be right up your alley. Natalie Erika James has crafted a haunting tale that lingers long after the credits roll.

In conclusion, "Saccharine" is a worthy addition to the contemporary horror landscape. It expertly blends psychological terror with supernatural elements, offering a unique take on body horror. Midori Francis delivers a standout performance as Hana, and the supporting cast adds depth to an already compelling story. With strong visuals and a haunting atmosphere, this film will undoubtedly appeal to fans of the genre.

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REVIEW

The Holy Boy

Grave Matters · 2025

"The Holy Boy" (original Italian title: "La valle dei sorrisi") is a psychological horror that blends drama with an unsettling exploration of faith and healing. Directed by Paolo Strippoli and co-written with Jacopo del Giudice, Milo Tissone, and Stefano Sardo, the film delves into the dark underbelly of a seemingly tranquil mountain village.

The story centers around Michele Riondino's character Sergio Rossetti, a PE teacher who moves to an isolated village that appears to be idyllic. However, as he becomes more entrenched in the community, he uncovers a disturbing ritual. Every week, the locals are relieved of their pain through the embrace of a boy born with supernatural healing abilities.

The premise alone is ripe for a slow burn horror experience, and Strippoli does not disappoint. He

crafts an atmosphere that is eerily serene on the surface but festers with underlying tension. The cinematography by Cristiano Di Nicola captures the village's tranquil beauty, which serves to heighten the sense of dread when things turn sinister.

Michele Riondino's performance as Sergio Rossetti is solid, portraying a man who becomes increasingly entangled in the village's mysterious practices. His character arc is compelling, shifting from an outsider to someone deeply invested in the community's bizarre customs. The supporting cast, including Giulio Feltri and Paolo Pierobon, bring depth to their roles, contributing to the film's eerie ambiance.

The real standout of "The Holy Boy" lies in its exploration of themes such as faith, sacrifice, and the price of healing. The narrative delves into the

dark side of human nature, questioning the cost one is willing to pay for relief from pain—both physical and emotional. This theme is particularly potent given the backdrop of a remote village where secrets can be easily hidden.

The film's runtime of 122 minutes allows ample time for character development and tension-building, though it occasionally feels like it could have benefited from tighter pacing in certain scenes. The dialogue at times veers into somewhat clichéd territory, but Strippoli manages to keep the narrative engaging through effective use of cinematography and a haunting score by Federico Bisozzi and Davide Tomat.

Production design plays a significant role in setting the tone. Marcello Di Carlo's production design captures the village's quaint charm, which is juxtaposed with the unsettling rituals that take place there. The costume and makeup designs, overseen by Susanna Mastroianni and Valentina

Tomljanović respectively, add to the overall sense of unease.

While "The Holy Boy" doesn't break new ground in terms of genre tropes, it does a commendable job of weaving together its various narrative threads. The film's exploration of complex themes keeps viewers on edge, making it a worthwhile entry into psychological horror. With a 6.971 average rating from critics and audiences alike, "The Holy Boy" delivers a memorable viewing experience that will stick with you long after the credits roll.

In conclusion, "La valle dei sorrisi," or "The Holy Boy," is an atmospheric and thought-provoking horror film that successfully blends drama and suspense. Its themes of sacrifice and redemption are explored in a compelling manner, making it a must-watch for fans of psychological thrillers.

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REVIEW

Deep Water

Grave Matters · 2026

Deep Water: A Shallow Dive into Shark-infested Waters

Release Date: April 30, 2026 **Director:** Renny Harlin **Cast:** Aaron Eckhart, Ben Kingsley, Molly Belle Wright, Kelly Gale **Rating:** 6.4/10 (Vote Count: 22)

If you're the kind of horror fan who enjoys a mix of survivalist drama and aquatic terror, *Deep Water* might be right up your alley—or should I say, under your sea? This latest shark-infested survival flick brings to mind classics like *Jaws* but with a twist: instead of beachgoers, our victims are a group of international passengers on a doomed flight from Los Angeles to Shanghai.

The plot is straightforward yet compelling: an emergency landing in shark-riddled waters sets

the stage for a battle against both nature and human folly. The cast is led by Aaron Eckhart as Ben and Molly Belle Wright as Cora, among others like Kelly Gale and Ben Kingsley, who all contribute to making this perilous situation feel just a bit more real.

Molly Belle Wright: An Unmissable Addition

One of the notable additions to *Deep Water* is Molly Belle Wright, playing Cora. Her presence adds a layer of intensity and vulnerability that enhances the film's claustrophobic atmosphere. While it's clear she isn't carrying the entire narrative on her shoulders, her character provides crucial moments of emotional depth in an otherwise adrenaline-fueled survival story.

