

Hellraiser (2022 film)

Hellraiser is a 2022 supernatural horror film directed by David Bruckner, with a screenplay by Ben Collins and Luke Piotrowski, from a screen story they co-wrote with David S. Goyer. It is a reboot^[1] of the *Hellraiser* franchise, the eleventh installment overall, and a second adaptation of the 1986 novella *The Hellbound Heart* by Clive Barker, which was adapted into the 1987 film *Hellraiser*. The film stars Odessa A'zion, Jamie Clayton, Adam Faison, Drew Starkey, Brandon Flynn, Aoife Hinds, Jason Liles, Yinka Olorunnife, Selina Lo, Zachary Hing, Kit Clarke, Goran Višnjić, and Hiam Abbass. It follows a young woman recovering from addiction who ends up with a mechanical puzzle box that can summon the Cenobites, humanoid beings who thrive on pain being pleasure.

Plans for a *Hellraiser* remake were publicized in October 2007, when Julien Maury and Alexandre Bustillo were reported to be directing, with Barker producing and Marcus Dunstan and Patrick Melton writing the script. After Maury and Bustillo left the project, Todd Farmer and Patrick Lussier were attached, with production slated for an early 2012 release. However, following the release of *Hellraiser: Revelations* (2011) to secure continuing rights, Farmer and Lussier were no longer involved. By 2018, after the critical and commercial success of *Halloween*, Miramax had confirmed plans for new *Hellraiser* installments. The film was green-lit in early 2019, with Bruckner directing from a script written by Collins and Piotrowski, while the project moved to Hulu with Spyglass Media Group and Phantom Four Films. Filming took place from September to October 2021.

The film was released in 2022; first during Fantastic Fest 2022,^[2] throughout North America, through Hulu,^[3] and then the United Kingdom and globally, through Spyglass and Paramount Pictures.^[6] The film received mixed-to-positive reviews from critics, with some deeming it an improvement over its predecessors and the best since the original 1987 film; it was praised for its new take on the series, faithfulness to the

Hellraiser



Promotional release poster

Directed by	David Bruckner
Screenplay by	Ben Collins Luke Piotrowski
Story by	David S. Goyer Ben Collins Luke Piotrowski
Based on	<i>The Hellbound Heart</i> by Clive Barker
Produced by	David S. Goyer Keith Levine Clive Barker Marc Toberoff
Starring	Odessa A'zion Jamie Clayton Adam Faison Drew Starkey Brandon Flynn Aoife Hinds Jason Liles

tone of the source material and Clayton's performance, while being criticized for its rushed character development and runtime.

Plot

During a party at hedonistic millionaire Roland Voight's mansion, sex worker Joey solves a mechanical puzzle box at Voight's insistence. Upon completion, the box springs a blade which cuts Joey, and opens a portal to another dimension, from which chains fly out and rip him apart.

Six years later, recovering addict Riley lives with her brother Matt, his boyfriend Colin, and their roommate Nora. Riley and her boyfriend Trevor break into an abandoned storage warehouse, where they discover and take the puzzle box. Returning home late, Riley gets into an argument with Matt and leaves. At an empty park, she solves the box and avoids its blade. The Cenobites, a group of mutilated humanoids, appear and demand she choose another sacrifice. Matt finds Riley blacked out and, as he tries to wake her, inadvertently cuts himself on the box. He goes to a nearby restroom to clean his wound. Riley hears him scream and discovers that he has vanished.

Believing the box caused Matt's disappearance, Riley and Trevor track down Serena Menaker, Voight's former lawyer, who had hidden it in the warehouse. Menaker tries to take the box from Riley but is cut by the blade and later taken by the Cenobites. Visiting Voight's abandoned mansion, Riley finds his journals. She learns that the box has multiple configurations, each requiring a victim to be marked for sacrifice by its blade. On completion, it grants the holder a "gift" from Leviathan, the entity that rules over Hell. Riley sees an apparition of Matt and is horrified to discover he has been flayed.

