



**IN DREAMS ARE MONSTERS**

# Fright Night

When certified horror buff Charlie Brewster becomes convinced the two guys next door are vampires, everyone thinks he's just watched too many spooky movies. But as the signs add up, Charlie turns to veteran horror host Peter Vincent for help. A pitch-perfect blend of horror, humour and homoeroticism, this much-loved cult classic is a fascinating study of nonconformity and otherness, offering a bounty of queer subtext to sink your teeth into.

**Michael Blyth, [bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)**

## **A contemporary review**

Although, thanks to John Landis and Rick Baker, the werewolf seems to be having little difficulty in keeping up with the 1980s (actually achieving teenage idol status as the break-dancing basketball champion in *Teen Wolf*), the vampire is finding it less easy to shake off the Carpathian image. Tom Holland (whose script for *Psycho II* similarly sought to update Gothic nightmares) has now applied the sophistication of the *Ghostbusters* era to the familiar iconography of the undead, complete with coffins, stakes, and lethal giant bats. It's an enterprising hybridisation, for which *Dracula* fans may be expected to raise at least an anaemic smile of approval.

From his careers as actor (prolific) and screenplay writer (modest), Holland has evidently learned enough to put together an efficient first film as director. Elegantly photographed by Vilmos Zsigmond's former assistant Jan Kiesser, *Fright Night* is unarguably a smoother ride, and with more comfortable performances than, for instance, Wes Craven's horrendously ugly and edgy *Nightmare on Elm Street*. There are plenty of pleasing details, like the curl of a wood shaving over an impermeable fingernail as it slides grimly along a bannister, the mother placidly offering her son a Valium when he has just avoided being flung out of a window, or the vampire listening with modest pride to his rival's distant scream at the discovery that Amy has been fanged. Owing nothing to special effects but everything to script and timing, two particularly happy encounters are the scene in which Charley's accusations are outfaced by the vampire's politely incredulous assistant (an appealing acting debut by Jonathan Stark), and the sequence when Dandrige mesmerises Amy on the dance floor and calmly tosses aside the heavies who come to her defence. If the old legend is to offer any kind of chill in a modern context, these are surprisingly convincing illustrations.

Chris Sarandon plays the monster as the established smoothie, a plausible neighbourhood psychopath right up to the disappointing moment of dissolution when the eyes go weird, the teeth grow, and the single objective is a box in the cellar. Holland rounds it all off with a battle royal amidst the antique furniture, bolts of sunlight knocking the antagonists across the room and crushing the darkness in a whirlwind of flames. The snarling enemy deserves a better opponent, however, than the miscast Roddy McDowall, whose chalk-dust hair and beakily aggrieved expression are, of all the film's challenges, by far the least persuasive. William Ragsdale, another newcomer, captures more accurately the script's tone of part-fearful, part-hopeful bemusement, a horror-film fan by no means averse to finding the Universal classics coming to life next door. A pity, though, that after his first mauling by his supernatural adversary he shows not a single bruise.

**Philip Strick, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, April 1986**

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## FRIGHT NIGHT

*Director:* Tom Holland  
*Production Companies:* Vistar Films, Columbia Pictures Corporation, Delphi IV Productions  
*Producer:* Herb Jaffe  
*Associate Producer/Unit Production Manager:* Jerry A. Baerwitz  
*Production Supervisor:* Laura Buff  
*Production Co-ordinator:* Sheila Barnes  
*Production Assistant:* Steve Housewright  
*Assistant Directors:* Gerald Sobul, Carole Keligian  
*Screenplay:* Tom Holland  
*Director of Photography:* Jan Kiesser  
*Camera Operator:* Craig Denault  
*Video Consultant:* Gail Mutrux  
*Visual Effects:* Entertainment Effects Group  
*Visual Effects Producer:* Richard Edlund  
*Visual Effects Editor:* Marty November  
*Visual Effects Photography:* Bill Neil  
*Optical Effects:* Boss Film Corporation  
*Matte Department Supervisor:* Neil Krepela  
*Chief Matte Artist:* Matthew Yuricich  
*Matte Artist:* Michele Moen  
*Head Effects Technician:* Bob M. Cole  
*Special Effects:* Michael Lantieri, Darrell Pritchett, Clay Pinney, Albert Lannutti  
*Mechanical Effects Supervisor:* Thaine Morris  
*Creatures Designed/Created by:* Randall William Cook, Steve Johnson  
*Editor:* Kent Beyda  
*Additional Editor:* Larry Bock  
*Production Designer:* John F. Decuir Jr  
*Set Designers:* Mark Fabus, Ross Gallichotte  
*Set Decorator:* Jerry Adams  
*Production Illustrator:* Brent Boates  
*Costume Designer:* Robert Fletcher  
*Costume Supervisor:* Mort Schwartz

