

= Let the Right One In (film) =

Let the Right One In (Swedish : Låt den rätte komma in) is a 2008 Swedish romantic horror film directed by Tomas Alfredson , based on the 2004 novel of the same title by John Ajvide Lindqvist , who also wrote the screenplay . The film tells the story of a bullied 12 @-@ year @-@ old boy who develops a friendship with a vampire child in Blackeberg , a suburb of Stockholm , in the early 1980s . Alfredson , unconcerned with the horror and vampire conventions , decided to tone down many elements of the novel and focus primarily on the relationship between the two main characters . Selecting the lead actors involved a year @-@ long process with open castings held all over Sweden . In the end , the 11 @-@ year @-@ olds Kåre Hedebrant and Lina Leandersson were chosen for the leading roles . They were subsequently commended by both Alfredson and film reviewers for their performances .

The film received critical acclaim and won several awards , including the " Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature " at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival and the European Fantastic Film Festivals Federation 's 2008 Méliès d 'Or (Golden Méliès) for the " Best European Fantastic Feature Film " , as well as four Guldbagge Awards from the Swedish Film Institute and the Saturn Award for Best International Film .

= = Plot = =

Oskar , a meek 12 @-@ year @-@ old boy , resides with his mother Yvonne in the western Stockholm suburb of Blackeberg in 1981 and occasionally visits his father Erik in the countryside . It is not clear why Erik is living apart from Yvonne , but on one such visit , when Oskar and Erik are enjoying a cosy night playing games , a drunken neighbour arrives and Erik starts to drink heavily with him , breaking up the father / son evening .

Oskar 's classmates regularly bully him , and he spends his evenings imagining revenge , collecting clippings from newspapers and magazines about grisly murders . One night he meets Eli , who appears to be a pale girl of his age . Eli has recently moved into the next @-@ door apartment with an older man , Håkan . Eli initially informs Oskar that they cannot be friends . Over time , however , they begin to form a close relationship , with Oskar lending his Rubik 's Cube to Eli , and the two exchanging Morse code messages through their adjoining wall . Håkan requests that Eli stop seeing Oskar . After questioning Oskar about a cut on his cheek , Eli learns that the boy is being bullied by schoolmates and encourages him to stand up for himself . This inspires Oskar to enroll for weight @-@ training classes after school .

Earlier , Håkan stops and kills a passerby on a busy footpath near a main road to harvest fresh blood for Eli , but he fails to return with any when he is interrupted by an oncoming dog walker . Eli is prompted to waylay and kill a local man , Jocke , making his way home from a bar after having said goodnight to his best friend , Lacke . A local cat @-@ loving recluse , Gösta , witnesses the attack from his flat , but hardly believes what he has seen and later refuses to report the incident . Håkan hides Jocke 's body in an ice @-@ hole in the local lake . Håkan later makes another well @-@ prepared but incompetently executed effort to obtain blood for Eli by trapping a teenage boy in a changing room after school . The boy 's friends are waiting for him to emerge , and go to see what is holding him up . Before he is discovered , Håkan pours concentrated hydrochloric acid onto his own face , disfiguring it to prevent the authorities from identifying him and tracing Eli . Eli learns that Håkan has been taken to the hospital and scales the building to access his restricted room . Håkan opens the window for Eli and offers his neck to her for feeding ; after she has fed , Håkan falls out of the window on the snow . Now alone , Eli goes to Oskar 's apartment and spends the night with him , during which time they agree to " go steady " . While Eli states , " I 'm not a girl " , Oskar (ambiguously) either ignores this or accepts the homoerotic status of the relationship .