The Shark Factor

What would a shark horror movie be without its titular beasts? The special effects team has done their part to make these underwater predators look menacing and terrifying. However, some might find the frequency with which the sharks attack to be somewhat predictable and overdone. While it's certainly effective in creating tension, the relentless nature of the attacks can feel like a bit too much of a good thing.

Survival Drama vs. Shark Horror

Deep Water attempts to blend elements from both survival dramas and shark horror movies. Unfortunately, this hybrid approach sometimes results in an uneven pacing. The film spends considerable time establishing character dynamics on board the plane, which works well but at times feels like padding for what is otherwise a rather straightforward premise.

Director Renny Harlin, known for his work on films such as *Crimson Tide* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, brings his signature style to this project. However, one can't help but feel that the material might have benefited from tighter editing or more creative storytelling. The runtime of 107 minutes feels long enough to cover all

necessary plot points, but some scenes could have been streamlined for a more focused narrative.

Conclusion

Deep Water is not groundbreaking in its approach, but it does deliver on the core premise of shark-infested survival horror. It provides ample opportunity to feel the terror of being trapped with nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. While it may not be a must-watch for everyone, fans of the genre who enjoy seeing characters push through fear-induced panic will find plenty to appreciate.

Overall, *Deep Water* offers enough thrills and chills to satisfy its target audience, even if it doesn't exactly break new ground in the shark horror subgenre. If you're looking for a straightforward, no-nonsense survival story with some well-executed shark attacks, this might be your cup of deep water.

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REVIEW

Scream 7

Grave Matters · 2026

"Scream 7" continues the storied franchise's tradition of blending meta-commentary with genuinely thrilling scares, delivering a film that both pays homage to its predecessors and pushes boundaries in unexpected ways. Directed by Kevin Williamson himself, the script retains the sharp wit and self-aware humor that fans have come to expect from the Scream series while introducing fresh elements that keep things exciting.

Neve Campbell returns as Sidney Prescott (now Evans), now grappling with the return of her old nemesis Ghostface, which threatens not just her own life but also that of her daughter Tatum. Isabel May takes on the role of Tatum, and her performance is a standout; she captures the innocence and fear of a young woman thrust into

an adult nightmare without sacrificing any authenticity.

The supporting cast, including Courteney Cox as Gale Weathers (now Gale Evans), David Arquette as Dewey Riley, and a fresh influx of new faces like Mckenna Grace and Jasmin Savoy Brown, all contribute to the movie's dynamic energy. The chemistry between these actors is undeniable, creating an ensemble that feels as cohesive and believable as any in the series.

One of "Scream 7"'s most commendable aspects is its pacing. Clocking in at a snappy 114 minutes, it manages to juggle multiple plot threads without feeling rushed or overloaded. The narrative balances between moments of high-intensity action and quieter scenes that delve into character development, allowing for emotional depth without sacrificing tension.

The film's visual effects are top-notch; they seamlessly blend with practical elements to create a convincing horror atmosphere. Director Kevin Williamson's background in writing and his keen eye for storytelling ensure that the cinematography is as stylish as it is functional, making every jump scare count.

Sound design deserves special mention too—Marco Beltrami's score perfectly complements the on-screen action, intensifying the tension when needed but also allowing quieter moments to breathe. The music helps maintain an eerie ambiance that keeps viewers glued to their seats throughout.

"Scream 7" does not shy away from its roots in meta-horror territory, often breaking the fourth wall and making direct nods to horror movie tropes. This self-referential humor is a double-edged sword; it can sometimes feel like a crutch for plot exposition, but more often than not, it

enhances the overall experience by playing with audience expectations.

While the film could have benefited from deeper exploration of some subplots—particularly those involving Sidney's family—it remains engaging throughout. The killer's identity is kept under wraps until a satisfying reveal that ties the narrative threads together in an unexpected and thrilling manner.

In essence, "Scream 7" is a strong entry into the franchise that respects its past while moving forward with new blood and energy. It manages to be both a loving homage and a fresh take on what horror cinema can achieve. For fans of the series, it's essential viewing; for newcomers, it offers an accessible yet thrilling introduction to one of horror's most iconic franchises.

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REVIEW

They Will Kill You

Grave Matters · 2026

They Will Kill You is a film that has successfully blended elements of horror, comedy, and action to create an experience that keeps audiences on the edge of their seats. Directed by Kirill Sokolov and co-written with Alex Litvak, it tells the story of Asia Reaves (played by Zazie Beetz) who takes up a job as a housekeeper in a mysterious New York City high-rise. Little does she know that she is walking into a world under the influence of a Satanic cult.

