

= Corpse Bride =

Corpse Bride , often referred to as Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride , is a 2005 British @-@ American stop @-@ motion @-@ animated musical fantasy film directed by Mike Johnson and Tim Burton with a screenplay by John August , Caroline Thompson and Pamela Pettler based on characters created by Burton and Carlos Grangel . The plot is set in a fictional Victorian era village in Europe . Johnny Depp led a cast as the voice of Victor , while Helena Bonham Carter voiced Emily , the title character . Corpse Bride is the third stop @-@ motion feature film produced by Burton and the first directed by him (the previous two films , The Nightmare Before Christmas and James and the Giant Peach , were directed by Henry Selick) . This is also the first stop @-@ motion feature from Burton that was distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures . It was dedicated to executive producer Joe Ranft , who died during production .

The film , a critical and commercial success , was nominated for the 78th Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature , but lost to Wallace & Gromit : The Curse of the Were @-@ Rabbit , which also starred Bonham Carter . It was shot with Canon EOS @-@ 1D Mark II digital SLRs , rather than the 35mm film cameras used for Burton 's previous stop @-@ motion film The Nightmare Before Christmas .

= = Plot = =

In an unspecified Victorian @-@ era village somewhere in Europe , Victor Van Dort (Johnny Depp) , the son of nouveau riche fish merchants , and Victoria Everglot (Emily Watson) , the neglected daughter of hateful aristocrats , are preparing for their arranged marriage , which will simultaneously raise the social class of Victor 's parents and restore the wealth of Victoria 's penniless family . Both have concerns about marrying someone they do not know , but upon meeting for the first time , they fall for each other . After the shy Victor ruins the wedding rehearsal by forgetting his vows and is scolded by Pastor Galswells (Christopher Lee) , he flees and practices his wedding vows in the nearby forest , placing the wedding ring on a nearby upturned tree root .

The root turns out to be the finger of a murdered woman in a tattered bridal gown , who rises from the grave claiming that she is now Victor 's wife . After fainting , Victor wakes up and finds out he was spirited away to the surprisingly festive Land of the Dead . The bewildered Victor learns the story of how Emily (Helena Bonham Carter) , his new bride , was murdered years ago by an unknown criminal on the night of her secret elopement . Emily , as a wedding gift , reunites Victor with his long @-@ dead dog , Scraps . Meanwhile , Victoria 's parents hear that Victor has been seen in another woman 's arms , and become suspicious .

Wanting to reunite with Victoria , Victor tricks Emily into taking him back to the Land of the Living by pretending he wants her to meet his parents . She agrees to this and takes him to see Elder Gutmacht (Michael Gough) , the kindly ruler of the underworld , to send him and Emily temporarily to the Land of the Living . Once back home , Victor asks Emily to wait in the forest while he rushes off to see Victoria and confess his wish to marry her as soon as possible , to which she gladly returns his feelings . Just as they are about to share a kiss , Emily arrives and sees the two of them together and , feeling betrayed and hurt , angrily drags Victor back to the Land of the Dead . Victoria tells her parents that Victor has been forcibly wed to a dead woman , but they believe she has lost her mind and lock her up in her bedroom . She escapes her room by window and rushes to Galswells to find a way to help Victor , but fails . With Victor gone , Victoria 's parents decide to marry her off to a presumably wealthy newcomer in town named Lord Barkis Bittern (Richard E. Grant) , who appeared at the wedding rehearsal , against her will .

Emily is heartbroken by Victor 's deception . Victor , however , apologizes for lying to her , and the two reconcile while playing the piano together . Shortly after , Victor 's recently deceased family coachman appears in the afterlife and informs Victor of Victoria 's impending marriage to Barkis . In order for their marriage to become valid , Victor must repeat his vows in the Land of the Living and willingly drink the Wine of Ages , a poison - thus joining her in death . Overhearing this , and fretting about having lost Victoria to another man , Victor agrees to die for Emily . All of the dead go "

upstairs " to the Land of the Living to perform the wedding ceremony for Victor and Emily . Upon their arrival , the town erupts into a temporary panic until every living person recognizes each other 's loved ones from the dead and they have a joyous reunion under the bizarre circumstances .