Trevor, Colin, and Nora arrive in a van to take Riley home. While Riley explains her findings to Colin, the still-living but mutilated Voight, who is hiding inside the walls, stabs Nora with the box. They leave the mansion, but the Cenobites take Nora. Their leader, the Priest, taunts and flays Nora. The van crashes, forcing them to walk back toward the mansion. The Priest confronts Riley, offering to exchange Matt for two sacrifices. Riley refuses and is cut by the blade. The Priest commands her to choose two more sacrifices or become one herself. After Trevor is injured by one of the Cenobites, the Chatterer, Riley solves the next configuration and stabs it. The Cenobite gets torn to pieces as the next sacrifice.

Trevor, Colin, and Riley make it back to the mansion, realizing that there are steel doors designed to lock the Cenobites out. Riley and Colin leave Trevor to rest, and it is revealed that Trevor has been working for Voight to find people to sacrifice to the puzzle box. Riley and Colin trap a Cenobite, the Asphyx, to become

	<div>Yinka Olorunnife</div> <div>Selina Lo</div> <div>Zachary Hing</div> <div>Kit Clarke</div> <div>Goran Višnjić</div> <div>Hiam Abbass</div>
Cinematography	Eli Born
Edited by	David Marks
Music by	Ben Lovett
Production companies	<div>20th Century Studios^{[a][1]}</div> <div>Spyglass Media Group</div> <div>Phantom Four Films</div> <div>247Hub^[1]</div>
Distributed by	<div>Hulu (North America)</div> <div>Paramount Pictures (International)</div>
Release dates	<div>September 28, 2022 (Fantastic Fest^[2])</div> <div>October 7, 2022 (United States^[3])</div>
Running time	120 minutes
Countries	<div>United States</div> <div>Serbia^[4]</div>
Language	English
Budget	\$14 million
Box office	\$12,640 ^[5]

the last sacrifice, but Voight appears and stabs Colin with the box. Voight reveals that he sought new, pleasurable sensations after completing all of his sacrifices, but his "reward" was a contraption attached to him that twists his nerve endings, leaving him in constant pain. He completes the final configuration and traps the Cenobites, demanding they ask Leviathan to free him from his "gift". While Leviathan appears in the sky above the mansion, Riley retrieves the box and unlocks the steel doors, letting in the Cenobites. Riley saves Colin from torture by stabbing Trevor, choosing him as a new final sacrifice. Trevor is mutilated and dragged to Hell. Meanwhile, the Priest tells Voight that his reward cannot be revoked, but can be traded for a different reward as his current gift, "sensation," does not suit him. She offers him "power", which he accepts. Voight is released from his contraption and healed, only to be immediately impaled with a large chain by Leviathan and lifted away.

With the sacrifices completed, the Cenobites tell Riley they can resurrect Matt as a gift. Riley refuses to have any gift because she knows it is always going to be twisted, following what Voight had informed her about how each gift the Cenobites offer will result in pain, and tells them that she will accept Matt's death. The Cenobites tell her that by choosing to live with her guilt and loss, she has effectively chosen the gift of "lament". The box reverts to its cube configuration and the Cenobites disappear. As Riley and Colin leave the mansion, he asks her if she made the right choice; Riley remains silent. Inside Leviathan's realm, Voight undergoes a brutal transformation into a new Cenobite.

Cast

- [Odessa A'zion](#) as Riley McKendry, a recovering drug addict^[7]
- [Jamie Clayton](#) as the Priest, leader of the Cenobites^[8]
- Adam Faison as Colin, Matt's boyfriend
- [Drew Starkey](#) as Trevor, Riley's boyfriend who met her in a [twelve-step program](#)
- [Brandon Flynn](#) as Matt McKendry, Riley's estranged brother
- [Aoife Hinds](#) as Nora, Matt and Colin's roommate
- Jason Liles as the Chatterer, a Cenobite who chases Riley, Trevor, and Colin
- Yinka Olorunnife as the Weeper, a Cenobite who bleeds from her eyes
- [Selina Lo](#) as the Gasp, a Cenobite whose deformation hinders her breathing
- Zachary Hing as the Asphyx, a Cenobite
- Kit Clarke as Joey Coscuna, a sex worker and one of Voight's victims
- [Goran Višnjić](#) as Roland Voight, a hedonistic millionaire and businessman who serves the Cenobites and Leviathan. He later becomes an angelic-like Cenobite.
- [Hiam Abbass](#) as Serena Menaker, Voight's lawyer
- [Gorica Regodić](#) as the Mother, a Cenobite
- [Vukašin Jovanović](#) as the Masque, a Cenobite