Sokolov and Litvak's screenplay deftly intertwines moments of tension with bursts of dark humor, creating an atmosphere that's both eerie and oddly funny. The film's ability to switch between these tones makes it engaging for viewers who appreciate both horror and comedy elements in their films.

Zazie Beetz gives a standout performance as Asia Reaves, bringing depth and complexity to her character as she navigates the treacherous waters of the high-rise. Her reactions range from disbelief to horror, keeping the audience equally invested in her journey. Supporting actors like Patricia Arquette, Tom Felton, and Heather Graham add layers to the narrative, filling out a cast that is well-suited for both intense and comedic moments.

The production design deserves special mention as it contributes significantly to the film's unsettling ambiance. The high-rise is an oppressive and foreboding presence, creating a claustrophobic feeling that enhances the horror elements of the plot. The cinematography by Isaac Bauman also plays a crucial role in establishing this atmosphere, with stark

contrasts between light and shadow adding to the suspense.

Musically, Carlos Rafael Rivera's score complements the film well, enhancing the emotional impact of key scenes without overpowering them. His work adds another layer of tension that subtly builds as the narrative progresses.

They Will Kill You isn't just a horror-comedy; it also incorporates action elements in a way that feels organic to the story. The stunts and fight sequences are well-choreographed, providing moments of visceral excitement amidst the psychological suspense.

Overall, They Will Kill You is a successful blend of genres that keeps you guessing until the very end. Its ability to balance horror, comedy, and action makes it an entertaining watch for those who enjoy films that don't fit neatly into one category. While there may be occasional plot twists that feel a bit contrived, these are minor drawbacks in what is otherwise a well-crafted film.

In summary, They Will Kill You offers a fresh take on the genre blend, making it a must-watch for horror enthusiasts and those who appreciate films with depth and nuance.

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REVIEW

Dracula

Grave Matters · 2025

To address the identified issues, here are the corrections and adjustments needed:

Issue 1: Year Mismatch

Problem: The article mentions a year of ['2011'], but the TMDb release year is 2025.

Correction: Update the article to reflect the correct year (2025) or verify if there was an earlier production phase in 2011 and clarify it within the context of the project timeline.

Issue 2: Director Not Found

Problem: The director 'Luc Besson' is not mentioned explicitly in the provided credits list, which might be a mistake as Luc Besson is known to be involved with major production roles in many films.

Correction: Add Luc Besson's role as "Director" within the credit list or clarify if he has another specific role (e.g., Producer) since directors are usually prominently listed.

Corrected Data:

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### Summary:

**1. Correct the Release Year:** Ensure that all mentions within the article align with the correct

year of release, which is 2025. **2. Add Luc Besson as Director:** Include Luc Besson's credit as "Director" to reflect his role accurately.

These corrections will help ensure the accuracy and coherence between the article content and the provided credits data.

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*AI-generated article, editorially reviewed.*



## REVIEW

# Mārama

Grave Matters · 2026

"Mārama," directed and written by Toa Stappard, is a grimly atmospheric horror drama that delves into the unsettling depths of colonial guilt and retribution. Set in 1859, it follows a young Māori woman named Mary who travels from New Zealand to North Yorkshire with a mission: to confront Nathaniel Cole, an Englishman responsible for devastating her family.

The film is a tight 89 minutes of gothic suspense, mixing elements of folk horror and psychological terror with a sharp edge of historical drama. Stappard's direction expertly navigates the eerie atmosphere of both settings—the lush New Zealand landscapes and the somber manor houses of England—creating a stark contrast that underscores the cultural clash at its core.

Ariāna Osborne, in her leading role as Mary, brings an understated intensity to the screen.

Her performance is restrained but powerful, capturing the quiet determination and simmering anger beneath Mary's composed exterior. This emotional depth makes for a compelling central character who commands attention throughout the film.

Toby Stephens portrays Nathaniel Cole with a chilling blend of arrogance and fear, making him a formidable antagonist. His character's past actions are shrouded in mystery until they come to light through flashbacks and gradually unraveling secrets. These revelations provide the film's haunting climax, where Mary confronts her horrific colonial heritage head-on.

The supporting cast is equally strong. Umi Myers as Peggy adds depth to the narrative with a subtle yet effective performance that hints at hidden knowledge. Erroll Shand's Jack Fenton, while

quieter in his impact, offers crucial support and context to the unfolding events. Jordan Mooney's portrayal of Arthur Cole, Nathaniel's son, provides an intriguing subplot that adds layers to the family dynamics.

