



PREVIEW

Bones and All

‘Whatever you and I got, it’s got to be fed,’ Lee (Timothée Chalamet) tells his lover Maren (Taylor Russell) in Luca Guadagnino’s deliciously dark cannibal road movie, something of a return to the (dis)comfort zone of *Suspiria* (2018) after forays into TV drama and the obligatory pandemic video short. Pushing the boundaries of teen horror, screenwriter David Kajganich’s clever adaptation of Camille DeAngelis’s 2015 novel of the same name plays like a red-meat version of *Twilight* (2008) – ravenous, sexy and surprisingly moving.

It’s the mid-eighties and Maren is an 18-year-old high-school student trying to fit in. She’s only recently arrived, she doesn’t have many friends, and her strict dad (André Holland) locks her in her room at night. But when she sneaks out to join the other girls for a sleepover, the reason for her father’s caution becomes apparent. It’s not to protect her from the world, but to protect the world from her.

Maren is a cannibal. But her dad can’t take it anymore and bails, leaving her to fend for herself with some cash, her birth certificate and a cassette full of backstory. She decides to search for the mother she never met and learn the nature of who she really is. Help comes in the guise of Sully, an amiable codger played with soft-voiced menace by Mark Rylance. He has a creepy way of referring to himself in the third person: ‘Sully’s never dully,’ he mutters to himself. He reveals that there are more ‘eaters’ and that they can smell each other. He’s also a scavenger: he finds people who are about to die and scoffs them when they do. Spooked by Sully, who has a habit of wearing baggy Y-fronts while feeding, Maren joins up with Lee, a pale, floppy-haired young tough, skinny as a splinter, with a taste in tasselled shirts.

Like his countryman Paolo Sorrentino, Guadagnino is a highly visual director, but his style is always at the service of his characters and their relationships rather than mere look-at-me flash. An early shot through a glass coffee table perfectly captures the intimacy of teenage friendship – their makeup and snacks partly obscuring the view – before horrifyingly ripping it to shreds. Much more than in the mannered *Suspiria*, *Bones and All* establishes its world as at once recognisably generic – *The Lost Boys* and *Near Dark* (both 1987) come to mind – and as solidly believable as a phone book. Elliott Hostetter’s production design creates a credible world of diners, supermarkets and boarding rooms that Lee and Maren pass through on their journey. Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross complement their atmospheric score with a canny and eclectic selection of eighties pop, including Joy Division’s ‘Atmosphere’ and ‘Lick It Up’ by Kiss, to which Lee rocks out.

Guadagnino sinks his teeth into the kinds of coming-of-age issues common to teen films, taking something of a Garth Marengi approach: subtext is for cowards. Lee and Maren’s carnal and carnivorous appetites intertwine, with Lee’s sexuality particularly open (at one point, he cruises a fairground to pick up sex and dinner). They also fret about their morality, looking for some way out of their predicament and longing to settle down together and live normal lives. The choice is stark: be themselves and live as outcasts, or restrain who

they are. But that would mean abstaining from each other and for Lee and Maren, looking as tasty as they do, abstinence just isn't on the cards.

The two leads are superb, with Russell particularly affecting as a young woman torn between her head, heart and stomach. Chalamet – who is also one of the film's producers – has an insolent confidence in his own beauty but still manages to project a wounded insecurity. When his young sister insults his shirt, he almost unconsciously takes it off and scrunches it up in his hands as he responds. He's also reunited briefly with *Call Me by Your Name* co-star Michael Stuhlbarg, who shows up as an overalls-wearing grease monkey, taking all the sexy out of cannibalism, and urging Maren and Lee to commit to eating 'bones and all', promising it to be an even greater rush.

Guadagnino has created an effective and gruesome shocker. Davide Favargiotti and Michele Gualdrini's sound design amplifies the already grisly effects: the sound of chomping and slurping can be heard off screen. But *Bones and All* is also the tale of a lost young pair, finding each other and themselves. It is wryly funny, gleefully entertaining and oddly touching. Delicious and nutritious.

John Bleasdale, *Sight and Sound*, December 2022

Luca Guadagnino on 'Bones and All'

The title – the concept of eating somebody, 'bones and all' – seems more important in your version of the film compared to the novel it's based on?

Yes, it's about the annihilation, the destruction. The disappearance of every kind of memento of the existence of somebody. I found the concept of that fascinating, very terrifying. Everything that you have been, made completely invisible forever.

It feels like the film is not really about cannibalism; it's more about urges that we can't control?