During an ice skating field trip at the lake , some of Oskar 's fellow students discover Jocke 's body . At the same time , Oskar finally stands up to his tormentors and strikes the leader of the bullies , Conny , on the side of the head with a pole , splitting his ear . Some time later , Oskar shows Eli a private place he knows . Unaware that Eli is a vampire , Oskar suggests that they form a blood bond

, and cuts his hand , asking Eli to do the same . Eli , thirsting for blood but not wanting to harm Oskar , laps up his spilled blood before running away . Lacke 's girlfriend , Virginia , is subsequently attacked by Eli . Lacke turns up in time to interrupt the attack . Virginia survives , but she soon discovers that she has become painfully sensitive to sunlight . Thirsting for blood , she pays a visit to Gösta , only to be fiercely attacked by his cats . In the hospital , Virginia , who has realized what she has become , asks an orderly to open the blinds in her room . When the sunlight streams in , she bursts into flames .

On realizing her true nature , Oskar confronts Eli , who admits to being a vampire . Oskar is initially upset by Eli 's need to kill people for survival . However , Eli insists that their bloodthirsty natures are alike , in that Oskar wants to kill and Eli needs to kill , and she encourages Oskar to " be me , for a little while . "

Lacke , who has lost everything because of Eli , tracks her down to the closed @-@ off apartment . Breaking in , he discovers Eli asleep in the bathtub . Lacke prepares to kill Eli , but Oskar , who was hiding inside the apartment , interferes ; Eli immediately wakes up , jumps on Lacke and kills him , feeding on his blood . Eli thanks Oskar and kisses him in gratitude . However , an upstairs neighbor is angrily knocking on the ceiling due to the disturbance the fight has caused . Eli realizes that it is no longer safe to stay and leaves the same night .

The next morning , Oskar receives a phone call from Conny 's friend , Martin , who lures Oskar out to resume the after @-@ school fitness program at the local swimming pool . The bullies , led by Conny and his sadistic older brother Jimmy , start a fire to draw Mr Ávila , the teacher in charge , outside , enter the pool @-@ area and order the other children to clear out , which leaves Oskar trapped alone in the pool . Jimmy forces Oskar under the water , threatening to stab his eye out if he does not hold his breath for three minutes . While Oskar is being held underwater , Eli arrives and rescues Oskar by killing and dismembering the bullies except for the most reluctant of their number , Andreas , who is left sobbing on a bench .

Later , Oskar is traveling on a train with Eli in a box beside him , safe from sunlight . From inside , Eli taps the word " kiss " to Oskar in Morse code , to which he taps back " puss " (small kiss in Swedish) .

= = Cast = =

Kåre Hedebrant as Oskar
Lina Leandersson as Eli
Elif Ceylan as Eli (Voice)
Susanne Ruben as Aged Eli
Per Ragnar as Håkan
Henrik Dahl as Erik
Karin Bergquist as Yvonne
Peter Carlberg as Lacke
Ika Nord as Virginia
Mikael Rahm as Jocke
Karl Robert Lindgren as Gösta
Anders T. Peedu as Morgan
Pale Olofsson as Larry
Cayetano Ruiz as Magister Ávila
Patrik Rydmark as Conny
Johan Sömnes as Andreas
Mikael Erhardsson as Martin
Rasmus Luthander as Jimmy
Sören Källstigen as Erik 's friend
Bernt Östman as Virginia 's nurse
Kajsa Linderholm as Oskar 's Teacher

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The film project started in late 2004 when John Nordling , a producer at the production company EFTI , contacted Ajvide Lindqvist 's publisher Ordfront to acquire the rights for a film adaption of Ajvide Lindqvist 's novel . " At Ordfront they just laughed when I called , I was like the 48th they put on the list . But I called John Ajvide Lindqvist and it turned out we had the same idea of what kind of film we should make . It wasn 't about money , but about the right constellation " . A friend introduced Tomas Alfredson to the novel . While he normally does not like to receive books , because " it 's a private thing to choose what to read " , he decided after a few weeks to read it . The depiction of bullying in the novel affected Alfredson deeply . " It 's very hard and very down @-@ to @-@ earth , unsentimental (...) I had some period when I grew up when I had hard times in school (...) So it really shook me " , he told the Los Angeles Times . Ajvide Lindqvist already knew Alfredson 's previous work , and he and Alfredson discovered that they " understood each other very well " .