*Costumer:* Bettylee Balsam  
*Make-up Artist:* Ken Diaz  
*Additional Make-up:* Rick Stratton  
*Contact Lens Effect:* Morton K. Greenspoon  
*Titles and Opticals:* Modern Film Effects  
*Music:* Brad Fiedel  
*Electric Violin:* Ross Levinson  
*Music Editor:* Jim Weidman  
*Choreography:* Dorain Grusman  
*Sound Recording:* Don Rush  
*Re-recording Mixers:* John Reitz, David Campbell, David J. Kimball  
*Supervising Sound Editor:* Tom McCarthy Jr  
*Stunt Co-ordinator:* Bill Couch Jr

## Cast

Chris Sarandon (*Jerry Dandrige*)  
William Ragsdale (*Charley Brewster*)  
Amanda Bearse (*Amy Peterson*)  
Roddy McDowall (*Peter Vincent*)  
Stephen Geoffreys (*Evil Ed*)  
Jonathan Stark (*Billy Cole*)  
Dorothy Fielding (*Judy Brewster*)  
Art Evans (*Detective Lennox*)  
Steward Stern (*cook*)  
Nick Savage, Prince A. Hughes,  
Ernie Holmes (*bouncers*)  
Sorenson Heidi (*hooker*)  
Irina Irvine (*teenage girl*)  
Robert Corff (*Jonathan*)  
Pamela Brown (*Miss Nina*)  
Chris Hendrie (*newscaster*)

USA 1985

108 mins

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## IN DREAMS ARE MONSTERS

**Fright Night** Fri 4 Nov 20:50; Tue 22 Nov 20:40 (+ intro)  
**Possession** Sat 5 Nov 20:20 (+ intro by author Kier-La Janisse); Sun 27 Nov 15:30  
**Ganja & Hess** Mon 7 Nov 18:00; Sat 26 Nov 15:20  
**La Llorona** Mon 7 Nov 21:00  
**Frankenstein** Tue 8 Nov 18:20; Sun 27 Nov 13:00  
**Viy** Tue 8 Nov 20:50  
**Inferno** Wed 9 Nov 20:40; Sat 26 Nov 18:20  
**The Entity** Fri 11 Nov 17:55; Tue 15 Nov 20:30  
**Nightbreed – Director’s Cut** Sat 12 Nov 20:35

**Nosferatu (Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens)** Sun 13 Nov 15:50 (+ intro by Silent Film Curator Bryony Dixon); Sat 19 Nov 14:10  
**The Skeleton Key** Mon 14 Nov 20:45  
**Def by Temptation** Wed 16 Nov 18:10 (+ intro); Sat 26 Nov 18:10  
**Candyman** Thu 17 Nov 20:50 (+ intro)  
**Kuroneko (Yabu no naka no kuroneko)** Fri 18 Nov 18:15  
**Cronos** Sat 19 Nov 12:10; Sun 20 Nov 18:30  
**Us** Sat 19 Nov 15:10; Tue 29 Nov 20:40  
**A Nightmare on Elm Street** Wed 30 Nov 20:50

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