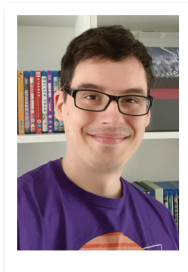




Nosferatu



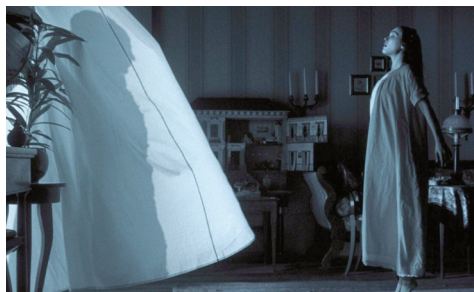
***Nosferatu* is the new film by acclaimed director Robert Eggers. A remake of the 1922 classic by F. W. Murnau, which was itself based on Bram Stoker's seminal vampire novel *Dracula*, it stars Lily-Rose Depp, Nicholas Hoult, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Willem Dafoe,**

and the excellent Bill Skarsgård as the titular fiend.

The original *Nosferatu* is not only one of the most important horror films of all time, but one of the most important films of all time. It pioneered many filmmaking techniques, and codified many tropes, as well as introducing the concept of the vampire to a wider audience. Writer-director Robert Eggers, therefore, had a significant task bringing this classic tale to a modern audience. Thankfully, he has roundly succeeded.

Nosferatu is an absolutely gorgeous film to look at. The cinematography, colour grading, use of light and shadow, shot composition, set design, costumes, hair and make-up, and everything in between are all spot on, making some scenes feel like paintings come to life.

It is a very thorough and somewhat slow-paced film, at least to begin with. It is a full twenty minutes before Thomas Hutter reaches Count Orlok's castle in an eerie horse-drawn carriage pursued by wolves, and longer than that before we fully see the Count's frightening visage. Unlike many adaptations of *Dracula*, Eggers also takes time to cover some of the events that take place on the Demeter, named here the Empusa. It is also oppressive, brutal, upsetting, uncomfortable, and occasionally genuinely unnerving. Not since *Hereditary* has a horror film been so truly horrific, blending creeping dread with nauseating gore.



The cast is largely excellent. Lily-Rose Depp is a revelation as the tortured Ellen Hutter, and delivers some of the finest possessed acting this century. Bill Skarsgård gives an astonishing performance as the ghastly Count Orlok, completely unrecognisable beneath impressive make-up, and affecting an over-the-top, but still effective, Bela Lugosi-esque accent. Simon McBurney, who stars as Renfield expy Herr Knock, plays crazy extremely well.

The only real weak link in the cast is Aaron Taylor-Johnson as the sceptical friend of the Hutters, Friedrich Harding. He is not bad, per se, but makes some odd acting choices, ones that clash with the more nuanced and layered performances of the rest of the cast.

Likewise, director Eggers has made a few odd decisions, with certain shots feeling at odds with the general ambience of the piece, and a few pacing issues here and there. There are also a couple of unnecessary jump scares, which feel cheap and misplaced given the generally patient and atmospheric tone.

But, with the exception of a couple of minor gripes, *Nosferatu* is a masterpiece. Eggers has outdone himself, reaching heights not seen since his 2015 debut *The Witch*. He has given us one of the best horror films of the 2020s, and the most frightening and engrossing vampire movies in recent memory.