Production

Development

In October 2006, [Clive Barker](#) announced through his official website that he would be writing the script to a forthcoming remake of the original *Hellraiser* film, to be produced by [Dimension Films](#).^{[9][10][11]} In October 2007, [Julien Maury](#) and [Alexandre Bustillo](#) were eyed to write and direct.^{[12][13]} Dimension was hoping to rush the film into production before the [potential strikes](#) expected by the end of the year.^[14] A

release date of September 5, 2008 was planned by the studio.^[15] By January 2008, the project, then titled *Clive Barker Presents: Hellraiser*, was delayed to January 9, 2009 following the studio's dissatisfaction with Maury and Bustillo's script.^{[16][17]} In February 2008, Marcus Dunstan and Patrick Melton were tapped for a page-one rewrite, and production was gearing up to begin that spring.^[18] By April 2008, the directing pair had vacated *Hellraiser* and moved onto *Halloween II* after clashing with producer Bob Weinstein, who wanted a film with a wider appeal for mass audiences.^{[19][20][21]} Darren Lynn Bousman was offered the film, but his commitments to other projects likely prevented him from accepting.^[22] That October, French director Pascal Laugier was set to direct.^{[23][24][25]} The film was pulled from its January release date in December 2008.^[26] Laugier told *Dread Central* in March 2009 that work on the film had begun with a co-writer he could not publicly name.^[27] Laugier envisioned a much more serious tone for the film than the producers had hoped; who pushed for a commercial film that would appeal to a teen audience,^[28] and he left the project in June 2009.^{[29][30][31]} By October, reports indicated that the film would be released in 3D.^[32]

Throughout 2010, further pitches were given by Christian E. Christiansen, Cory Goodman, and from writing duo Josh Stolberg and Peter Goldfinger.^[33] By August, the reboot had taken a back seat at Dimension Films, as production commenced on *Hellraiser: Revelations*; greenlit primarily to retain the rights to the property.^[34] In October 2010, Christiansen was reported to be in the running for director while Amber Heard was considered for the lead role.^{[35][36]} Mere days later, it was officially announced that Patrick Lussier and Todd Farmer were to direct and write, respectively, a reboot of the *Hellraiser* franchise. The story would have differed from the original film, as Lussier and Farmer did not want to retell the original story out of respect for Barker's work, instead focusing on the world and function of the puzzle box. During their tenure on the project, Lussier and Farmer had worked out numerous ideas beyond a simple reboot. One idea was a prequel starring William Fichtner as Pinhead, while another pitch had Pinhead portrayed by a woman.^{[37][38]} However, in 2011, Farmer confirmed that both he and Lussier were dropped from the project.^{[39][40]}

In October 2013, Barker announced that he would be directing and writing the film, and Doug Bradley was to return in his role as Pinhead.^[41] A year later, Barker stated that a second draft of the script was completed and described the film as a "very loose" remake of the original film, but said that he may not direct the film.^[42] In March 2017, Barker said that the film's "script was written and delivered to Dimension years ago. That was the last anyone heard until news of a sequel surfaced."^[43] After the successful release of the 2018 horror sequel *Halloween*, Miramax confirmed that it was considering beginning production on new installments to the *Hellraiser* franchise.^[44]

In May 2019, Gary Barber announced that Spyglass Media Group would be developing a new remake of *Hellraiser* to be written and co-produced by David S. Goyer.^{[45][46]} In April 2020, David Bruckner was reported to direct the remake, with Ben Collins and Luke Piotrowski writing the script after having previously collaborated with Bruckner on *The Night House* (2020), which Goyer also produced.^{[47][48]} In December 2020, following a legal dispute, Barker officially regained the rights to the property in the United States.^[49]

