



Crimson Peak

Director: Guillermo del Toro

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A Legendary Pictures / DDY production

With the participation of the: Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program, Province of Ontario Production Services and Computer Animation and Special Effects Tax Credits, Ontario Production Services Tax Credit

Presented by: Legendary Pictures, Universal Pictures

Executive Producer: Jillian Share

Produced by: Thomas Tull, Jon Jashni, Guillermo del Toro

Unit Production Managers: D.J. Carson, Callum Greene

Production Accountant: Elaine Thurston

Location Manager: Fred Kamping

Post-production Supervisor: Douglas Wilkinson

1st Assistant Director: J.J. Authors

Script Supervisor: Dug Rotstein

Casting by: Robin D. Cook

Written by: Guillermo del Toro, Matthew Robbins

Director of Photography: Dan Laustsen

A Camera Operator: Gilles Corbeil

Steadicam: Gilles Corbeil

Stills Photographer: Kerry Hayes

Visual Effects Supervisor: Dennis Berardi

Visual Effects: Jesse Kobayashi

Visual Effects by: Mr X Inc.

Special Effects Co-ordinators: Laird McMurray, Rocco Larizza

Film Editor: Bernat Vilaplana

Production Designer: Tom Sanders

Supervising Art Director: Brandt Gordon

Set Decorators: Shane Vieau, Jeff Melvin

Costume Designer: Kate Hawley

Make-up Department Heads: Jordan Samuel, Cliona Furey

Main Title Design by: lamstatic

Title Designers: Ron Gervais, Dave Greene

End Credit by: DeLuxe Toronto

Digital Intermediate Colourist: Chris Wallace

Music by: Fernando Velázquez

Conducted by: Fernando Velázquez

Choreography: Amy Wright

Sound Designer: Randy Thom

Production Sound Mixer: Glen Gauthier

Re-recording Mixers: Lora Hirschberg,

Michael Semanick, Joe Dzuban

Supervising Sound Editors: Dennis Leonard, Randy Thom

Stunt Co-ordinator: Branko Racki

Dolby Sound Consultant: Thomas Kodros

Unit Publicist: Joe Everett

Digital Intermediate by: DeLuxe Toronto

Cast:

Mia Wasikowska (*Edith Cushing*)

Jessica Chastain (*Lucille Sharpe*)

Tom Hiddleston (*Thomas Sharpe*)

Charlie Hunnam (*Dr Alan Michael*)

Jim Beaver (*Carter Cushing*)

Burn Gorman (*Holly*)

Leslie Hope (*Mrs McMichael*)

Doug Jones (*Edith's mother/Lady Sharpe*)

Jonathan Hyde (*Ogilvie*)

Bruce Gray (*Ferguson*)

Emily Coutts (*Eunice*)

Alec Stockwell (*Finlay*)

Brigitte Robinson (*Jane, secretary*)

Gillian Ferrier, Tamara Hope, Kimberly-Sue Murray (*society girls*)

Guillermo del Toro

Crimson Peak

The screening on Saturday 19 May will include a Q&A with Guillermo del Toro

Guillermo del Toro on 'Crimson Peak'

You wrote the story for Crimson Peak back in 2006 with Matthew Robbins. Why did it take so long to get made?

I wanted to make it right after *Pan's Labyrinth*, but two things detained it. One was that I wanted it to be R rated. I knew that at the heart of the movie there were concerns that were very adult for me, sexually and psychologically, and visually there were moments of violence and eroticism that were not going to be PG-13. And secondly I knew I wanted to make it for \$50 million, and not 20, not 30, because I wanted to build the house, I wanted to do the wardrobe, because I wanted to hide several clues of the story and the characters in the wardrobe and the sets. I wanted to make it like a living painting. And it took eight years for someone, in this case Legendary Pictures, to come back to me and say, 'Here's the money and we're OK with the R rating.'

Unusually for your gothic films, Crimson Peak is about adults rather than children – we see the ten-year-old Edith only briefly.

It's a curious thing because although there are no kids, in reality the stories of both the protagonist [Edith] and the antagonists [Lucille and Thomas] are firmly rooted in childhood. Edith we see in the opening as a little kid. But then we hear innumerable times about the childhood of Thomas and Lucille; the whole point of the movie is to show that the real horror was that childhood. I gave the house windows that look like eyes and the house almost becomes all those ancestors watching over them. And then you see Lucille and Thomas as children in a very strange mural in the attic. So it is still rooted in childhood. I wanted very much to talk about this Chinese puzzle box of abuse that is the family, this ancestral horror of a family passing the poison from one generation to the next – that was interesting to me.

Why did you choose to place the story in this particular period – the turn of the century at the transition from Victorian to Edwardian – and to contrast the US with the UK, the New World with the Old.

