

= The Orphanage ( film ) =

The Orphanage ( Spanish : El orfanato ) is a 2007 Spanish horror film and the debut feature of Spanish filmmaker J. A. Bayona . The film stars Belén Rueda as Laura , Fernando Cayo as her husband , Carlos , and Roger Príncipe as their adopted son Simón . The plot centers on Laura , who returns to her childhood home , an orphanage . Laura plans to turn the house into a home for disabled children , but after an argument with Laura , Simón is found to be missing .

The film 's script was written by Sergio G. Sánchez in 1996 and brought to the attention of Bayona in 2004 . Bayona asked his long @-@ time friend , director Guillermo del Toro , to help produce the film and to double its budget and filming time . Bayona wanted the film to capture the feel of 1970s Spanish cinema ; he cast Geraldine Chaplin and Belén Rueda , who were later praised for their roles in the film .

The film opened at the Cannes Film Festival on May 20 , 2007 . It received critical acclaim from audiences in its native Spain , winning seven Goya awards . On its North American release , The Orphanage was praised by English @-@ speaking critics , who described the film as well directed and well acted , and noted the film 's lack of " cheap scares " ; subsequently , New Line Cinema bought the rights to the film for an American remake .

= = Plot = =

In 1975 Spain , a young girl named Laura is given up for adoption . Years later , adult Laura ( Rueda ) returns to the closed orphanage , accompanied by her husband , Carlos ( Cayo ) , and their seven @-@ year @-@ old adopted son , Simón ( Príncipe ) . She plans to reopen the orphanage as a facility for disabled children . Simón claims to see a boy named Tomás ( Óscar Casas ) . He befriends Tomás and draws pictures of him as a child wearing a sack mask . Social worker Benigna Escobedo ( Montserrat Carulla ) informs Laura that Simón 's adoption file indicates that Simón is HIV positive . Incensed at Benigna 's intrusion , Laura asks her to leave . She later finds Benigna in the orphanage 's coal shed , but Benigna flees the scene . Later , Simón teaches Laura a game which grants its winner a wish . Clues lead the two to Simón 's adoption file . Simón becomes angry , and says that his new friend told him that Laura is not his biological mother and that he is going to die soon .

During a party at the orphanage , Laura and Simón argue , and Simón hides from her . While looking for him , she encounters a child wearing a sack mask who shoves her into a bathroom and locks her inside . Escaping , she finds that Simón is missing and she is unable to find him . That night Laura hears several loud crashes . Police psychologist Pilar ( Mabel Rivera ) suggests to Laura and Carlos that Benigna may have abducted Simón .

Six months later , Simón is still missing . Searching in a Spanish city , Laura spots Benigna who is then struck and killed by a car . The police find evidence that Benigna once worked at the orphanage , and that she had a son named Tomás who was interned there . The children stole a mask that Tomás wore to conceal his deformed face . Embarrassed , Tomás hid in a local sea cave and was subsequently drowned . His death occurred weeks after Laura was adopted .

Laura asks for the assistance of a medium named Aurora ( Geraldine Chaplin ) in the search for Simón . Aurora conducts a seance during which she claims to see the ghosts of the orphans crying for help . Laura discovers the remains of the orphans she grew up with in the orphanage . They were killed by Tomás ' mother Benigna who wanted revenge on the children that were not blamed for the death of her son . She stored their remains in the orphanage 's coal shed . Unable to cope with the situation , Carlos leaves the orphanage .

Laura recreates the original orphanage layout and attempts to contact the children 's spirits by playing a version of Peek Behind the Curtain . The spirits lead her to the door of a hidden underground room . Inside is Simón 's corpse , wearing Tomás 's mask . Laura finally realizes what happened : while searching for Simón the night he disappeared , Laura moved pieces of construction scaffolding , blocking the entrance to the secret room . The crashes that night were caused by Simón trying to get out . He fell and broke his neck .

Laura takes an overdose of sleeping pills . Dying , she begs to be with Simón again and the children 's spirits appear , with Simón among them . Simón tells Laura that his wish was for her to stay and take care of the orphans . Sometime later , Carlos visits a memorial to Laura , Simón and the orphans . Carlos returns to the orphans ' old bedroom and finds a medallion that he had given to Laura . He turns to look as the door opens , and he smiles .

= = Cast = =

Belén Rueda as Laura , the wife of Carlos and mother of the adopted Simón . Laura returns to the orphanage that she spent some of her youth at to turn it into a home for disabled children . Mireia Renau portrays the younger Laura .

Fernando Cayo as Carlos , the husband of Laura and father of adopted Simón .

Roger Príncipe as Simón , the young adopted son of Laura and Carlos . Simón meets new imaginary friends in the orphanage and eventually threatens to run away with them .

Mabel Rivera as Pilar , the head police psychologist who eventually discovers the truth of who Benigna really is .

Montserrat Carulla as Benigna Escobeda , a former worker at the orphanage who identifies herself as a social worker . When she is seen young in the film , she is portrayed by Carol Suárez . Production companies working with Bayona tried to urge him to keep this character alive until the end of the film .

