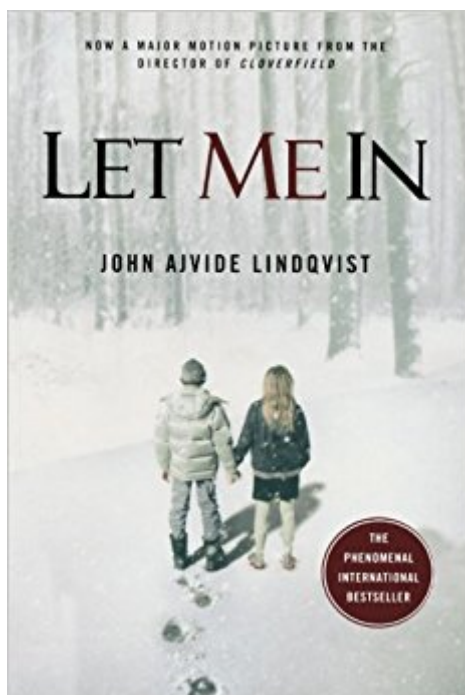


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Let Me In



Synopsis

Let Me In Takes Top Honors at Tribeca Film Festival and is now an Award-winning movie in both the U.S. and Sweden! It is autumn 1981 when inconceivable horror comes to Blackeberg, a suburb in Sweden. The body of a teenager is found, emptied of blood, the murder rumored to be part of a ritual killing. Twelve-year-old Oskar is personally hoping that revenge has come at long last---revenge for the bullying he endures at school, day after day. But the murder is not the most important thing on his mind. A new girl has moved in next door---a girl who has never seen a Rubik's Cube before, but who can solve it at once. There is something wrong with her, though, something odd. And she only comes out at night. . . .Sweeping top honors at film festivals all over the globe, Let Me In has received the same kind of spectacular raves that have been lavished on the book. American and Swedish readers of vampire fiction will be thrilled! Following the success in Sweden, this movie was remade in 2010 starring Kodi Smit-McPhee, Chloe Grace Moretz and Richard Jenkins changing its name from the Swedish Let The Right One In. The story has continued to reach new viewers in a London Musical and the book remains a vampire favorite among its readers.

Book Information

Paperback: 472 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin; Reprint edition (2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312656491

ISBN-13: 978-0312656492

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 1.3 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (521 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Let the Right One In, by John Ajvide Lindqvist. has one fantastic element: vampires. It's set in a suburb of Stockholm, on a social housing development that has become a sink estate. It's a sad place, full of aimless people. The people with responsibility - teachers, policemen, parents, are, for the most part, trying to do the right thing. They've got good intentions. The book has a huge cast of

characters with the major division between adults and children, each subdivided into the successful, more or less, and the failures, with a further division into victims and victimizers. The book opens with a bullied child, Oskar, who fantasizes about becoming a mass murderer. He meets Elli, a child vampire. The predictable does not happen. Many of the adults on the estate are as powerless as the children - lonely, middle aged and elderly alcoholics, unemployed or working at minimum wage jobs. They are presented with a moral choice similar to that of the children: even if a victim, one can refuse to victimize others. (And that is the major freedom the characters in the book have.) An earlier reviewer said he/she wasn't sure if this belonged in horror... it's horror in the same way that Henry James' ghost stories fit the genre. It's mainstream/literary/horror, a book that crosses boundaries. I think genres are more useful for finding a kind of reading than describing a book - essentially, this is a very good book that people who read horror and people who would never consider reading horror would both like. It doesn't rank highly on the 'feel good factor' but it has a surprisingly happy ending -- one of those 'happy endings' that is about as happy as, all things considered, an ending can be. I loved it - and think it's one of the best books I've read in the past year or so.