It's a crucial moment. When Henry James was discussing gothic romance, and I'm paraphrasing here, he said it was essentially about ghosts that represent the past, or the incapacity to move into the future without vanquishing them. And I thought it was a very interesting time because in 1901 Buffalo, New York, and America in general were practically futuristic. In 1901 Buffalo was the most electrified city in the world. Edith is using a typewriter, we see cars on the streets, we can hear the constant traffic of trains in the distance, there's a telegraph, we hear phones ringing everywhere. And even though she's seen a ghost, Edith has an incredibly modern, almost futuristic attitude towards her femininity. Then she travels to a world that is frozen in time. In fact we made that point in the design of Thomas and Lucille's clothes – they are 10 or 15 years older than anybody else's because they are their parents' clothes.

So the idea was: can I pose Edith as the future, trying to break with the past and the guilt and the horror of that family? This was crucial for me, since it was such a female-centric movie in my mind. I wanted her not to be rescued by the hero, but for her to rescue the hero.

Sofia Wells (*young Edith*)
Joanna Douglas (*Annie, maid*)
Bill Lake (*coroner*)
Jim Watson (*shipping agent*)
Javier Botet (*Enola, Margaret, Pamela*)
Peter Spence (*manager*)
Danny Waugh (*club attendant*)
Sean Hewitt (*reverend*)
William Healy (*young Alan*)
Matia Jackett (*young Eunice*)
Karen Glave, Khadijah Roberts-Abdullah (*maids*)
John Carter Craig (*patient*)
Martin Julien (*postal clerk*)
Brian Kaulback, Richard Kerr, Shane McPherson (*vendors*)
Tim Blake (*reverend*)
Thomas Dorey (*architect*)
USA 2015
119 mins
Digital

With thanks to

Cai Mason, Lisa Taback, Imogen Munsey and the Netflix team, Gary Ungar

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One of the most recognisable traits of your work is precisely the humanity you give to the ghosts and monsters. That's reflected in the effects you use to create them – they are ethereal here, but much fleshier than a CGI-generated image, like a mix of flesh, bones, spirit and smoke.

I wanted the movie to feel handmade. I wanted people to realise that they are not in a digital set, that we actually built the house. I wanted people to sense that we painstakingly hand-made those dresses. And, in fact, Lucille and Thomas's clothes are hand-stitched, in contrast to the American wardrobe which is machine-stitched. I wanted people to have a sense that it was almost like an opera, that everything had been created, slightly exaggerated, but beautifully enhanced. I wanted the ghosts to be unlike any other ghosts you've ever seen, so I decided I would use actors and make-up. I then said to the digital effects guys, 'Let's find a way to make them translucent, without having to shoot them against a green screen.' I wanted them to be on set with the actors. We came up with a very simple but nice solution and created a little black box of photogrammetry that reproduces the background. Then we animated a skeleton inside the bodies, like we did with Santi in *Devil's Backbone*, and I made their body a little more liquid, so when they move they leave traces of their body around. That way it's a perfect mixture of make-up and digital effects, because it's 50/50.

Crimson Peak seems the most lavish and beautiful film you have made. Why was this so important for you?

I have a nostalgia for the big Hollywood gothic romance, like Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* [1943] or Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* [1940] or the beautiful production of *Great Expectations* [1946] by David Lean. But I have an almost painful realisation that for many people horror or anything gothic means a B movie and that no one has produced anything that's as operatic as those films in at least 30 years. I wanted to make this opulent sort of operatic movie because gothic romance is about excess, albeit a very controlled sense of excess – in the acting, in the *mise en scène*.

I made it clear to the cinematographer [Dan Laustsen] that we were creating the opposite of the desaturation that normally goes with period pieces. We were going to be really saturated. The one movie I watched a lot was *The Leopard* [1963]. I really studied the way Visconti shot the dancers, and the way he controlled the colour palette. And then I said to my cinematographer, we are going to move the camera as if it were very heavy. We won't be chasing people around; it's going to be very stately, like we are on tracks or a dolly, even if we use the Steadicam.

This is the most gothic of your films, but do you think it also has a Mexican dimension?

Normally the Anglo-Saxon approach to a ghost story – even in the best cases, like M.R. James – is an approach that sees the rational clashing with the supernatural. On the other hand, in *Crimson Peak* there's a full-blown acceptance of the ghosts being real from the first ten seconds of the film. There is a postulate that opens the movie that says, 'Ghosts are real. This much I know.' That's a very Mexican thing to say. The violence and the passion of *Crimson Peak* is very Latin; the relationship with stabbing in particular as a means of death is extremely Mexican. And ultimately, there is a very intimate relationship with melodrama, which is almost a signature part of the Mexican culture – the explosive passions that run underneath the very Anglo-Saxon façade of characters like Lucille.

Interview by Mar Diestro-Dópido, *Sight and Sound*, November 2015