In addition to EFTI , co @-@ producers included Sveriges Television and the regional production @-@ centre Filmpool Nord . The production of the film involved a total budget of around 29 million SEK , including support from the Swedish Film Institute and Nordisk Film- & TV Fond and WAG .

= = = Screenplay = = =

Lindqvist had insisted on writing the screenplay himself . Alfredson , who had no familiarity with the vampire and horror genres , initially expressed skepticism at having the original author do the adaptation , but found the end result very satisfying . Many of the minor characters and events from the book were removed , and focus directed primarily on the love story between the two leads . In particular , many aspects of the character Håkan , including him being a paedophile , were toned down , and his relationship with Eli was mostly left open to interpretation . Alfredson felt that the film could not deal with such a serious theme as pedophilia in a satisfying manner , and that this element would detract from the story of the children and their relationship . Still , the film provided a few hints , of which Alfredson mentions one in the director 's comments (Håkan likes children , for the wrong reasons) .

A key passage in the novel details what happens when a vampire enters a room uninvited , an action that traditional vampire lore usually prohibits . Alfredson originally wanted to omit this from the film , but Ajvide Lindqvist was adamant that it had to be included . Alfredson was initially nervous about the scene . He realized in post @-@ production that the sound effects and music made it " American , in a bad way " , and had to be removed for the scene to work . The end result , which shows Eli slowly beginning to bleed from her eyes , ears , and pores , received positive notices from many critics . Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian described it as a " haemophilia of rejection " .

The novel presents Eli as an androgynous boy , castrated centuries before by a sadistic vampire nobleman . The film handles the issue of Eli 's gender more ambiguously : a brief scene in which Eli changes into a dress offers a glimpse of a suggestive scar but no explicit elaboration . When Oskar asks Eli to become his girlfriend , Eli tries to tell Oskar " I 'm not a girl " . An actress plays Eli 's character , but her voice was considered to be too high pitched , so it was dubbed by voice actress Elif Ceylan . According to an interview with the director , as the film was originally conceived , flashbacks explained this aspect in more detail , but these scenes were eventually cut . In the end , Ajvide Lindqvist was satisfied with the adaptation . When Alfredson showed him eight minutes of footage for the first time , he " started to cry because it was so damn beautiful " . He subsequently described the film as a " masterpiece " . " It doesn 't really matter that [Alfredson] didn 't want to do it the way I wanted it in every respect . He could obviously never do that . The film is his creative process " , he said .

=== Casting ===

Casting of the lead actors took almost a year , with open castings held all over Sweden . Kåre Hedebrant , selected to audition for the role as Oskar after an initial screening at his school , eventually landed the role . Lina Leandersson responded to an online advertisement seeking a 12 @-@ year @-@ old boy or girl " good at running " . After three more auditions , she was selected to play Eli .

Alfredson has described the casting process as the most difficult part of making the film . He had particular concerns about the interaction between the two leads , and the fact that those who had read the book would have a preconceived notion of how the characters were supposed to look . He wanted the actors to look innocent , and be able to interact in front of the camera . They were supposed to be " mirror images of each other . She is everything he isn 't . Dark , strong , brave , and a girl . (...) Like two sides of the same coin . " On another occasion , Alfredson stated that " [c] asting is 70 percent of the job ; it 's not about picking the right people to make the roles . It is about creating chords , how a B and A minor interact together , and are played together . "

In the end , Alfredson expressed satisfaction with the result , and has frequently lauded Hedebrant and Leandersson for being " extremely intelligent " , " incredibly wise " , and " unprecedentedly fantastic . "

=== Filming ===

Although the film takes place in Blackeberg , a suburb of Stockholm , principal photography took place in Luleå (in the north of Sweden) to ensure enough snow and cold weather . The area where the filming took place dated from around the same time as Blackeberg , and has similar architecture . However , Alfredson shot a few scenes in the Blackeberg area . In particular , the scene where Eli leaps down on Virginia from a tree , was shot in the town square of Blackeberg . Another scene , where Eli attacks Jocke in an underpass , was shot in the nearby suburb Råcksta . The original Blackeberg underpass that Lindqvist had envisioned was deemed too high to fit in the picture . Some of the outdoor close @-@ up scenes were made in a super cold studio .