After a quarrel with Barkis (and realizing he was only after her supposed money) , Victoria follows the procession of dead to the church . Emily notices Victoria and realizes that she is denying Victoria her chance at happiness the same way it was stolen from her . As Victor prepares to drink the cup of poison to kill himself , Emily stops him and reunites him with Victoria . Barkis interrupts them , and Emily recognizes him as her former fiance - who is revealed to be the one who murdered her for her dowry . Barkis tries to kidnap Victoria at sword point , but Victor stops him and the two men duel . The dead townspeople are unable to interfere with the affairs of the living . Emily intercedes to save Victor and Barkis mockingly proposes a toast to Emily , claiming she was " always the bridesmaid , never the bride . " He unknowingly drinks the cup of poison . The dead , now able to intercede , happily drag the " new arrival " back to the Land of the Dead for retribution for his crimes . Victoria , now a widow , is once again able to marry Victor .

Emily sets Victor free of his vow to marry her , giving the wedding ring back to Victor and her wedding bouquet to Victoria before exiting the church . As she steps into the moonlight , she transforms into hundreds of butterflies , presumably finding peace , as Victor and Victoria look on wrapped in each other 's embrace .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The film is based on a 19th @-@ century Russian folktale , which Joe Ranft introduced to Burton while they were finishing The Nightmare Before Christmas . The film began production in November 2003 , while Burton was completing Big Fish . He continued with production on his next live @-@ action feature , Charlie and the Chocolate Factory , which was produced simultaneously with the film . Co @-@ director Mike Johnson spoke about how they took a more organic approach to directing the film , saying : " In a co @-@ directing situation , one director usually handles one sequence while the other handles another . Our approach was more organic . Tim knew where he wanted the film to go as far as the emotional tone and story points to hit . My job was to work with the crew on a daily basis and get the footage as close as possible to how I thought he wanted it . "

= = = Filming = = =

The film was originally supposed to have been shot on film , though a last @-@ minute change by the studio helped introduce a different technology . In 1997 , during pre @-@ production on Henry Selick 's feature , Monkeybone , the film 's cinematographer Pete Kozachik was looking for a type of filming that would streamline the process of integrating stop @-@ motion characters with pre @-@ filmed live actors . After finishing Monkeybone , Kozachik continued to test cameras for a practical means of shooting feature animation digitally . In early 2003 , the production unit was not interested in digital capture for stop motion ; the team was instead prepping the movie for a film shoot . Two weeks before filming was to begin , Kozachik and visual effects consultant Chris Watts came up with a solution using digital still cameras that was deemed viable by Warner Bros. senior vice president of physical production and visual effects Chris DeFaria . The production then became digital . After testing a dozen different models , Kozachik opted for a basic digital still camera , the Canon EOS @-@ 1D Mark II , an off @-@ the @-@ shelf model that was outfitted with adapters to allow the use of Nikon prime lenses (14mm @-@ 105mm) . Kozachik spoke about why he chose the camera , saying : " One reason I went with this particular camera is that its image chip is just about the same

size as Super 35 film negative , so we could use Nikon lenses and treat them like regular 35mm cine lenses and get the same effect ? the same depth of field and angle of coverage . I knew that we were going to be fighting to make this look like a ' real ' movie because we weren 't shooting on film , so I wanted to at least have the optics look like movie optics . "

Animation took place at 3 Mills Studios in East London . A dozen animators / puppeteers were put to work when production began , but that number had tripled by the end of production . The initial group spent time developing each puppet 's unique characteristics . The puppets themselves , built by Mackinnon and Saunders , were typically about 17 inches tall and animated on sets built three to four feet off the ground with trap doors that allowed animators access to the sets ' surfaces to manipulate the puppets . The three primary characters ? Victor , Victoria and Corpse Bride ? were fitted with heads the size of golf balls that contained special gearing to allow the animators to manipulate individual parts of the puppets ' faces . The animators ' work was spread over 25 to 35 individual setups / stages , each having its own Canon digital camera . A total of 32 cameras were used on the film . Each camera was outfitted with a " grabber " system that enabled the animators to capture frames and download them into a computer to assemble a short " reel " of the shot being produced to check their work .

