

Clever, Scary 'Fright Night' Remake With Colin Farrell

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 18, 2011 - 2:36pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The word remake sends an understandable chill down the spine of most horror fans. We've been subjected to so many retreads and reboots and the batting average of quality has been pathetically low. And yet, there are exceptions including Zack Snyder's "Dawn of the Dead" and David Cronenberg's "The Fly." We can add Craig Gillespie's "Fright Night" to the short list of exceptions to the rule. With so many of the elements missing from the horror genre in the '10s, this is one of the best scary movies Hollywood has produced in a long time.

The concept of "Fright Night" is devilishly simple – what if pure evil moved in next door? How do you avoid your neighbor, especially after you know he's a supernatural killing machine and he's wiping out your classmates? It's a question forced upon Charley Brewster (Anton Yelchin) after his friends start disappearing and the guy whom lives 20 feet away starts acting more and more suspicious. His old buddy Ed (Christopher Mintz-Plasse), a D&D-loving young man who Charley has discarded in favor of the cool kids, begs his former L.A.R.P. partner to believe him when he says a vampire has descended on their Las Vegas 'burb. Of course, Charley doesn't heed the warnings until it's too late for dear Ed.



Fright Night

Photo credit: DreamWorks

Before he knows it, Charley is spying on his neighbor Jerry (Colin Farrell) and warning his mother Jane (Toni Collette) to never invite the charismatic stranger into their house. Can he protect his gorgeous girlfriend Amy (Imogen Poots) from the smooth-talking bloodsucker? And can the Criss Angel-esque Vegas magician Peter Vincent (David Tennant of "Dr. Who") live up to his stage persona and help Charley save his family and friends?

"Fright Night" is a refreshingly simple vampire tale – good guy in one house, bad guy next door. In fact, it's so uncluttered with subplots and

secondary characters that it's likely to throw off modern audiences accustomed to twist endings and comic relief. Marti Noxon's screenplay is a thing of beauty, one that perfectly blends the core foundation of its source with the smart level of dialogue and plot structuring that she brought to "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." "Fright Night" is a wonderfully focused film from its opening kill to its clever finale. Unlike so many of its peers, it wastes no time blending fear and comedy, working like the lean, thrill-producing machine it needed to be to succeed.

It helps that director Craig Gillespie ("Lars and the Real Girl") proves to be an inspired choice, finding the right pace and tone to keep "Fright Night" uncluttered. And he also displays a visual acuity that is unexpectedly strong. One of the most accomplished elements of "Fright Night" is something so rare in modern horror that you almost forget that it's missing – memorable visuals. From a victim holding up a finger to her mouth to shush her potential savior to an amazing single-shot car sequence straight out of "Children of Men" to, well, every time the great David Tennant is on-screen, "Fright Night" is actually visually striking. (One note – see it in 2D if possible. Some of the 3D tricks are fun but considering how the form makes everything darker, it might not have been the best choice for a movie that takes place almost entirely at night.)



Fright Night

Photo credit: DreamWorks

As for the cast, his character's name may seem innocuous ("Jerry the Vampire") but Colin Farrell turns him into one of the best horror movie villains of the last few years. He's inspired, bringing a perfect blend of charisma and malevolence to the role. There's a lot to like about "Fright Night" but it's worth seeing for Farrell's work alone. He's that good. Yelchin delivers as a lead and Collette brings a bit of depth to a part that could have had absolutely none, but the supporters shine more than the protagonist as Farrell, Tennant, and the future superstar Imogen Poots all give memorable performances. It's a great ensemble, something so rare in horror.

There's a bit of a pacing issue in the final act that keeps "Fright Night" from absolute perfection (it's about ten minutes too long) but it gets so much closer to the gold standard than most of its modern genre colleagues that it seems silly to complain. This is a funny, action-packed, and, believe it or not, actually scary horror film that could actually make you believe in something that's usually scarier than vampires – remakes.

"Fright Night" stars Anton Yelchin, Colin Farrell, Toni Collette, Imogen Poots, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, and David Tennant. It was written by Marti Noxon and directed by Craig Gillespie. It is rated R and opens on August 19th, 2011.



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