The jungle gym where much of the interaction between Oskar and Eli takes place was constructed specifically for the film . Its design was intended to suit the CinemaScope format better than a regular jungle gym , which would typically have to be cropped height @-@ wise .

Most of the filming used a single , fixed , Arri 535B camera , with almost no handheld usage , and few cuts . Tracking shots relied on a track @-@ mounted dolly , rather than Steadicam , to create calm , predictable camera movement . The crew paid special attention to lighting . Cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema and director Alfredson invented a technique they called " spray light " . In an interview , van Hoytema describes it as follows : " If you could capture dull electrical light in a can and spray it like hairspray across Eli ? s apartment , it would have the same result as what we created " . For the emotional scenes between Oskar and Eli , van Hoytema consistently diffused the lighting .

=== Post @-@ production ===

The film contains around 50 shots with computer @-@ generated imagery . Alfredson wanted to make them very subtle and almost unnoticeable . The sequence where multiple cats attack Virginia , one of the most complicated scenes to film , required several weeks of drafting and planning . The crew used a combination of real cats , stuffed cats and computer @-@ generated imagery .

The film features analogue sound @-@ effects exclusively throughout . The lead sound @-@ designer Per Sundström explained : " The key to good sound effects is working with natural and real sounds . (...) These analogue sounds can be digitally reworked as much as necessary , but the origin has to be natural " . Sundström designed the soundscape to come as close to the actors as possible , with audible heartbeats , breathing , and swallowing . Late in production it was also decided to overdub actress Lina Leandersson 's voice with a less feminine one , to underline the

backstory . " She 's 200 years old , not twelve . We needed that incongruity . Besides , it makes her menacing " , Sundström said . Both men and women up to the age of forty auditioned for the role . After a vote , the film team ended up selecting Elif Ceylan , who provides all of Eli 's spoken dialogue . Footage of Ceylan eating melon or sausage was combined with various animal noises to emulate the sound of Eli biting into her victims and drinking their blood .

The sound crew won a Guldbagge Award for Best Achievement from the Swedish Film Institute , for the " nightmarishly great sound " in the film .

= = = Soundtrack = = =

Swedish composer Johan Söderqvist wrote the score . Alfredson instructed him to write something that sounded hopeful and romantic , in contrast to the events that take place in the film . Söderqvist has described the outcome as consisting of both darkness and light , and emphasized melody and harmony as the most important qualities of the music .

The Slovak National Symphony Orchestra performed the score ; two years earlier they had performed the score for the first Swedish vampire movie , Frostbiten . It placed fourth on Ain 't It Cool News ' Top 10 Best Scores Of 2008 List , being described as " scrupulously weaving together strains of bone @-@ chillingly cold horror with the encompassing warmth of newly acquired love " . If magazine described the score as " the most beautifully emotional score yet to grace the undead . It ? s a feeling of tender melancholy that delivers its scares in a subtle , chamber orchestra way " .

The song " Kvar i min bil " , written and performed by Per Gessle , resonates repeatedly through the film . Originally an outtake from Gessle 's solo album En häändig man , the song was specially provided for the film , to resemble the sound of popular 1980s pop group Gyllene Tider . Gessle has described the song as a " bluesy tune with a nice guitar hook ? . Other songs in the film include " Försonade " from 1968 , written and performed by future ABBA member Agnetha Fältskog , " Flash in the Night " from 1981 , written by Tim Norell and Björn Håkansson and performed by Secret Service , and " Dags å välja sida " by Peps Blodsband .

On November 11 , 2008 , MovieScore Media released the film soundtrack in a limited edition of 500 copies . It contains 21 of Söderqvist 's original scores from the film .