The film 's images were stored on a 1GB image card that was capable of holding approximately 100 frames of animation . Eight roving camera teams ? each team including a lighting cameraman , an assistant , a lighting electrician and a set dresser to deal with any art department issues ? worked with the animators to set up shots . Each camera team had a " lighting station " workstation ? comprising an Apple G4 computer and a monitor to assist in checking lighting and framing ? to view TIFF file versions of the camera 's images . Once a shot was approved , the computer was removed and the animators were left to shoot the scene using their still camera and " grabber " computer / camera system to check their work . The film 's story department head Jeffrey Lynch explained that the scenes were developed initially from storyboards created by a team , saying : " We shot as close to a 1 : 1 film ratio [one take per shot] as we could because there was no time for reshoots . We did most of our experimentation in the storyboard process ? as many ways as needed ? to get the scene how we wanted it . There was no coverage , as there would be for a live @-@ action film . "

Co @-@ director Johnson would go over each scene with the animators , sometimes acting out the scene , if necessary . The animators would create a " dope sheet " ? in which a shot was broken down , frame by frame ? to account for key " hits " . The animators would then shoot tests of the scene , often shooting on " 2s " or " 4s " (meaning shooting just every second or fourth frame of what would appear in the final animation) . Johnson explained : " The next day , when they 'd finish their test / rehearsal , we 'd cut it in and see how it played in the reel and fine @-@ tune from there . We might do some lighting tweaks , performance tweaks or have the art department get in and touch anything that needed it . Then we 'd close the curtain and let the animator animate the shot . " The animators would sometimes make use of the voice and / or video recordings of the actors , a practice also common in cel animation . Once photographed , the frames were manipulated by a team of " data wranglers . " Using a workflow developed by Chris Watts , the frames were downloaded from the camera image cards as RAW files , converted to Cineon files and processed through a " color cube . " Cinematographer Pete Kozachik explained : " The color cube is a 3D lookup table created by FilmLight Ltd. that forces the image data into behaving like a particular Eastman Kodak film stock ? in this case , 5248 , one of my favorites . With this film emulation , we could actually rate our cameras at ASA 100 , then take our light meters and spot meters and , with great confidence , shoot as if we were using 5248 . Sure enough , the footage would come back and look just like it . " The frames could be processed further to generate a TIFF file for viewing on the lighting station computer monitors so lighting , composition and color could be previewed .

= = = Visual effects = = =

Visual effects were delivered by London 's Moving Picture Company (MPC) , and were applied to the 1 @,@ 000 or so shots in the film , though most of the effects simply painted out puppet supports and similar set equipment . Some visual effects elements ? groups of birds and butterflies ,

were created completely in CG , though others were composited as visual effects from real @-@ life elements . Pete Kozachik explained that the trick for shooting the characters by themselves was obtaining visually interesting shots that would dependably support the director 's storytelling , saying : " The challenge is keeping the action clear and simple with lighting and composition . There 's a discipline to clear storytelling with these puppets . You want to be abstract , but one can easily go overboard with these critters because they aren 't as familiar to the audience as real humans . The characters don 't necessarily translate the same as if you 're shooting a real person . You have to consciously balance arty atmosphere and graphic clarity so as to not confuse the audience about what it is they 're looking at . "

In a 2005 , interview with About.com , Burton spoke about the differences between directing Corpse Bride and The Nightmare Before Christmas , saying : " The difference on that was that one I had designed completely . It was a very completed package in my mind . I felt like it was there . I felt more comfortable with it . With this , it was a bit more organic . It was based on an old folk tale . We kept kind of changing it but , you know , I had a great co @-@ director with Mike Johnson . I feel like we complemented each other quite well . It was just a different movie , a different process . " He also spoke about casting Johnny Depp as Victor , saying : " It was weird because we were doing both at the same time . He was Willy Wonka by day and Victor by night so it might have been a little schizophrenic for him . But he ? s great . It 's the first animated movie he 's done and he 's always into a challenge . We just treat it like fun and a creative process . Again , that ? s the joy of working with him . He 's kind of up for anything . He just always adds something to it . The amazing thing is all the actors never worked [together] . They were never in a room together , so they were all doing their voices , except for Albert [Finney] and Joanna [Lumley] did a few scenes together , everybody else was separate . They were all kind of working in a vacuum , which was interesting . That ? s the thing that I felt ended up so beautifully , that their performances really meshed together . So he was very canny , as they all were , about trying to find the right tone and making it work while not being in the same room with each other . "

= = Music = =

The soundtrack was produced by Danny Elfman with the help of John August and released on September 20 , 2005 . It contains all of the music from the film including score music and four songs with lyrics sung by voice actors .