Geraldine Chaplin as Aurora , the medium brought in to help find Simón when the police can 't find him .

Andrés Gertrúdx as Enrique , Aurora 's sound technician .

Edgar Vivar as Prof. Leo Balabán , the man who puts Laura in contact with Aurora and directs the spirit session in her house .

Óscar Casas as Tomás , the deformed son of Benigna who Simón claims to have befriended .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The first draft of the script of The Orphanage was written by Sergio G. Sánchez in 1996 . Sánchez was not sure why he chose to write a genre film for the screenplay , as he explains , " I ended up writing a film in the style of those I liked as a kid , movies like Poltergeist , The Omen , and Rosemary 's Baby which I ruined on the first VCR we owned at home . " Sánchez revealed the literary influences underlying his writing of the script , such as The Turn of the Screw and Peter Pan . Sánchez originally wanted to direct the script but he was repeatedly turned down by various Spanish production companies . While Sánchez was working on the short film 7337 in 2004 , he met with director Juan Antonio Bayona and offered him the script to direct . Bayona accepted the opportunity because he felt that a fantasy themed script like that of The Orphanage would allow him freedom as a director , saying the fantasy genre was a great tool for learning as it " allows manipulation of space and time as we wish or the use of certain camera moves with an immediate efficiency " .

Bayona cut parts of the script , including the outcome of the other orphanage children , because he wanted to focus on the character of Laura and what happens to her . To create the film as he wanted , Bayona had to double both the film 's budget and the amount of filming time . To accomplish this , Bayona received help from fellow film director Guillermo del Toro , whom he had met at Festival de Cine de Sitges when del Toro was presenting his film Cronos ( 1993 ) . Del Toro offered to co -@ produce the film as soon as he learned about it . For the rest of his crew , Bayona worked with his regular team that he worked with on commercials and music videos .

= = = Casting = = =

During casting discussions between Bayona and del Toro , Bayona expressed a desire to see Belén Rueda in the lead . Bayona admired her after seeing her performance as Julia in Alejandro Amenabar 's The Sea Inside . Del Toro appreciated this choice , as he admired her as an actress and liked that Bayona was casting her against type . Bayona asked Rueda to watch The Innocents and Close Encounters of the Third Kind to prepare for the role . Another actress Bayona desired for the film was Geraldine Chaplin in the role of Aurora , the medium . Bayona stated that he wanted the film to have " the mood of 70s Spanish cinema and Geraldine starred in one of the best movies of that decade , Carlos Saura 's The Secret of Anna , as the ghost of the mother . It made sense to have her play the medium . " Bayona was nervous about filming with Chaplin . To break that tension , on the first day of shooting with her Bayona hid under a bed during a scene which required Chaplin to portray Anna kneeling down near it in the dark , and he grabbed Chaplin 's leg when she did so . Anna 's scream in the film is Chaplin 's actual frightened scream as Bayona grabbed her . Roger Príncipe 's test @-@ screening was one of the first for the role of Simón . Bayona test @-@ screened over four @-@ hundred children during two months before making his choice to cast Princep . Edgar Vivar was cast in role of Balabán ; Bayona knew him through his work on the Mexican television series El Chavo and sent him an invitation for the role through e @-@ mail .

= = = Filming = = =

Production on The Orphanage began on May 15 , 2006 in Llanes , Asturias . This location was chosen due to the area 's diverse natural settings that include beaches , caves , cliffs , forests , a small village , and the Partarrío Manor where the orphanage scenes take place . The orphanage was an old colonial house from the end of the nineteenth century . Bayona wanted to use certain cinematographic techniques that were impossible to achieve in the house , so several parts of the house were reconstructed in sound stages . After four weeks in Llanes , the team moved to Barcelona to finish up the last ten weeks of filming in sound stages , making over 80 % of the film there . Bayona showed the films La residencia and The Innocents to his director of photography on the film , to make special notice of the Scope lensing used in both films .

= = Release = =

The Orphanage premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on May 20 , 2007 . The film was positively received with a ten @-@ minute ovation from the audience . The film 's Spanish debut took place at the Sitges Film Festival on October 4 , 2007 where it opened the festival . The Orphanage had a wide release in Spain on October 11 , 2007 and was immensely successful in Spain after an \$ 8 @. @ 3 million four @-@ day launch from 350 screens . The film was the second highest @-@ grossing debut ever for a Spanish film and was the biggest opening of the year , making it even larger than the worldwide success of the Spanish @-@ Mexican film Pan 's Labyrinth . It opened in limited release in the United States on December 28 , 2007 and had a wide release on January 11 , 2008 . It opened in Mexico on January 25 , 2008 and earned over \$ 11 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 at the box office .

In Spain , the film was nominated for 14 Goya Awards , including Best Picture and ended up winning awards for Best Art Direction , Best Director of Production , Best Makeup and Hair , Best New Director , Best Screenplay ? Original , Best Sound Mixing , and Best Special Effects . The Orphanage was chosen by the Spanish Academy of Films as Spain 's nominee for the 2007 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film , but ultimately did not end up as one of the five final nominees in that category . The Orphanage was picked up by Picturehouse at the Berlin Film Festival for American distribution .

