

## Blu-Ray Review: Decline All Offers to See ‘The Uninvited’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 5, 2009 - 9:09am

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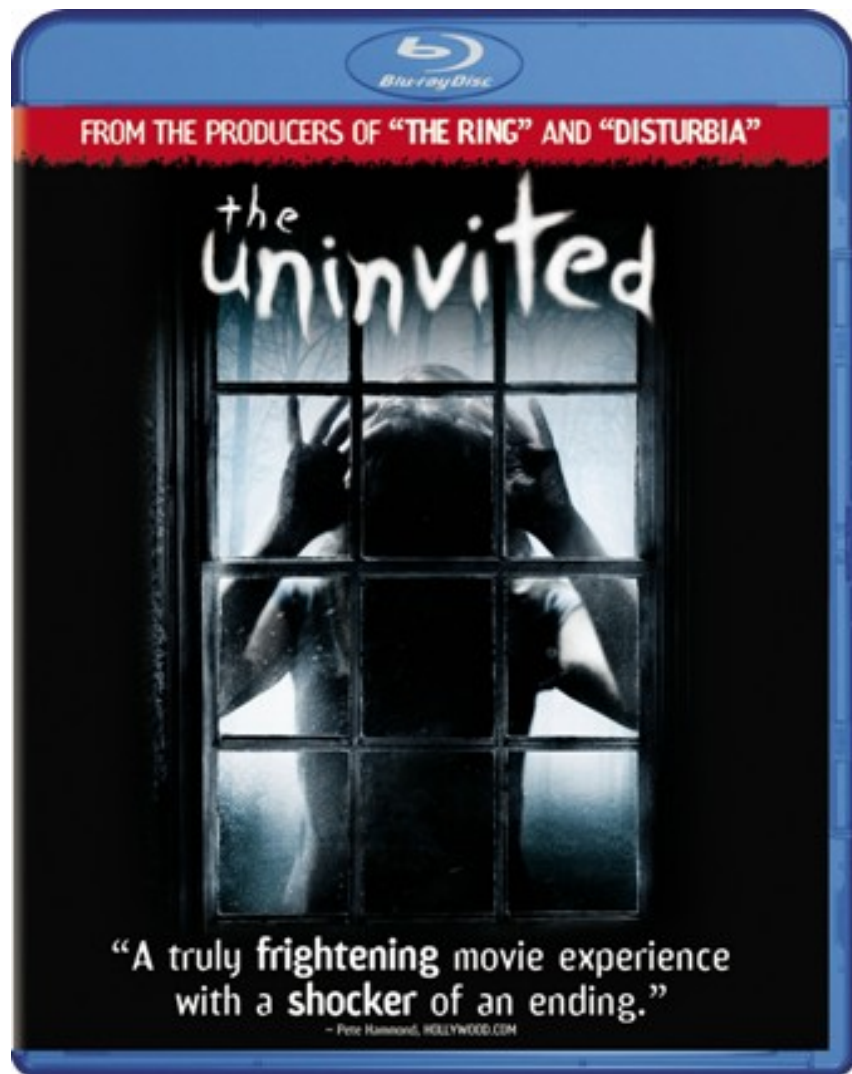
CHICAGO – Why does Hollywood keep screwing with Asian horror movies? Yes, Gore Verbinski’s “The Ring” was an effective adaptation of “Ringu,” but what the mini-genre of the ‘Asian horror remake’ has wrought since then has been downright terrifying. Take for example the truly horrific “[The Uninvited](#) [11],” a movie notable only in that it’s so much worse than its source material that maybe it will finally put an end to this ignominious trend.

I’ve seen a lot of Asian horror and most remakes pale in comparison, but I thought I’d try something new with “The Uninvited,” now available on Blu-Ray and DVD. I thought perhaps I was romanticizing my brief obsession with those original films when I had to review remakes like the “The Grudge,” “Pulse,” “The Eye,” and “Shutter” and thought I should do an original-remake double feature this time. BIG mistake.



The Uninvited was released on Blu-Ray on April 28th, 2009.  
*Photo credit: Paramount*

My concern was that the faults of the new film might make me think the original was better than it actually was. Such is not the case with “A Tale of Two Sisters,” an amazing slice of gothic terror. Everything about “Two Sisters” works. It’s a fantastic movie, one of the best horror films of the last decade and with his even-better “The Good, The Bad, and The Weird” coming out later this year, Ji-Woon Kim is clearly a filmmaker who should be closely watched.



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*Photo credit: Paramount*

Everything that Kim gets right with "Two Sisters," The Guard Brothers (Charles and Thomas) screw up. Working from a shockingly dull script by Craig Rosenberg and Doug Miro & Carlo Bernard, the directorial duo has mistaken jump scares and loud music for atmosphere. Worst of all, they think audiences will care about the literal mystery at the core of the story, not realizing that they're working on a mood piece. It doesn't need to make sense.

"The Uninvited" (even the change in name feels wrong) opens with one of many dream sequences. Anna ([Emily Browning](#) [9]) is relating a dream about the night her mom died. It turns out that the night terror is being relayed to a shrink just before Anna is set to go home again after recuperating in a mental hospital.

Anna comes home to find that the mystery surrounding her mother's death is far more sinister than she first expected. With the prodding of her sister ([Arielle Kebbel](#) [3]), Anna starts to think that her father's new girlfriend ([Elizabeth Banks](#) [8]) had something to do with her mother's death. In an odd bit of genre slumming, David Strathairn plays the father.

As Anna becomes more convinced that the step-mother figure now occupying their house had something to do with her mother's death, she has increasingly terrifying visions, including seeing ghostly children and the mangled body of a murder victim.



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*Photo credit: Paramount*

Browning isn't bad, but the rest of the ensemble in "The Uninvited" feels miscast, especially Banks as the "evil stepmom" and Kebbell in a performance that shows no signs of life.

I could go on and on about what "Two Sisters" does right and "The Uninvited" does wrong, but suffice it to say that it's pretty much

everything. But let's ignore the comparison and judge "The Uninvited" on its own. Even without the superior source material, "The Uninvited" is poorly written, poorly directed, and just plain dull. It's a snoozer.

The lackluster Blu-Ray release of "The Uninvited" doesn't help. Even the video and audio feel wrong, although this is a case where it's hard to tell if it's the production value or the actual transfer. Either way, the flesh tones and daylight scenes look typically amazing in HD, but the line detail in the night scenes is unsatisfactory. And the audio, with its poorly mixed dialogue to score/effects ratio is similarly below par. DreamWorks has been a model in Blu-Ray transfers but even the greats falter now and then.

As for special features, "The Uninvited" includes nearly nothing with just a 19-minute featurette called "Unlocking the Uninvited," deleted scenes and an alternate ending.

Luckily, the Asian horror trend died down a few years ago and "A Tale of Two Sisters" was one of the last successful films waiting to be remade. Perhaps it's fitting that a sub-genre that produced so many dull, repetitive attempts at horror ends with a perfect example of everything that's wrong with it.

*'The Uninvited' is released by DreamWorks and stars Emily Browning, Arielle Kebbel, David Strathairn, and Elizabeth Banks. It was written by Craig Rosenberg and Doug Miro & Carlo Bernard and directed by The Guard Brothers. It was released on April 28th, 2009. It is rated PG-13.*



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