All songs written and composed by Danny Elfman and John August . All scores written by Elfman .

= = Release = =

Corpse Bride premiered on September 7 , 2005 at the Venice International Film Festival . The film was released on September 23 , 2005 in United States and on October 13 , 2005 in the United Kingdom .

= = = Box office = = =

Corpse Bride grossed \$ 53 @,@ 359 @,@ 111 in North America , and \$ 63 @,@ 835 @,@ 950 in other territories , for a worldwide total of \$ 117 @,@ 195 @,@ 061 .

In North America , the film opened to number two in its first weekend , with \$ 19 @,@ 145 @,@ 480 , behind Flightplan . In its second weekend , the film dropped to number three , grossing an additional \$ 10 @,@ 033 @,@ 257 . In its third weekend , the film dropped to number six , grossing \$ 6 @,@ 511 @,@ 336 . In its fourth weekend , the film dropped to number nine , grossing \$ 3 @,@ 577 @,@ 465 .

The biggest market in other territories being France , UK and Japan where the film grossed \$ 8 @.@ 88 million , \$ 8 @.@ 57 million and \$ 7 @.@ 1 million respectively .

= = = Critical response = = =

Corpse Bride received positive reviews from critics . The review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes reported a 83 % approval rating with an average rating of 7 @. @ 2 / 10 based on 187 reviews . The site 's consensus reads : " As can be expected from a Tim Burton movie , Corpse Bride is whimsically macabre , visually imaginative , and emotionally bittersweet . " Another review aggregator , Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 top reviews from mainstream critics , calculated a score of 83 based on 35 reviews , indicating " universal acclaim " . The film was nominated for AFI 's 10 Top 10 in the " Animation " genre . The film was nominated for the 78th Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature , but lost to Wallace & Gromit : The Curse of the Were @- @ Rabbit .

Justin Chang of Variety gave the film a positive review , saying " This macabre musical about a young bridegroom who mistakenly weds a girl from beyond the grave is an endearingly schizoid Frankenstein of a movie , by turns relentlessly high @- @ spirited and darkly poignant . " Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter gave the film a positive review , calling it " A wondrous flight of fancy , a stop @- @ motion @- @ animated treat brimming with imaginative characters , evocative sets , sly humor , inspired songs and a genuine whimsy that seldom finds its way into today 's movies . " Michael Atkinson of The Village Voice gave the film a positive review , saying " The variety of its cadaverous style is never less than inspired ; never has the human skull 's natural grin been redeployed so exhaustively for yuks . " Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly gave the film a B , saying " As an achievement in macabre visual wizardry , Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride has to be reckoned some sort of marvel . " Manohla Dargis of The New York Times gave the film four out of five stars , saying " Cinema 's reinvigorated fixation with the living dead suggests that we are in the grip of an impossible longing , or perhaps it 's just another movie cycle running its course . Whatever the case , there is something heartening about Mr. Burton 's love for bones and rot here , if only because it suggests , despite some recent evidence , that he is not yet ready to abandon his own dark kingdom . " Moira MacDonald of The Seattle Times gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " What makes Corpse Bride sing , ultimately , is the breadth of imagination that it demonstrates ; creating a cluttered , textured and mysteriously beautiful world that we 're loathe to leave at the end . "