= = Release = =

Let the Right One In received its first performance at the Gothenburg Film Festival in Sweden on 26 January 2008 where Alfredson won the Festival 's Nordic Film Prize . It subsequently played at several other film festivals , including the Tribeca Film Festival in New York (24 April 2008) , where it won the Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature , the Edinburgh Film Festival on 25 Jun 2008 where it won the Rotten Tomatoes Critical Consensus Award , and the Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival in Switzerland on 3 July 2008 where it won the Méliès d 'Argent (Silver Méliès) . The Swedish premiere was originally planned for 18 April 2008 , but following the positive response from the festival screenings , the producers decided to postpone the release until autumn , to allow for a longer theatrical run . At one time there was a plan to release the film for a special series of screenings in Luleå , beginning 24 September and lasting seven days . This was canceled when the Swedish Film Institute announced that Everlasting Moments had been selected over Let the Right One In as Sweden 's submission for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film . The distributors released it on 24 October 2008 in Sweden , Norway , and as a limited release in the United States . In Australia , the film was released on 19 March 2009 . The film was released in cinemas in the UK on 10 April 2009 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Swedish critics generally expressed positive reactions to the film . In 26 reviews listed at the Swedish @-@ language review site Kritiker.se it achieved an average rating of 4 @.@ 0 out of 5 . Svenska Dagbladet gave the film a rating of 5 out of 6 and hailed Alfredson for his ability to " tell [

stories] through pictures instead of words about a society where hearts are turned to icicles and everyone is left on their own , but also about love warm and red like blood on white melting snow " . Göran Everdahl for SVT 's Gomorron Sverige gave the film 4 out of 5 and described the film as " kitchen sink fantasy " that " gives the vampire story back something it has been missing for a long time : the ability to really frighten us " . Expressen and Göteborgs @-@ Posten were less impressed and gave the film 3 out of 5 . Expressen criticized it for being unappealing to those uninitiated in vampire films while Göteborgs @-@ Posten believed the supporting characters had lost the emotional depth that made the novel so successful .

Let the Right One In received widespread critical acclaim in the U.S. As of 2014 the film has a 98 % " Certified fresh " rating at Rotten Tomatoes based on 175 reviews , with an average rating of 8 @.@ 2 out of 10 . Additionally , Metacritic has reported an average score of 82 out of 100 based on 30 reviews which indicates " universal acclaim " . Reviewers have commented on the beautiful cinematography and its quiet , restrained approach to the sometimes bloody and violent subject matter . KJ Doughton of Film Threat thought the visuals in the ending were fresh and inventive and would be talked about for years to come . Roger Ebert gave the film 3 @.@ 5 out of 4 stars , calling it a vampire movie that takes vampires seriously , drawing comparisons to Nosferatu and to Nosferatu the Vampyre . He described it as a story of " two lonely and desperate kids capable of performing dark deeds without apparent emotion " , and praised the actors for " powerful " performances in " draining " roles . Ebert later called the film " The best modern vampire movie " . One negative review came from Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly , who gave the movie a " C " , characterizing it as a " Swedish head @-@ scratcher " , with " a few creepy images but very little holding them together " .

Bloody Disgusting ranked the film first in their list of the ' Top 20 Horror Films of the Decade ' , with the article saying " It ? s rare enough for a horror film to be good ; even rarer are those that function as genuine works of art . Let the Right One In is one of those films ? an austere beautiful creation that reveals itself slowly , like the best works of art do . The simplicity of the story allows Swedish director Tomas Alfredson to focus on these two pre @-@ teen characters with a penetrating insight that not only makes it a great vampire film but a great coming @-@ of @-@ age film as well . At its core , the film is , simply , a human story , a pensive meditation on the transcendent possibilities of human connection . Most of all , it ? s a film that sticks with you , and whose stature will continue to grow in the decades to come . "

The film was ranked # 15 in Empire magazine 's 2010 list of " The 100 Best Films Of World Cinema " . In their rationale , the authors noted that , " in these days where every second movie seems to feature vampires , it takes a very special twist on the legend to surprise us ? but this one knocked us out and then bit us in the jugular " , and found that the " strange central friendship " between the two lead characters was what made the film " so frightening , and so magnetic " . In the early 2010s , Time Out conducted a poll with several authors , directors , actors and critics who have worked within the horror genre to vote for their top horror films . Let the Right One In placed at number 28 on their top 100 list .

