

The Invitation (2022 film)

The Invitation is a 2022 American horror thriller film directed by Jessica M. Thompson and written by Blair Butler. It stars Nathalie Emmanuel and Thomas Doherty. Inspired by the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, it follows a young woman who, after her mother's death, meets long-lost family members and discovers the dark secrets they carry.^[1]

Originally titled *The Bride*, it was produced by Emile Gladstone through his Latchkey Productions, Sam Raimi and Robert Tapert's Ghost House Pictures, with Butler writing the script. However, Raimi and Tapert exited due to scheduling conflicts. By 2020, the film's director, producer and new title were announced. Casting occurred from May to October 2021, with filming beginning that September in Budapest.

The Invitation was released theatrically in the United States on August 26, 2022, by Sony Pictures Releasing. The film received generally mixed-to-negative reviews, with critics praising Emmanuel's acting but criticizing the story, screenplay, and horror elements. It was a box-office success, grossing \$38 million worldwide on a \$10 million budget.

Plot

A young woman is imprisoned in a room in large stately home, later revealed to be New Carfax Abbey. She manages to escape her room and, despite the pleas of the search party, she hangs herself from the staircase, saying the final words, 'it all ends here. With me.'

In New York City, struggling artist Evelyn "Evie" Jackson makes a living freelancing for a catering business with her best friend Grace. Evie takes a DNA test after her mother's death, discovering she has a distant cousin in England named Oliver Alexander. She meets Oliver, who tells her the scandal of her great-grandmother, Emmaline, who had a secret child with a black footman.

Oliver invites Evie to an upcoming family wedding in England. She arrives in Whitby at the New Carfax Abbey, where she meets the lord of the manor, Walter De Ville, Mrs. Swift, a longtime maid of the estate, and De Ville's fanatically devoted butler, "Mr. Field". Evie also meets the rest of the Alexander family and the maids of honor, friendly Lucy and condescending Viktoria. During her stay,

The Invitation



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Jessica M. Thompson</u>
Written by	<u>Blair Butler</u>
Produced by	<u>Emile Gladstone</u>
Starring	<u>Nathalie Emmanuel</u> <u>Thomas Doherty</u> <u>Stephanie Corneliussen</u> <u>Alana Boden</u> <u>Hugh Skinner</u> <u>Sean Pertwee</u>
Cinematography	<u>Autumn Eakin</u>
Edited by	<u>Tom Elkins</u>
Music by	<u>Dara Taylor</u>
Production companies	<u>Screen Gems</u> <u>Mid Atlantic Films</u> <u>TSG</u> <u>Entertainment II</u>

Evie and Walter develop an attraction to each other. Meanwhile, throughout the house, several housemaids, under the stewardship of Mr. Field, vanish after being attacked by an unseen force.

One night, Evie sees an apparition in her bedroom. Blaming tiredness and jetlag, Walter offers to stay with her for the night. The next morning, while on a spa day with Lucy and Viktoria, Evie accidentally cuts her finger. Viktoria sucks the blood from it, passing it off as a joke. Leaving them at the spa, Evie sneaks into Walter's office and discovers that he had been researching her before her arrival and knew everything about her. She confronts him and threatens to leave, but the two reconcile and have sex.

Distributed by	<u>Sony Pictures</u> <u>Releasing</u>
Release date	August 26, 2022 (United States)
Running time	104 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$10 million
Box office	\$38 million

The family hosts a rehearsal dinner, where Evie expects to finally meet the bride and groom. Instead, Walter announces that he and Evie are to be wed. Mr. Field slits a maid's throat and serves it in wine glasses to Walter, Lucy, and Viktoria, who are all revealed to be vampires. Walter explains that Evie's ancestors, the Alexanders, are one of the three families who, for centuries, have each offered one of their women to become his wife in exchange for protection and wealth; Viktoria, Lucy and Emmaline were wedded to him, but Emmaline killed herself due to her guilt of killing humans, and due to the loss of her love, Evie's great-grandfather, and their infant son. The Alexander family had trouble finding a female member until they managed to track down Evie.

Evie is imprisoned in the cellar and visited by Lucy and Viktoria. Lucy explains that she has been bound to Walter De Ville for one hundred years, and Viktoria for five hundred. Viktoria admits that she was the apparition that Evie had seen, and reveals Dee, an imprisoned maid, who disappeared days earlier. Viktoria locks a frantic Evie inside a coffin, but she is freed by Mrs. Swift, who explains that Emmaline was a dear friend, and that Evie should get out as quickly as she can.

Evie hides in a shed where she discovers the bodies of the maids and of Mrs. Swift, who has been killed by Mr. Field. Evie escapes into town and asks an elderly couple for help. They reveal themselves to be Jonathan and Mina Harker, who work for De Ville, and they knock Evie unconscious. She wakes to find herself with De Ville, who is feeding on Imogen, a maid. He reveals himself to be Dracula.