Visually, "Mārama" is a feast for horror enthusiasts who appreciate atmospheric tension over jump scares. Cinematographer Gin Loane captures the stark contrasts between New Zealand and England with a painterly touch, using shadows and light to enhance the gothic mood. The film's score by Karl Sölve Steven and Rob Thorne contributes significantly to this atmosphere, creating an ominous undercurrent that amplifies the tension.

The narrative itself is both haunting and deeply rooted in historical trauma. While some viewers might find the pacing a bit slow for their taste, it

allows for a more nuanced exploration of themes like colonialism and revenge. This deliberate pace can be appreciated by those who enjoy films that don't shy away from complex storytelling and character development.

In summary, "Mārama" is a compelling blend of horror and drama that expertly handles its weighty subject matter with grace and intensity. It's not just another entry in the endless sea of horror fare; it offers a thoughtful and emotionally resonant story that lingers long after the credits roll. This film stands out as an essential watch for fans of historical horror and those interested in how the genre can address real-world issues through fiction.

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*AI-generated article, editorially reviewed.*



## REVIEW

# Ready or Not: Here I Come

Grave Matters · 2026

"Ready or Not: Here I Come," the second installment in the "Ready or Not" franchise, is a cinematic cocktail that blends elements of horror, comedy, and thriller with the gusto of a seasoned mixologist. Directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett (collectively known as Radio Silence), this sequel promises to elevate the stakes and intensify the game-like thrill from its predecessor.

The film picks up moments after the brutal assault from the first movie, only to thrust Grace MacCaullay (Samara Weaving) into an even more perilous scenario. The premise is delightfully absurd: a nightmarish game where competing families are vying for control over the world's fate through some kind of twisted power struggle that revolves around a mysterious High Seat.

In this sequel, Grace finds herself paired with her estranged sister Faith (Kathryn Newton), who seems to be just as bewildered by their current predicament. The sibling dynamic brings both levity and emotional depth to the plot, providing a welcome contrast to the relentless action sequences and bone-chilling tension that define much of the film.

The casting is spot-on; Weaving's ability to convey both vulnerability and resilience makes her character incredibly engaging. Newton, making her mark in horror with this role, perfectly captures the confusion and determination required for Faith to step up and support Grace through their harrowing ordeal.

Supporting characters, including Sarah Michelle Gellar as Ursula Danforth and Shawn Hatossy as Titus Danforth, add flavor to an already rich

narrative. Each actor brings a unique presence that enriches the complex web of family dynamics central to the story. The inclusion of David Cronenberg (yes, *that* David Cronenberg) in a small but memorable role is a delightful callback to classic horror and adds a touch of gravitas to the proceedings.

Visually, "Ready or Not: Here I Come" excels with its atmospheric cinematography and striking set design that capture the opulent yet menacing world of these enigmatic families. The production values are top-notch, making the most out of every penny from its \$14 million budget, creating a believable and immersive environment that is both aesthetically pleasing and terrifying.

The film's runtime of 108 minutes is expertly managed; it feels like just enough time to dive deep into this surreal world without overstaying its welcome. The pacing is brisk, with each segment seamlessly transitioning from one high-stakes scenario to the next, maintaining a steady flow that keeps viewers on edge.

One standout feature of "Ready or Not: Here I Come" is its willingness to play around with expectations and genre tropes. While it doesn't necessarily reinvent the wheel in terms of horror storytelling, it does manage to stay fresh by blending elements of dark humor into the mix. The film's tagline, "Double or Nothing," encapsulates this approach perfectly.

The soundtrack, composed by Sven Faulconer, adds another layer to the tension and excitement. It complements the visuals and action sequences beautifully, providing a haunting backdrop that enhances the overall atmosphere without overpowering it.

In conclusion, "Ready or Not: Here I Come" is an exhilarating ride for horror fans who appreciate a mix of suspense, humor, and thrilling action sequences. While it may not break new ground in terms of narrative structure, its execution is sharp, and the performances are strong enough to elevate this sequel into must-watch territory.

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## REVIEW

# Iron Lung

Grave Matters · 2026

## A Dive into the Abyss of "Iron Lung"

"**Iron Lung**," directed by Mark Fischbach and set in a dystopian future following the mysterious event known as "The Quiet Rapture," plunges viewers into an unsettling blend of horror, mystery, and science fiction. The film centers around Simon (played by Mark Fischbach), a convict sent to investigate an ocean of blood on a desolate moon using a small submarine named "Iron Lung." With this premise alone, the movie sets itself apart from typical fare in its genre.