= = = Home media = = =

The Orphanage was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray on April 22 , 2008 for a Region 1 release

by New Line Cinema . Both discs featured the same bonus features . A Region 2 version was released on DVD by Optimum Releasing on July 21 , 2008 .

= = = Remake = = =

In 2007 , New Line Cinema bought the rights to produce an English @-@ language remake with Guillermo del Toro as producer . On remakes , director Bayona noted that " The Americans have all the money in the world but can 't do anything , while we can do whatever we want but don 't have the money " and " The American industry doesn 't take chances , that 's why they make remakes of movies that were already big hits " . On August 4 , 2009 , Larry Fessenden was announced as the director of the American remake . Fessenden was later announced that he will not be involved with directing the remake , stating " Working on the script with Guillermo was a very exciting experience , but then I got into a casting miasma and that 's where the thing is ; I think they 're gonna do it another way , actually . So I think I 'm out of it . Hopefully they 'll still use my script , but I 'm not sure I 'm directing it anymore " . In January 2010 , Mark Pellington replaced Larry Fessenden as director of the project .

On August 5 , 2011 , Guillermo del Toro stated that the remake would reflect his original vision for the film , and that it had been planned even when the first version was in production . " Even when we produced the Spanish movie , I had intended to remake it because we had a very different screenplay that , because of money and time , got turned into the movie you saw ? which is great , but there was this other structure for the original script that I wanted to try . So even before we shot the first film it was an economic decision , a pre @-@ existing creative decision , to change it . " Del Toro also praised the new film 's director . " We have Mark Pellington attached as director ? I 'm a big fan of his The Mothman Prophecies and his video work ? and we are out to actors , so we 're hoping to get things going soon . " On August 30 , 2011 , it was reported that American actress Amy Adams was in talks to star as Laura , the main character , who was played by Belén Rueda in the original film . It was also stated that the current incarnation of the remake screenplay had been written by Larry Fessenden and Sergio G. Sánchez , the sole writer of the original film .

= = Reception = =

The Orphanage was received very well by American critics on its original release . The film ranking website Rotten Tomatoes reported that 87 % of critics had given the film positive reviews , based upon a sample of 168 . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the film has received an average score of 74 , based on 33 reviews . Critics praised the film for its lack of cheap scares . Film critic for the Chicago Sun Times Roger Ebert approved of the film claiming it to be " deliberately aimed at viewers with developed attention spans . It lingers to create atmosphere , a sense of place , a sympathy with the characters , instead of rushing into cheap thrills " . Bill Goodykoontz of the Arizona Republic echoed this statement noting , " Bayona never lets The Orphanage descend into cheap horror . The scares here are expertly done and , placed in the context of Laura 's state of mind , well @-@ earned , perhaps even explainable ( or not ) . " Peter Howell of the Toronto Star wrote , " The year 's best horror picture is also one of the simplest . The Orphanage makes little if any use of digital tricks to present its numerous terrors . " The casting of Chaplin and Rueda was praised while the role of Carlos was called dull . Goodykoontz noted the role of Carlos , saying " Cayo is rather pedestrian as Carlos , but he isn 't given that much to do " . Michael Phillips of the Chicago Tribune shared this opinion saying , " Rueda has a great pair of peepers for this assignment . When she looks one way and then the other , while skulking through the hallways of her childhood home , every nerve @-@ wracking whatwas that ? registers , and how . Cayo is pretty dull by comparison , but Chaplin certainly is not . " Liam Lacey of The Globe and Mail praised Rueda stating , " The strongest appeal of the film is the brooding , intense performance by Spanish actress , Belen Rueda . "

A negative review came from Lacey of The Globe and Mail , who felt that at " [ the film 's ] core , it seems intended as a sympathetic drama of a bereaved mother , who may have slipped into

madness . What 's even more disquieting is the persistent undercurrent of exploitation ? the mixture of grief and jarring shock effects and the pitiless use of a disfigured child as a source of horror . " A.O. Scott of The New York Times claimed the film to be a " diverting , overwrought ghost story " and that it " relies on basic and durable horror movie techniques " . Jack Matthews of New York Daily News found the ending of the film to be one of the worst of the season , but praised the acting of Belén Rueda .

The Orphanage listed as one of the top 10 best films of 2007 by several critics , including Lawrence Toppman of the Charlotte Observer , Marc Doyle of Metacritic and Tasha Robinson of The AV Club . Anthony Lane of The New Yorker included the film on his top ten list of 2008 . 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 . The Orphanage placed at number 76 on their top 100 list .

= = Soundtrack = =

In 2007 , the film score was composed by Fernando Velázquez and released on compact disc by Rhino Records in Spain . The score for the film was nominated for film awards including the Goya Award for Best Score . The soundtrack has not been released locally in North America or the United Kingdom and is only available by import .

= = = Track listing = = =

All music composed by Fernando Velázquez .