Evie is forced to wed De Ville, witnessed by the family members. Dee is tied up next to the altar as a sacrifice. As they finish exchanging vows, Evie bites De Ville's arm, consuming his blood, and instantly transforms into a vampire. She sets the wedding chapel on fire, stabs him in the heart, which rapidly ages him, and flees with Dee. An enraged Viktoria ambushes Evie, before Lucy intervenes. The two vampires fight until Lucy impales both Viktoria and herself on a spear, turning them both into ashes. Evie is then attacked by Mr. Field, but she manages overpower and kill him. Finally, Evie is attacked by De Ville, who grabs her by the throat. She breaks free by severing his wrist and kicking him into the flames, killing him. She loses her powers due to his death and reverts into the human form. Evie escapes as the manor is engulfed in flames.

Two weeks later, in London, Evie and Grace have tracked down Oliver, who prepares to flee after having paid off the police. The two women intend to kill him for tricking Evie and being complicit in the murders committed by the vampires.

Cast

- [Nathalie Emmanuel](#) as Evie
- [Thomas Doherty](#) as De Ville
- [Stephanie Corneliussen](#) as Viktoria
- [Alana Boden](#) as Lucy
- [Hugh Skinner](#) as Oliver
- [Sean Pertwee](#) as "Mr. Field" (credited as [Renfield](#))
- [Carol Ann Crawford](#) as Mrs. Swift
- [Courtney Taylor](#) as Grace
- [Tian Chaudhry](#) as Dee

Production

In April 2019, Screen Gems acquired an untitled pitch from [Blair Butler](#), who was also attached to write the screenplay. Emile Gladstone through his Latchkey Productions and [Sam Raimi](#) and [Robert Tapert](#) were on board to produce the film for their production company [Ghost House Pictures](#); however, they eventually exited the project.^{[2][3]} In June 2020, it was revealed that the film would be titled *The Bride* and that [Jessica M. Thompson](#) was set to direct, with Emile Gladstone producing without Raimi and Tapert.^[3] The original script was written by Butler, who drew inspiration from [Bram Stoker's](#) 1897 novel *Dracula*, with revisions by Thompson.^{[3][4]} In June 2022, the film's new title was announced as *The Invitation*.^{[5][6]}

[Nathalie Emmanuel](#) and [Garrett Hedlund](#) were cast in lead roles in May 2021.^[4] That August, Alana Boden and [Stephanie Corneliussen](#) were added to the main cast.^{[7][8]} In October, [Thomas Doherty](#), [Hugh Skinner](#), [Sean Pertwee](#), and Courtney Taylor joined the cast, with Doherty replacing Hedlund.^[9]

Principal photography began in September 2021 in [Budapest](#), Hungary.^[10]

Release

The Invitation was released theatrically in the United States on August 26, 2022, by [Sony Pictures Releasing](#).^[11] The film was released digitally on September 16, 2022, and on [Blu-ray](#) and [DVD](#) on October 25, 2022.^[12] As part of Netflix's first window deal with Sony, the film was released in the United States on December 24, 2022.^[13] For the week ending January 1, 2023, the film was number 5 on the global chart of Netflix views, with 12.2 million hours viewed on the service.^[14]

Reception

Box office

The Invitation was released on August 26, 2022 and opened #1 in its opening weekend in the US and Canada. Ultimately it grossed \$25.1 million in the United States and Canada, and \$12.9 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$38 million,^[15] against a budget of \$10 million.^[16]

In the United States and Canada, *The Invitation* was released alongside *Three Thousand Years of Longing* and *Breaking*.^[16] The film made \$2.6 million on its first day (including \$775,000 from Thursday night previews)^{[17][18]} and grossed \$6.8 million from 3,114 theaters during its opening weekend.^[19] It was the lowest-grossing film to top the box office since *Spiral* (\$4.5 million) in May 2021.^[20] In its sophomore weekend the film made \$4.7 million (and a total of \$5.7 million over the four-day *Labor Day* frame), dropping 30.7% and finishing fifth.^[21] *Deadline Hollywood* later reported the film turned a profit for the studio.^[22]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 29% of 66 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.7/10. The website's consensus reads: "Despite a very likable lead and a refreshingly light touch, *The Invitation* is ultimately too predictable to thrill as either a romance or a horror story."^[23] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 45 out of 100, based on 14 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[24] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "C" on an A+ to F scale.^[18]

Natalia Winkelman of *The New York Times* wrote: "For a fright-fest as broad as this one, there's an awful lot of banal dialogue, and the scare patterns are repetitive enough that even the easiest startlers (I count myself among them) grow immune early on."^[25] Joe Leydon of *Variety* wrote in his review: "Despite some ambitious efforts to revitalize hoary horror movie tropes with allegorical commentary on race, class and male privilege, [the film] is too wearily hackneyed for too much of its running time."^[26]


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External links

- [Official website \(<https://www.theinvitation.movie/>\)](https://www.theinvitation.movie/) 
- *The Invitation* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12873562/>) at *IMDb*
- *The Invitation* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v731782>) at *AllMovie*

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