

Lovely, Dark, and Deep (film)

Lovely, Dark, and Deep is a 2023 American horror film written and directed by Teresa Sutherland in her feature length debut, and starring Georgina Campbell.

The film had its world premiere at Fantasia on July 23, 2023 and was theatrically released and on VOD on February 22, 2024, by XYZ Films.

Plot

Lennon is a backcountry ranger starting a new job in Arvores National Park where in the past, a number of fellow rangers as well as members of the public have gone missing, including Lennon's predecessor. In her ranger cabin, Lennon keeps track of these missing people. During a hike, she becomes lost and her handheld transceiver's batteries give out. Lennon hears distorted sounds and messages over the transceiver, even with its batteries out. She is found by fellow ranger Jackson, who guides her back and asks her why she joined the park rangers. Lennon avoids the question.

The rangers receive a notice that a hiker, Sarah Greenberg, has gone missing. The rangers, coordinated by head ranger Zhang form a search party, but Jackson orders Lennon to stay at base camp in case Sarah returns. Spurred by her memories of when her own younger sister, Jenny, disappeared in the woods during her childhood, Lennon disobeys orders and searches for Sarah. She finds Sarah in the woods at night, bloody and disoriented, asking Lennon if she is real. Lennon notifies the team, and Sarah is rescued and taken to receive care. Zhang notifies Lennon that she is fired for disobeying a direct order from Jackson and to await airlift out of Arvores in five days. When Lennon rebuffs that they found Sarah, Jackson pointedly responds that she found Sarah.

Rather than wait, Lennon hikes through the park, but begins experiencing disturbing visions. She hears Jackson over the transceiver, informing her of another missing hiker and instructing her to go find him. She searches for the hiker, but finds herself inexplicably miles away on the other side of the park by the lake. Jackson's voice distorts over the transceiver and tells her that she is where she is meant to be, and that she

Table with 2 columns: Field (e.g., Directed by, Screenplay by) and Value (e.g., Teresa Sutherland, XYZ Films). Includes a poster image and release dates.

took something she must replace. Jenny appears and tells her that "they" will keep Lennon unless she replaces what she took, implying that by rescuing Sarah she took from "them". She finds two hikers camped in the woods, but finds that they cannot see or hear her. She sees a vision of herself, instructing herself to kill one of the campers, thereby replacing what she took. She refuses and continues to have disturbing visions, finally telling "them" that if murder is what will free her, then they can keep her.

<b>Running time</b>	87 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English

Lennon makes her way back to her cabin, but when she enters, she finds herself in her childhood home, and is forced to relive memories of Jenny's disappearance and the devastation it caused her family. She sees missing people in the distorted house, including her predecessor and Jenny. Messages from the past reveal that Zhang found Jenny during the search, but recognized her as being "taken" by the entities rather than lost, and the rangers lied to her parents about Jenny's whereabouts. Zhang appears and Lennon, distraught, asks her if she is real. Zhang tells her that she is, and explains that the entities take people away for unknown reasons, keeping them in this place, and that the rangers allow them to. The entities allow the rangers to explain the phenomenon to other recruits who experience strange encounters, she speculates, because the rangers protect their dark, forested, domain. However, Zhang expresses regret for how many people she has let them take, most especially Jenny. She refuses to let them take Lennon and opts to stay behind as a replacement. She bids her goodbye, telling Lennon she will make a fine ranger, before Lennon is dragged underwater and Zhang is pulled away. Lennon emerges in the lake, and is rescued by Jackson. Lennon tells him that she knows the secret.

Some time later, the new ranger recruits are sent out to their assignments, with Zhang listed as another missing person. Lennon returns to her cabin, and is called upon to find another missing hiker. She searches for him, and finds him disoriented, but when he asks her if she is real, she recognizes that he is one of the "taken". She responds that she is not real and walks away, leaving him to his fate.

## Cast

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- Georgina Campbell as Lennon
- Nick Blood as Jackson
- Wai Ching Ho as Zhang
- Mick Greer as Mr Finley
- Celia Williams as Mrs Finley

## Production

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Written and directed by Teresa Sutherland's in her feature length debut, the title of the movie is taken from a line of Robert Frost's poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*.

The film is edited by Alexandra Amick.<sup>[2]</sup> Josh Waller is producer for Woodhead Creative. Stefanie Coimbra is executive producer for House of Quest Films, alongside Molly C. Quinn, Matthew M. Welty, and Elan Gale for QWGMire. In October 2021, it was reported that Georgina Campbell, Nick Blood and Wai Ching Ho were in lead roles in the film which had entered principal photography in Portugal.<sup>[3]</sup> The cast also includes Mick Greer, and Celia Williams.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Release

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*Lovely, Dark, and Deep* had its world premiere at the Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal in July 2023,<sup>[5][4]</sup> before its theatrically released and on VOD on February 22, 2024, by XYZ Films.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Reception

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On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 89% of 34 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.7/10. The site consensus reads "Effectively playing on fundamental fears, *Lovely, Dark, and Deep* is a creepy calling card for debuting director Teresa Sutherland that's further distinguished by Georgina Campbell's haunting performance".<sup>[7]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- *Lovely, Dark, and Deep* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15560132/>) at IMDb
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