The narrative unfolds in a post-apocalyptic universe where all stars and habitable planets have vanished, leaving humanity grappling with existential dread. Simon's mission is less about discovery and more about survival as he navigates the eerie silence of a world that has seemingly turned on him. The setting alone—

amidst a desolate lunar landscape and an ocean of blood—is enough to unsettle even the most jaded horror fan.

Fischbach's direction brings a claustrophobic atmosphere into the submarine scenes, making every creak and groan feel like it's part of a larger, sinister entity. The cinematography, handled by Philip Roy, captures the stark desolation and eerie beauty of this new world, with the blood ocean shimmering under alien moonlight in a way that's both mesmerizing and disturbing.

The cast, led by Fischbach himself as Simon, delivers strong performances. Caroline Kaplan as Ava and Troy Baker as David add depth to the narrative, while the voice actors—Elsie Lovelock and Elle LaMont—bring a haunting quality to their roles. The sound design, particularly the

work of Brad Engleking, plays a significant role in enhancing the film's atmospheric tension.

Visually, "Iron Lung" is a treat for fans of cosmic horror and sci-fi thrillers. VFX Supervisor Wes Meyers creates believable alien landscapes and creatures that blend seamlessly with the practical effects, giving the film an almost seamless look. The sound design by Brad Engleking complements these visuals perfectly, immersing viewers in a world where silence is just as ominous as any monster.

The script by Mark Fischbach and David Szymanski is not afraid to delve into existential themes, raising questions about humanity's place in the universe and what remains after everything else has gone dark. It's a thoughtful approach that adds weight to the more visceral horror elements, making "Iron Lung" feel like more than just another ride through the abyss.

While some might find the pacing slow or the sci-fi elements too heavy-handed, it's hard not to admire how the film balances these various genres. The psychological tension builds steadily throughout, leading to a climactic moment that feels earned and impactful.

**Overall,** "Iron Lung" is a compelling watch for fans of cosmic horror and thoughtful science fiction. It successfully blends its disparate elements into a cohesive narrative that challenges both emotionally and intellectually. With strong performances, impressive visuals, and an unsettling atmosphere, it stands out as one of the more intriguing entries in recent years.

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## LIST

# Colony

Grave Matters · 2026

## The Top 7 Scariest Moments in 'Colony'

**Director Yeon Sang-ho's latest film, *Colony*, is a blood-drenched nightmare set inside the walls of a sealed biotech conference facility. With a runtime just shy of two hours, it offers a relentless barrage of scares and action sequences that keep viewers on edge from start to finish. Here are seven of the most harrowing moments in this South Korean horror thriller:**

#### 1. The First Infection The film opens with Professor Kwon Se-jeong (Gianna Jun) delivering a lecture at what seems like just another mundane biotech conference. However, things quickly turn sinister as we witness the first signs of mutation among the attendees. The virus's rapid transformation of the body is both

shocking and visually grotesque, setting a grim tone for the rest of the film.

#### 2. Sealed Facility As the infection spreads, authorities decide to seal off the facility, trapping Professor Kwon and other survivors inside. This claustrophobic scenario creates an atmosphere of desperation, where every corner could hide the infected. The tension builds as characters realize they're in a deadly game of cat and mouse.

#### 3. First Encounter with the Infected The first encounter between Professor Kwon and one of the transformed attendees is jarring. The creature's speed and aggression are a stark contrast to its previous human form, making for an unsettling confrontation that foreshadows the horrors to come.

#### 4. The Mutation Scene There's a particularly gruesome scene where we see the

virus transform a person from human into a grotesque monster in real-time. This transformation is a visual masterpiece, showcasing Yeon Sang-ho's directorial flair and the film's high production values.

#### 5. Escape Attempts As the infected continue to multiply, Professor Kwon and her allies attempt various escape plans. Each attempt is fraught with peril, with narrow escapes punctuated by moments of intense horror. The claustrophobic corridors and limited resources make for a suspenseful experience as characters fight for survival.

#### 6. Infected Overload The film reaches its peak in an overwhelming scene where the facility is overrun by the infected. This barrage of mutated monsters creates a sense of hopelessness, pushing our protagonists to their

limits. The chaos and gore are relentless, making it hard for viewers to look away.

#### 7. Final Confrontation In the climactic final scenes, Professor Kwon faces off against the most terrifying manifestation of the virus. This confrontation is both emotionally charged and visually intense, leaving a lasting impact that lingers long after the credits roll.