= = = Home media = = =

The film was released in North America on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in March 2009 by Magnet Films , and in the UK in August by Momentum Pictures . The American discs feature both the original Swedish dialogue and an English dubbed version , while the European versions feature only the Swedish , and an audio @-@ descriptive track in English . Icons of Fright reported that the American release had been criticized for using new , oversimplified English subtitles instead of the original theatrical subtitles . Following customer complaints , Magnet stated that they would release an updated version with the original theatrical subtitles , but will not exchange current discs . Director Tomas Alfredson also expressed his dissatisfaction with the DVD subtitles , calling it a " turkey translation " . " If you look on the ' net , people are furious about how bad it is done " , he added . The UK release retains the theatrical subtitles .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Alfredson won the Gothenburg Film Festival 's Nordic Film Prize as director of *Let the Right One In* on the grounds that he " succeeds to transform a vampire movie to a truly original , touching , amusing and heart @-@ warming story about friendship and marginalisation " . *Let the Right One In* was nominated in five categories for the Swedish Film Institute 's 2008 Guldbagge Award , eventually winning for best directing , screenplay and cinematography as well as a Best Achievement @-@ award to production designer Eva Norén . In awarding the film the " Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature " , the top award at the Tribeca Film Festival , the jury described the film as a " mesmerizing exploration of loneliness and alienation through masterful reexamination of the vampire myth " . The film also won the Méliès d 'Argent (Silver Méliès) at the Swiss Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival (NIFFF) and went on to win the Méliès d 'Or (Golden Méliès) for the " Best European Fantastic Feature Film " , awarded by the European Fantastic Film Festivals Federation of which NIFFF is a part . Other awards include the first Rotten Tomatoes Critical Consensus Award at the Edinburgh Film Festival .

Despite being an internationally successful film , *Let the Right One In* was not submitted by Sweden for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film . The details surrounding the film 's eligibility for the award resulted in some confusion . Being released on 24 October 2008 , the film would normally be eligible for submission for the 82nd Academy Awards . However , the producers decided to release it on 24 September as a seven @-@ day limited run only in Luleå . This would be exactly enough to meet the criteria for the 81st Academy Awards instead . When the Swedish Film Institute on 16 September announced that Jan Troell 's *Everlasting Moments* had been selected instead of *Let the Right One In* , the Luleå screenings were cancelled . Despite the fact that the film was released within the eligibility period for the 82nd Academy Awards , it wasn 't among the films considered because the Swedish Film Institute doesn 't allow a film to be considered twice .

= = American version = =

After the release of *Let the Right One In* took place , Cloverfield director Matt Reeves signed on to write and direct an English @-@ language version for Overture Films and Hammer Films . Hammer Films acquired the rights at the 2008 Tribeca Film Festival , where *Let the Right One In* won the " Founders Award for Best Narrative Feature " , and Overture films planned to release the film in 2010 . Alfredson has expressed unhappiness about the idea of a remake , saying that " Remakes should be made of movies that aren 't very good , that gives you the chance to fix whatever has gone wrong " and expressing concern that the end result would be too mainstream . Alfredson was initially asked to direct the remake , but he turned it down stating that " I am too old to make the same film twice and I have other stories that I want to tell . " Lindqvist , in contrast , said that he had heard that Reeves " will make a new film based on the book , and not remake the Swedish film " and so " it 'll be something completely different , but it 's going to be really interesting to see . " Hammer Films producer Simon Oakes referred to the project as a remake of the film and later not as a remake , but just as " Reeves ' version " . *Let Me In* was released in late 2010 starring Chloë Grace Moretz and Kodi Smit @-@ McPhee as Abby and Owen , Eli 's and Oskar 's respective counterparts , and received very positive reviews despite not performing well at the box office .