

**FILM REVIEW: LET THE RIGHT ONE IN**

*A beautiful Scandinavian love story, between sadness and prosperity.*



*“What he was scared of was not that maybe she was a creature who survived by drinking other people's blood. No, it was that she might push him away.”  
— John Ajvide Lindqvist, *Let the Right One In**

It is astonishing to find some bliss in what we call a vampire horror film. Nevertheless, it is indeed the effect produced by the film of the Swedish director Tomas Alfredson. *Let the Right One In* is based on John Ajvide Lindqvist's 2004 novel of the same name and premiered in 2008 at the Gothenburg Film Festival in Sweden.

Kåre Hedebrant portrays Oskar, a twelve-year-old boy who lives with his separated mother in a Stockholm suburb and befriends Eli (Lina Leandersson), a child of his age with captivating and unusual beauty. Before meeting her, Oskar was a lonely boy, a victim of school bullying. Despite the hatred and the desire for revenge within him, he does not find the courage to defend and assert himself. The courtyard of his apartment block is the only place where Oskar feels powerful enough to retaliate. One evening, he met Eli. Oskar forgets his animosity, in order to become familiar with her, despite her odd appearance. Indeed, she does not seem to be affected by the freezing cold of Sweden and her skin is as pale as the snow — ubiquitous in the film. When it comes to Eli, she has just moved into the neighbourhood with an old man called Håkan (Per Ragnar) who helps her to satisfy her perpetual need for blood. Although at first she felt reluctant concerning her relationship with Oskar, she realises that she also needs him.

The screenplay was developed by John Ajvide Lindqvist who introduced the horror genre to the director of the film, and it became a success. Indeed, Alfredson managed to give his film a heavy and dark atmosphere. His camera is very often immersed in the dark and cold nights of Sweden. The night appears as an important point of the film, since it is the only time of the day where Eli is able to be herself and to be reunited with Oskar.

The main action of the film, the relationship between Oskar and Eli, evolves at night. While the secondary action of the film, the bullying, occurs mainly during the day. It is strange to feel more comfortable in the middle of these dark scenes, confronted with the nature of Eli. We know that she is not just a twelve-year-old girl, she is also a vampire. We are confronted with Oskar's innocence — and that is beautiful.

Oscar-winning director Guillermo del Toro described the film as *'delicate and brutal in equal parts'*. The relationship between the two children emphasizes the idea of sensitivity, it is the haven of rest. Oskar's mother does not understand the sorrow of her son, while his father is absent. When it comes to the relationship between Håkan and Eli, it also illustrates the incapability of adults.

Let Me In, directed by Matt Reeves, is nothing but a poor and unnecessary remake of Alfredson's film. If you want to watch a beautiful vampire film, watch the wonderful original version, enhanced by the soundtrack of Johan Söderqvist — romantic and full of melancholy.