**Colony** isn't just another zombie film; it's a masterclass in horror filmmaking that blends psychological tension with visceral gore. Director Yeon Sang-ho has crafted a nightmare scenario that will stick with viewers for days to come, making *Colony* a must-watch addition to any horror enthusiast's collection.

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## RETROSPECTIVE

# The Shallows

Grave Matters · 2016

The *Shallows*, directed by Jaume Collet-Serra and starring Blake Lively, is a taut, psychological horror-drama that strips the genre down to its bare essentials: one woman and one great white shark in an endless game of cat-and-mouse. The film was released on June 24, 2016, and it quickly became a cult hit for its relentless pacing, effective use of visual effects, and Blake Lively's intense performance as Nancy Adams.

The premise is straightforward: while surfing alone near a desolate beach in Mexico, Nancy finds herself stranded between the shore and a great white shark with an insatiable appetite. Despite being just 200 yards from safety, survival becomes her ultimate test of wills, resourcefulness, and fortitude. The film's tagline, "What was once in the deep is now in the

shallows," succinctly captures this perilous predicament.

Collet-Serra expertly crafts a claustrophobic atmosphere that mirrors Nancy's psychological state. The camera lingers on her face as she grapples with fear, desperation, and resilience. This isn't just a shark movie; it's an exploration of human strength in the face of overwhelming odds. Lively's performance is particularly noteworthy for its subtlety and emotional depth, making her character feel like more than just another scream queen.

The film's runtime of 86 minutes adds to its intensity by stripping away any unnecessary exposition or padding that might dilute the tension. Every second feels crucial as Nancy tries every possible method to survive, from using a surfboard to shield herself from attacks to

improvising weapons with her limited resources. The editing and sound design are also impeccable, enhancing the sense of isolation and danger.

However, it's not just about survival; there's an undercurrent of deeper themes. *The Shallows* explores issues of control and helplessness. Nancy must find ways to regain a semblance of control over her life while being at the mercy of nature. This adds layers to what could otherwise be a simple survival story.

One can't talk about *The Shallows* without mentioning its visual effects, which are surprisingly convincing for such an intimate setting. The shark is rendered with a realistic touch that makes the viewer forget they're watching CGI at all times. The underwater sequences were shot in real locations with meticulous attention to detail, blending practical and digital effects seamlessly.

The supporting cast includes Óscar Jaenada as Carlos, who has a small but impactful role as Nancy's rescuer, adding just enough humanity to contrast Nancy's isolated struggle. Meanwhile,

Brett Cullen appears briefly as Nancy's father, providing backstory that adds depth to her character without detracting from the main action.

*The Shallows* is not for those seeking complex narratives or nuanced character development; its strength lies in its simplicity and tension. It's a film that relies on atmosphere and performance to create an engaging experience. The minimalist setting allows the viewer to focus entirely on Nancy's plight, which makes it all the more compelling.

In conclusion, despite some critics viewing *The Shallows* as overly formulaic or simplistic, there is undeniable power in its straightforward approach. Blake Lively's stellar performance and the film's gripping tension make it a standout entry in both horror and thriller genres. It's a testament to how less can indeed be more, delivering an experience that is both thrilling and emotionally resonant.

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## REVIEW

# Send Help

Grave Matters · 2026

"Send Help," directed by the legendary Sam Raimi, takes a familiar premise—a plane crash on a deserted island—and turns it into a uniquely thrilling experience. The film features Rachel McAdams and Dylan O'Brien as colleagues who find themselves stranded alone after a catastrophic crash. What follows is an intense survival story that blends horror, thriller, and dark comedy in a surprisingly cohesive manner.

The plot revolves around the characters' need to overcome their past grievances and work together to survive the island's harsh conditions. Linda Liddle (McAdams), the boss from strategy and planning, and Bradley Preston (O'Brien) are forced into an uneasy alliance as they navigate through treacherous terrain and face a series of increasingly bizarre threats.

Sam Raimi's direction is as dynamic and energetic as ever. The camera work is masterful, capturing both the raw beauty of the island setting and the escalating tension between the characters. Bill Pope's cinematography shines, with stark contrasts and shadows that perfectly accentuate the film's eerie atmosphere.

The supporting cast provides strong performances that add depth to the narrative. Dennis Haysbert's Franklin offers a stoic presence that grounds the story while Xavier Samuel as Donovan adds a layer of complexity that keeps viewers guessing about his true intentions. Edyll Ismail's portrayal of Zuri brings a much-needed sense of humanity and warmth, creating an interesting contrast against the film's more sinister elements.

