

Film Review: Dark Vision of the Future in Atmospheric ‘Stake Land’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 29, 2011 - 8:47am

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Connor Paolo](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [IFC Films](#) [5]
- [Jim Mickle](#) [6]
- [Michael Cerveris](#) [7]
- [Movie Review](#) [8]
- [Nick Damici](#) [9]
- [Stake Land](#) [10]
- [Zombieland](#) [11]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Playing not unlike a much darker version of “Zombieland” (in that the post-apocalyptic creatures are similar and the veteran/rookie duo at the core not far off Woody & Jesse), “Stake Land” is a confident piece of genre filmmaking that not only deserves a wider audience but hints at truly great things to come for its talented director. It’s far from perfect but it’s incredibly promising, unlike the future of the characters it presents.

I know, I know — Haven’t we seen this before? Post-apocalyptic tales seem as common in the post-9/11 decade as romantic comedies (and usually less terrifying). It is easy to understand why viewers may be exhausted by this overdone genre. Add the fact that this post-apocalypse is filled with the bloodsucking, flesh-eating creatures dominating the overdone vampire genre and it’s easy to see why movie goers may take a pass. Don’t. “Stake Land” is an accomplished piece of filmmaking with some striking visuals, well-done action scenes, and clever twists of storytelling. The acting diminishes the piece a bit as none of the cast quite delivers and the dialogue can be a bit cheesy but enough of the other elements work that it’s easily worth a look, especially for horror fans.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “Stake Land” in our reviews section.](#) [12]

In a world overrun by not just vampires but the cannibals and religious zealots left behind by what happens when food and structure disappear, an orphaned teenager named Martin (Connor Paolo) becomes basically the apprentice to a grizzled veteran named Mister (Nick Damici). Mister plays no games. He has no witty banter. He decides, for reasons unknown, to save Martin and teach him the art of staking vampires — It’s not as easy here to crack a breastbone as in some vampire fiction.

But vampires (and, keep in mind, these are the speedy, “28 Days Later...” variety of vampires) are far from the only problem for Martin and Mister. As they move north to try and find New Eden, they come across a nun (Kelly McGillis) who is about to be raped. Mister kills the two freaks about to commit such a heinous act, crossing paths with a cult leader (Michael Cerveris of “Fringe”), who has basically created his own society with very different rules. They find other survivors on their trek north (including horror icons Danielle Harris and Larry Fessenden) and director Jim Mickle and co-writer Damici clearly imply that the world of “Stake Land” would be a brutal, vicious, awful place even without vampires.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “Stake Land” review.](#) [12]

“Stake Land” stars Connor Paolo, Nick Damici, Kelly McGillis, Michael Cerveris, and Danielle Harris. It was written by Damici & Jim Mickle and directed by Mickle. It was released in Chicago on April 29th, 2011 and is unrated.



Stake Land

Photo credit: IFC Films

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- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/zombieland>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/14132/dark-vision-of-the-future-in-atmospheric-stake-land>