

Lisa Frankenstein is a 2024 American comedy horror film directed by Zelda Williams, in her feature-length directorial debut, and written by Diablo Cody. The film stars Kathryn Newton, Cole Sprouse, Liza Soberano, Henry Eikenberry, Joe Chrest, and Carla Gugino. The plot follows a misunderstood teenage goth girl who meets and develops a relationship with a reanimated Victorian-era corpse. Cody stated that *Lisa Frankenstein* is set in the same fictional universe as *Jennifer's Body*.^[6]

Lisa Frankenstein was released in the United States by Focus Features on February 9, 2024. The film received mixed reviews from critics.

Plot

In 1989, Lisa Swallows is a lonely teenage girl still struggling to come to terms with the loss of her mother, who was killed by an axe murderer two years earlier. Her father, Dale, remarries a horrid and narcissistic woman named Janet and she gains a popular stepsister, Taffy. Lisa spends much of her time in the local Bachelor's Grove Cemetery, much to the chagrin of her family.

After an unfortunate tanning bed electrocution, Lisa heads to a party with Taffy. She is accidentally drugged and is sexually assaulted by a classmate, Doug. Disoriented and upset, Lisa returns to the cemetery and speaks to the grave of a young Victorian man who died in 1837, expressing her desire to be with him (in reality she means to be dead). The young man had been a musician who had fallen in love with a woman in his own time before she left him for another man. He was killed after being struck by lightning. A bolt of green lightning strikes the grave after Lisa leaves, and the young man (referred to as "the Creature" in the film's credits) is brought back to life as a lovesick zombie.

The Creature breaks into the house. Lisa realizes he is the young man whose grave she dotes on, and decides to hide him in her bedroom closet. The Creature is mute, missing multiple body parts, and covered in debris, all attributes he is deeply ashamed of.

Lisa Frankenstein



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Zelda Williams
Written by	Diablo Cody
Produced by	Mason Novick <div>Diablo Cody</div>
Starring	Kathryn Newton <div>Cole SprouseLiza SoberanoHenry EikenberryJoe ChrestCarla Gugino</div>
Cinematography	Paula Huidobro
Edited by	Brad Turner
Music by	Isabella Summers
Production companies	MXN Entertainment <div>Lollipop Woods</div>
Distributed by	Focus Features <div>(United States)</div>

Lisa claims that a burglar broke in to explain the mess made by the Creature, but Janet claims she is making it up for attention. After The Creature leaves a worm in Janet's food, she threatens to send Lisa to an asylum. The Creature kills Janet, cutting off her left ear, which Lisa sews onto his head. Prior, both dump Janet's body into the cemetery. Lisa figures out that, using electrocution, body parts can become one with him. She uses Taffy's tanning bed to put in his ear and later lures Doug to the cemetery so that the Creature can cut off his right hand. The Creature kills Doug and hides his body with Janet's. With these new attachments, the Creature starts looking more like his old self, and he and Lisa start to bond.

	<div>Universal Pictures (international)^[1]</div>
Release date	February 9, 2024
Running time	101 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$13 million ^[3]
Box office	\$9.9 million ^{[4][5]}

The police start to investigate Janet's and Doug's disappearances. Lisa avoids being implicated before going to the home of her crush, Michael, resolving to lose her virginity to him. She finds him in bed with Taffy and is devastated. The Creature enters, chopping off Michael's penis and causing him to bleed to death. He prepares to attack Taffy, but Lisa intervenes. He drives to the cemetery, and Lisa, with a traumatized Taffy in tow, follows. Before Lisa goes after the Creature to kill him, she gives Taffy her late mother's rosary as a token for her kindness and sympathy.

Lisa confronts the Creature, who admits he loves her. They leave the cemetery after throwing a police officer into an open grave. Lisa attaches Michael's penis to the Creature so they can have sex. With the police zeroing in on her, and now fully embracing death, Lisa convinces the Creature to electrocute her in the tanning bed. The Creature does as she asked, causing Lisa to burn to death.

Some time later, Dale and Taffy visit Lisa and Janet's graves. The Creature, now fully alive and able to speak, sits on a park bench and reads Percy Shelley's *To Mary* to a resurrected and bandaged Lisa as she lies on his lap.