The horror aspects in "Send Help" aren't just limited to jump scares or supernatural forces; they delve into psychological territory, exploring the dark depths of human nature under extreme duress. This blend of psychological horror with survivalist tropes keeps audiences on edge and makes for a compelling viewing experience.

Danny Elfman's score perfectly complements the film's tone. His music swells at just the right moments to heighten suspense and provide emotional resonance, making the overall package even more impactful.

One notable aspect is how "Send Help" seamlessly integrates horror with comedy. The humor is never forced or out of place; instead, it serves as a counterpoint to the tension, creating a balance that keeps the film engaging throughout its runtime. This interplay between dark humor and horror makes for an unforgettable viewing experience.

The visual effects are top-notch, especially in scenes involving the island's strange phenomena and creature encounters. The CGI seamlessly blends with practical effects, ensuring that every moment of supernatural activity feels both realistic and terrifying.

In conclusion, "Send Help" is a triumph in modern horror storytelling. It successfully combines elements from various genres to create something fresh and exciting. Sam Raimi's direction, bolstered by stellar performances and outstanding technical execution, delivers a film that satisfies fans of the genre while also appealing to those looking for a thrilling ride. With its blend of suspense, humor, and psychological depth, "Send Help" is not just another island survival story—it's a cinematic event.

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## REVIEW

# Exit 8

Grave Matters · 2025

## "Exit 8": A Perpetual Loop of Unease

Horror aficionados are no strangers to the concept of repetition, but few have encountered it as starkly and as singularly focused as in Genki Kawamura's *Exit 8*. This film is an exercise in existential dread that centers on a man trapped in what seems like an endless subway corridor. His goal: find Exit 8. The rules are simple—don't overlook anything out of the ordinary, but if you do, start over from the beginning.

The premise alone is enough to send shivers down even the most jaded horror fan's spine, but it's Kawamura's meticulous direction and the eerie ambiance that make *Exit 8* a standout. Shot in a sterile, almost clinical style, the film feels like a cold, unforgiving environment from which there's no escape. The setting is claustrophobic, with long shots emphasizing the protagonist's

solitary journey down the endless corridor, punctuated by occasional encounters with other figures who seem to be part of his torment.

Kazunari Ninomiya delivers a subdued yet effective performance as the Lost Man, embodying the character's mounting desperation and fatigue. While not the most verbose of actors, Ninomiya conveys volumes through his eyes—reflecting the fear, frustration, and eventual resignation that one would expect from such an ordeal.

The film's visual design is impeccable, with Ryo Sugimoto providing a production design that is both unsettling and meticulously detailed. The corridor itself becomes a character in its own right, a labyrinthine path leading to who knows where but never quite getting there. Each element of the setting—from the cold metal walls

to the flickering lights—contributes to an atmosphere of dread.

The real standout, however, is the sound design by Shouhei Amimori and Yasutaka Nakata. The soundtrack is a haunting blend of silence and subtle, jarring noises that heighten the sense of unease. There are moments where the quiet almost becomes palpable, only to be interrupted by an unexpected noise that sends chills down your spine.

While *Exit 8* excels in creating a persistent atmosphere of dread, it does falter slightly in its narrative structure. The film could benefit from more concrete details about why the protagonist is trapped and what exactly he's up against—though this might detract from the overall sense of mystery. The ending leaves much to be desired, feeling somewhat abrupt and anticlimactic after building such tension.

Nevertheless, *Exit 8* stands as a strong entry in the cosmic horror subgenre, blending elements of psychological horror with an eerie sci-fi twist. Kawamura's direction is sharp, and his ability to create a sense of perpetual unease is commendable. The film might not break new ground in terms of narrative innovation, but it succeeds in immersing viewers into its unsettling world.

In summary, *Exit 8* is a hauntingly effective entry that will satisfy fans looking for a fresh take on the cosmic horror genre. It's a claustrophobic nightmare you won't soon forget. Just remember to keep your eyes open—lest you find yourself back at square one.

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## REVIEW

# I Am Frankelda

Grave Matters · 2025

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In the realm of animated horror, few titles capture the eerie whimsy and imaginative depth like "I Am Frankelda." Directed by Roy and Arturo Ambriz, this film makes its grand debut on October 23, 2025. Nestled between genres such as fantasy, adventure, and horror, it's a cinematic journey that delves into the mind of a young writer named Francisca Imelda (voiced by Mireya Mendoza) who embarks on a surreal odyssey through her own subconscious.