I think so, yeah. It's more about the fact that they can't escape the biological urge they're made of. That urge deals with their consciousness and with their idea of themselves as people. They feel like they can control something that they can't, which deals with the idea that we can control our bodies, but we can't. I've met a lot of people, particularly my father, I must say, with a lot of problems with food.

Let's talk about Michael Stuhlbarg – in his role in Call Me by Your Name, he played a benevolent father. Here, it's a darker role...

Yeah, the perverted father. Stuhlbarg emailed me and Dave [Kajganich] more than 100 questions about the character. Those emails, I treasure them. It was compelling, he was really kicking my ass as a performer to the director. But every question was so fantastic and then he showed up and did what he did, which is incredible.

How early was Mark Rylance in the frame for his role as the villainous drifter, Sully?

Quite soon. He was very kind and he looked at Sully with kindness, which was very interesting to me because, of course, to play a mean character from the perspective of the villain would have flattened it out. Our conversations were all about the cruelty of his doom, solitude and need for company. Mark Rylance for me is, clearly, one of the finest and greatest performers in any medium of performance.

What were the influences on this film? It reminded me of Badlands [1973] and Raw [2016]. I thought a little bit about Trouble Every Day [2001], too.

I mean, those references are all there. But I really thought about the movies by Fritz Lang and Nicholas Ray. The American period of Fritz Lang. The landscape in Lang was fantastic to think about in reference to this movie.

Interview by Catherine Bray, *Sight and Sound*, December 2022

BONES AND ALL

Directed by: Luca Guadagnino

©: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Inc.

a Frenesy Film Company/Per Capita Productions *production*

In association with: The Apartment Pictures, Memo Films,

3 Marys Entertainment, Tenderstories, Elafilm, Wise, Excelsa, Serfis, Piace, Cor Cordium

Presented by: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures

Executive Producers: Giovanni Corrado, Raffaella Viscardi, Moreno Zani, Marco Colombo, Jonathan Montepare

Produced by: Luca Guadagnino, Theresa Park, Marco Morabito,

David Kajganich, Francesco Melzi d'Eri, Lorenzo Mieli,

Gabriele Moratti, Peter Spears, Timothée Chalamet

CASTING: Francine Maisler

SCREENPLAY BY: David Kajganich

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY: Camille DeAngelis

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Arseni Khachaturan

EDITOR: Marco Costa

PRODUCTION DESIGNER: Elliott Hostetter

COSTUME DESIGNER: Giulia Piersanti

MAKE-UP: Fernanda Perez

HAIR: Massimo Gattabrusi

MUSIC: Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross

Cast

Taylor Russell (*Maren*)

Timothée Chalamet (*Lee*)

Michael Stuhlbarg (*Jake*)

André Holland (*Maren's father*)

Chloë Sevigny (*Janelle*)

David Gordon Green (*Brad*)

Jessica Harper (*Barbara Kerns*)

Jake Horowitz (*booth man*)

Mark Rylance (*Sully*)

USA 2022©

130 mins

Courtesy of Warner Bros.

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Preview: She Said + Q&A with screenwriter Rebecca Lenkiewicz

Thu 24 Nov 18:00

Preview: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse + Q&A with directors Peter Baynton and Charlie Mackesy and producer Cara Speller

Fri 2 Dec 18:15

Missing Believed Wiped Session 1: World Preview Lost and Found:

Spike Milligan: The Unseen Archive + intro

Sat 3 Dec 11:45

Missing Believed Wiped Session 2: oddities and rarities

Sat 3 Dec 14:20

Preview: Tori and Lokita + Q&A with director-screenwriters

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne

Sat 3 Dec 17:45

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 5 Dec 18:30

Preview: Enys Men + Q&A with director

Mark Jenkin

Mon 5 Dec 20:45

TV Preview: Happy Valley Final Series Episode 1 + Q&A with

Sally Wainwright, James Norton & Siobhan Finneran

Tue 6 Dec 18:15

Book Launch Event: The Shining

(Extended Version) + Q&A with Lee Unkrich

Thu 8 Dec 18:40

Peter Greenaway in Conversation

Fri 9 Dec 18:20

The Precious Things:

BBC Centenary Special + intro

Sat 10 Dec 14:20

TV Preview: His Dark Materials + intro with

cast and crew

Tue 13 Dec 18:00 BFI IMAX

TV Preview: Ghosts Christmas Special + Q&A with cast and crew

Thu 15 Dec 18:20

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