Liam Lacey of The Globe and Mail gave the film three out of four stars , saying " Ghoulishness and innocence walk hand @- @ in @- @ hand in Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride , a movie that digs into Hollywood 's past to resurrect the antique art of stop @- @ motion animation and create a fabulous bauble of a movie . " Jack Mathews of the New York Daily News gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Stop @- @ motion animation may be the hardest and most tedious job in Hollywood , but the makers of Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride deserve a couple of years in Tahiti celebrating their effort . " Lou Lumenick of the New York Post gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride is an instant classic . " Lisa Rose of the Newark Star @- @ Ledger gave the film three out of five stars , saying " Corpse Bride offers unclassifiable enchantment . " James Berardinelli of ReelViews gave the film three out of four stars , saying " As animated films go , this is easily the best of a weak year . " Peter Howell of the Toronto Star gave the film four out of four stars , saying " If his The Nightmare Before Christmas from a dozen years back was a treat for the eyes and mind , Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride goes double or nothing by being a delight for the ears and also the heart . " Joe Williams of the St. Louis Post @- @ Dispatch gave the film a B + , saying " Beneath the bone pile of allusions , Corpse Bride is a darkly enchanting fable in its own right . "

Andrew Sarris of The New York Observer gave the film a negative review , saying " Corpse Bride turns out to be a ponderous mixture of puppetry and animation that is far too technologically complex and laborious for this hopelessly Luddite reviewer . " Roger Ebert gave the film three out of four stars , calling it " A sweet and visually lovely tale of love lost . " Roger Moore of the Orlando Sentinel gave the film four out of five stars , saying " The sweetness , the visual flourishes and inspired pieces of casting carry the Corpse Bride , if not all the way down the primrose path , then at least across the threshold . " Robert K. Elder of the Chicago Tribune gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " If Nightmare Before Christmas was a jazzy pop number , Corpse Bride is

a waltz--an elegant , deadly funny bit of macabre matrimony . " Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times gave the film two out of five stars , saying " The film does have a fairy @-@ tale aspect , but , like many of its characters , it is more dead and buried than fully alive . " Claudia Puig of USA Today gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Corpse Bride is an unexpectedly touching celebration of love told in a quirky and inventive style . " Peter Travers of Rolling Stone gave the film three and a half stars out of five , saying " In the guise of a family film , Burton evokes a darkly erotic obsession that recalls Edgar Allan Poe and Hitchcock 's Vertigo . It would be a test for any filmmaker , and Burton aces it . "

Steven Rea of The Philadelphia Inquirer gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride is easily the best stop @-@ motion animated necrophiliac musical romantic comedy of all time . It is also just simply , wonderful : a morbid , merry tale of true love that dazzles the eyes and delights the soul . " Bill Muller of The Arizona Republic gave the film four out of five stars , saying " Corpse Bride is a delightful mix of strange goings @-@ on and imaginatively crafted puppetry , a wild ride through Burton 's chaotic , splendidly original world . " Michael Booth of The Denver Post gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Corpse Bride will win your heart , if it doesn 't rip it out of your chest first . " Terry Lawson of the Detroit Free Press gave the film three out of four stars , saying " There 's a happy Halloween in store even for children who aren 't allowed to trick or treat , and it 's courtesy of Tim Burton 's animated Corpse Bride . " Bruce Westbrook of The Houston Chronicle gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " Amazingly fluid and drop @-@ dead gorgeous , Tim Burton 's Corpse Bride is the best @-@ looking , stop @-@ motion animation film ever . " Rene Rodriguez of the Miami Herald gave the film two and a half stars out of four , saying " Corpse Bride suffers from the same problem that has plagued Burton 's recent live @-@ action films : for all its formidable razzle @-@ dazzle , it doesn 't engage the heart . " Colin Covert of the Star Tribune gave the film three and a half stars out of four , saying " This vibrantly imaginative mix of horror and humor puts the f @-@ u @-@ n in funeral . "

= = = Home media = = =

Corpse Bride was released on DVD and HD DVD on January 16 , 2006 . It was released on Blu @-@ ray on September 26 , 2006 . As of February 3 , 2015 , the film has sold 2 @,@ 777 @,@ 736 DVDs and 40 @,@ 411 Blu @-@ ray Discs totaling a gross of \$ 53 @,@ 359 @,@ 111 and \$ 61 @,@ 411 @,@ 543 respectively for a total gross of \$ 114 @,@ 770 @,@ 654 in North America .