Cast

- Kathryn Newton as Lisa, a lonely girl still reeling from her mother's axe murder
- Cole Sprouse as The Creature, a Victorian-era man who is one day resurrected from his grave
- Liza Soberano as Taffy, Lisa's bright, yet slightly oblivious stepsister^[7]
- Henry Eikenberry as Michael, Lisa's crush
- Joe Chrest as Dale, Lisa's father and Taffy's stepfather
- Carla Gugino as Janet, Lisa's stepmother and Taffy's mother
- Jenna Davis as Lori, Taffy's best friend
- Bryce Romero as Doug, Lisa's lab partner

Production

Diablo Cody wrote the script for *Lisa Frankenstein*, and she announced that she would be producing the film with collaborator Mason Novick in June 2022. Zelda Williams makes her feature-length debut as the director of the film starring Kathryn Newton and Cole Sprouse. Further casting announcements of Liza

Soberano, Carla Gugino, Joe Chrest, and Henry Eikenberry were also unveiled in August 2022,^[1] around the time when production began filming in New Orleans which was expected to run until September.^{[8][9]}

Some writers covering the film have theorized that its title is an amalgamation of "Lisa Frank", a company known for producing brightly colored stickers and school supplies, and *Frankenstein*.^{[10][11]} However, Cody has stated that this play on words was unintentional.^[12] In actuality, the titular character's name is an homage to a character in the 1985 John Hughes-directed film *Weird Science*, since, like *Lisa Frankenstein*, it features protagonists who bring their fantasy love interests to life.^[13]

Release

Theatrical

Lisa Frankenstein was released theatrically in the United States by Focus Features on February 9, 2024.^[14] It was released in the United Kingdom by Universal Pictures on March 1, 2024.^[2]

Home media

Lisa Frankenstein was released on video-on-demand (VOD) platforms in the US on February 27, 2024.^{[15][16]}

Soundtrack

A cover of the REO Speedwagon single, "Can't Fight This Feeling", was sung by American singer JoJo for the soundtrack. The song was released as a single on February 9, 2024,^{[17][18]} A music video was released the day before, interspersing clips from the film and JoJo performing the song in a recording studio.^[19]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, *Lisa Frankenstein* was projected to gross \$4–6 million from 3,144 theaters in its opening weekend.^[3] The film made \$1.7 million on its first day, including \$700,000 from Thursday night previews. It went on to debut to \$3.8 million, finishing second behind holdover *Argylle*.^[20] In its second weekend the film made \$2.1 million, falling to ninth place.^[21]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 51% of 192 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.6/10. The website's consensus reads: "An affectionate callback to classic horror comedies of the '80s, *Lisa Frankenstein* can be fun in its own right despite not quite measuring up to the movies it imitates."^[22] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 47 out of 100, based on 43 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[23] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B" on an A+ to F scale.^[20]

Richard Roeper of the *Chicago Sun-Times* gave the film two out of four stars, writing that it "suffers from Mixed Genre Syndrome and hops from horror spoof to trauma survivor story to pure camp to high school comedy, never really finding its footing."^[24] Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* described the film as derivative and "neither scary nor funny", calling it "a horror-com smoothie made mostly of ancient, moldy fruit."^[25] *The Guardian*'s Benjamin Lee gave the film a score of two out of five stars, criticizing its pacing and script, and writing that, "The film feels a little trapped between two worlds, a tween sleepover comedy on the verge of full body horror".^[26] *IndieWire*'s David Ehrlich gave the film a grade of "C", commending the performances of Newton and Sprouse but lamenting that, "Scenes have no shape to them, the world feels half-built, and the reality that supposedly holds them together is too erratic for Williams to establish any kind of emotional baseline."^[27] Robbie Collin of *the Telegraph* awarded the movie two stars out of five, writing that it is "hindered by its obsession with 80s cult classics."^[28]

Valerie Complex of *Deadline Hollywood* complimented the film's visual aesthetic and the performances of Newton and Soberano, but criticized its pacing: "[The] inconsistency in pacing, though reflective of the film's ambition to blend genres and tones, might detract from the cohesiveness of the narrative."^[29] Meagan Navarro of *Bloody Disgusting* characterized the film's central romance as underdeveloped, but praised Newton's performance, as well as the film's production design and humor, calling it "a cute, quirky, disjointed and harmless dark comedy that's less interested in fluid storytelling than it is championing teen weirdos and outcasts through an '80s vibe."^[30] *The New York Times*' Alissa Wilkinson also praised the production design, and concluded: "Brief, pleasant and fun to look at, the movie is not interested in anything more than love and being understood, and in that way it's a great callback to teen romances from an earlier era."^[11]

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