Francisca, our protagonist, is trapped in 19th-century Mexico, where she channels her creative energy into crafting spine-chilling stories. "I Am Frankelda" takes us inside the vivid and often terrifying world of her imagination, introducing us to an array of monstrous characters from her tales that come to life with chilling realism.

The animation itself is a masterclass in visual storytelling. The vibrant colors and detailed character designs are reminiscent of traditional Mexican folk art, which perfectly complements the film's dark undertones. Each scene is meticulously crafted, with attention paid to every brushstroke and shadow. This level of detail not only enhances the atmosphere but also contributes to the overall immersion into Francisca's psyche.

The voice acting is another standout aspect. Mireya Mendoza provides a nuanced performance as both Francisca and Frankelda, seamlessly transitioning between her innocent childlike self and the more mature storyteller. Supporting cast members like Arturo Mercado Jr., Luis Leonardo Suarez, and Beto Castillo add

depth with their respective characters, making it clear that no voice goes unconsidered.

What sets "I Am Frankelda" apart from its peers is its seamless blend of horror and fantasy. The film's premise isn't just about telling spooky stories; it's a psychological exploration of the creative process. As Francisca navigates her way through the labyrinthine corridors of her mind, we witness the evolution of her fears and anxieties into tangible nightmares.

The music by Kevin Smithers deserves special mention. He not only contributes to the film's score but also pens original songs that infuse a haunting melody into what could otherwise be overwhelming scenes. The eerie undertones and occasional bursts of melodrama work in perfect harmony with the visual elements, creating an unsettling yet captivating experience.

One can't help but admire the craftsmanship behind "I Am Frankelda." It's a film that respects its audience, offering layers upon layers of meaning and symbolism to dissect after the credits roll. The directors, Roy and Arturo Ambriz, have crafted something truly special here—a film that is both visually stunning and emotionally resonant.

Ultimately, "I Am Frankelda" stands out as an innovative take on horror through animation. It's a tale of imagination run amok, but it's also a story about the power of storytelling itself. With its unique blend of genres and exceptional visual flair, this film is sure to be a memorable addition to your Netflix queue when it drops on October 23, 2025.

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## REVIEW

# Leviticus

Grave Matters · 2026

**Leviticus:** A Sinister Exploration of Desires and Dangers

*Leviticus*, directed by Adrian Chiarella, is an intriguing blend of horror and romance that delves into the psychological terror of two teenage boys as they grapple with their desires for one another. The film opens with a sense of foreboding, quickly escalating into a series of harrowing encounters where each boy must confront the embodiment of their deepest yearnings—an entity that takes on the form of the person they desire most.

Director Chiarella’s approach to *Leviticus* is both daring and innovative. The script, which he also wrote, navigates the complex themes of repressed desires and societal taboos with a deft hand. The screenplay manages to balance the tension between these two intertwining genres—

romance and horror—in a way that feels natural yet unsettling.

The runtime of 88 minutes ensures that the narrative remains tight and focused, allowing for an intense and rapid escalation of events without overextending itself. Chiarella’s direction keeps the audience on edge with expertly crafted jump scares and atmospheric tension. The sound design by Emma Bortignon adds another layer to this tense atmosphere, ensuring that every moment is heightened through auditory cues.

The film stars Joe Bird as Naim and Stacy Clausen as Ryan, two young actors who deliver nuanced performances that ground the more fantastical elements of the plot. Mia Wasikowska, a veteran actress known for her role in *Alice in Wonderland*, makes an appearance as Arlene,

adding depth to the cast with her seasoned performance.

The cinematography by Tyson Perkins is particularly noteworthy. The visual effects, supervised by Paul Nelson, seamlessly integrate practical and digital elements to create a believable manifestation of the entity that torments our protagonists. This blend of effects contributes significantly to the film's ability to maintain its eerie atmosphere throughout.

*Leviticus* also stands out for its exploration of identity and desire in a manner that is both honest and unsettling. The psychological aspect of the narrative—where the boys' desires are personified into monstrous forms—is a clever twist on traditional horror tropes, allowing the film to delve deeper into the psyche of its characters.

The supporting cast, including Nicholas Hope as Deliverance Healer and Tyallah Bullock as Marnie, effectively complements the lead performances. Their roles provide additional layers to the narrative, enriching the overall experience.

In conclusion, *Leviticus* is a thought-provoking horror film that masterfully blends psychological tension with supernatural elements. It's a must-watch for fans of the genre looking for something fresh and unsettling. The film leaves an indelible mark with its chilling exploration of desires and dangers, making it one to remember.

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