Pre-production

In June 2021, it was reported that Odessa A'zion was cast in the lead role.^[7] In a July 2021 interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, it was revealed that the film's producers auditioned drag performer Gottmik for the role of Pinhead, after Gottmik showed off a Pinhead-inspired look for a runway, on *RuPaul's Drag*

Race.^{[50][51]}

Filming

In September 2021, Goyer announced that the production crew was "in the midst of" filming, confirming that principal photography had commenced in Belgrade, Serbia.^{[52][53]} In October 2021, after filming wrapped, Jamie Clayton was revealed to have portrayed Pinhead, while Brandon Flynn, Goran Višnjić, Drew Starkey, Adam Faison, Aoife Hinds, Selina Lo and Hiam Abbass were unveiled as supporting cast.^[54] Bruckner and the crew reached out to Bradley to make a cameo appearance in the film, but Bradley declined for two reasons: first, potential complications with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and secondly, his desire to leave his Pinhead performance's legacy intact, a decision Bruckner and his crew accepted.^[55]

Release

United States

On 28 September 2022, *Hellraiser* had its world premiere at Fantastic Fest in Austin, Texas as one of that film festival's "secret screenings".^[2] On 4 October 2022, it was screened at "Beyond Fest" in Santa Monica, California.^{[56][57]} The film was released in the United States by Hulu via streaming on 7 October 2022, exclusively on its service as a Hulu Original.^[3]

International

On 5 October 2022, David Bruckner announced, on Twitter, that Spyglass and Paramount Pictures were handling international distribution for the film.^{[58][6]} On 31 October 2022, Paramount announced, via Twitter,^{[59][60]} the release of the film in the United Kingdom through various streaming services, including Amazon Prime Video, iTunes, and Microsoft, as part of its international release.

Home media

Hellraiser was released on DVD by Paramount Home Entertainment in the United Kingdom on 27 March 2023.^[61]

Reception

Audience viewership

According to Whip Media's TV Time, *Hellraiser* was the third most streamed film in the United States during the week of October 9, 2022.^{[62][63]} According to the streaming aggregator *Reelgood*, *Hellraiser* was the eighth most watched program across all platforms during the week of October 14,^[64] and the 9th

during the week of October 19, 2022.^{[65][66]} According to the streaming aggregator JustWatch, *Hellraiser* was the most watched movie across all platforms in the United States during the week of October 3,^[67] and during the week of October 10, 2022.^[68]

Critical reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 67% of 148 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.2/10. The website's consensus reads: "A gift for long-suffering fans after numerous subpar sequels, David Bruckner's *Hellraiser* unlocks the puzzle box for getting this franchise back on the right track."^[69] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 55 out of 100, based on 25 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[70]

Katie Rife of Polygon criticized the characters and the length, but praised the set design and Clayton's performance, and felt overall the film "might even be the second best in the series after *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*".^[71] Dave White of TheWrap wrote, "Embodying Clive Barker's original intention of 'repulsive glamour', these Cenobites silently glide on hell's runway. The assignment was 'red flesh and raw meat, but make it fashion', and their work is an elegant slam dunk."^[72] Mark Hanson of Slant Magazine called it "a toothlessly retrograde enterprise."^[73]

Accolades

Year	Award	Category	Nominee(s)	Result	Ref.
2023	<u>Fangoria Chainsaw Awards</u>	Best Streaming Premiere Film	<i>Hellraiser</i>	Nominated	^{[74][75]}
		Best Supporting Performance	Jamie Clayton	Nominated	
		Best Makeup FX	Josh Russell, Sierra Russell	Nominated	

Future

In October 2023, Bruckner expressed interest in developing a sequel contingent upon the perceived success of the 2022 installment, and the collective interest of the audience.^[76] In March 2024, producer Keith Levine confirmed that there are developments in collaboration with Bruckner for a sequel.^[77]

Notes

- a. This film was originally in-production at 20th Century Studios, but the studio went uncredited upon release of the film. Despite this, 20th Century Studios promoted the film instead.

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