John Ajvide Lindqvist's *Let Me In* (aka *Let The Right One In*, depending on the edition) is absolutely one of the best novels of its kind that I've read in years. To attempt to categorize it as simply a horror novel or a vampire novel is not to give it its full due. The most apt comparison I can make is that it's something of a cross between Stephen King at his very best and, oddly enough, Henry Thoreau in that its characters all seem driven by "lives of quiet desperation". For those of you who are wanting to read the novel after having seen the film version, there are a few differences from the film. It won't hurt to tell you that in the novel, Eli's guardian does not die at the hospital, and that there is another plotline involving other characters that was left out of the film entirely (it became irrelevant after the guardian's plotline was changed). But that said, you will not be disappointed. Everything that made the film what it was is in the novel and then some, with edges far sharper than in the film. The novel takes you in much deeper into the lives of the characters, where things are rarely black and white and even the most seemingly unsympathetic of them become at least somewhat sympathetic when seen from the inside. While there are many characters and a number of plotlines going on, at the heart of the story are Oskar and Eli. Oskar is twelve, bullied, a lonely passive victim who fantasizes about revenge. You can see the seeds growing in him, see a future scenario of the sort you read about in the papers where the victim becomes the victimizer in a bloody act of unfocused rage. Eli is also twelve... sort of. And not a victim. Eli is a survivor, no

matter what it takes. Above all things, this is a story about loneliness and the need to "let the right one in". There is a lot of originality in this novel. While it's not much of a revelation to say that Eli is a vampire, it must be said that Lindqvist brings some new things to the vampire genre, things that I will not reveal. And the world of his novel is firmly grounded in its own reality, the world of Swedish suburbia, specifically Blackeberg, in 1982. Lindqvist shows us that even if you don't live in London or New Orleans or even Transylvania, there can still be things unknown moving about in the night. In addition, Lindqvist imbues his world of Swedish suburbia with an atmosphere that matches, or perhaps shapes, the quiet desperation of its inhabitants. There is a mounting dread always in the background. The fear that something will happen. Or the fear that something won't happen. Dreams and hopes can be as gut-wrenching and torturous as fear. I liked this passage in particular simply for the way it suggests the threat of things unknown: "The squirrel darts down the trunk of the oak tree, stops, listens. A siren, in the distance. The squirrel judges the sound to be not dangerous, irrelevant. It continues down the tree trunk. All day there have been people in the forest, dogs. Not a moment of calm and only now, when it is dark, does the squirrel dare come down out of the oak tree it has been forced to hole up in all day... The squirrel reaches the foot of the tree, runs along a thick root. It does not like to make its way over the ground in the dark, but hunger forces it on. It makes its way with alertness, stopping to listen, looking around every ten meters. Makes sure to steer clear of a badger den that has been inhabited as recently as this summer. He hasn't seen the family for a long time but you can never be too careful... Finally the squirrel reaches its goal: the nearest of the many winter stores it has laid up in the fall... Just as it picks up a nut between its paws it hears a sound... Danger... It takes the nut in its teeth and runs straight up into a pine tree without having time to cover over the store. Once in the safety of a branch it takes the nut into its paws again, tries to locate the sound. Its hunger is great and the food only some centimeters from its mouth but the danger must first be located, identified, before it is time to eat... The squirrel's head jerks from side to side, his nose trembles as he looks down over the moon-shadowed landscape below and traces the sound to its source. Yes. Taking the long way around was worth it. The scratching, wet sound comes from the badger den... Badgers can't climb trees. The squirrel relaxes a little and takes a bite of the nut while it continues to study the ground, but now more as a member of a theater audience, third balcony. Wants to see what will happen, how many badgers there are... But what emerges from the badger's den is no badger. The squirrel removes the nut from its mouth, looks down. Tries to understand. Put what it sees together with known facts. Doesn't manage it... Therefore takes the nut into its mouth again, dashes further up the trunk, all the way up into the very top... Maybe one of those can climb trees... You can never be too careful." I highly recommend this book to anyone who

enjoys the kind of fiction that unsettles you, that makes you look and keep on looking even when part of you wants very much to look away.

The novel, (I've a used copy of the UK translation) is painted on a much broader (encompassing and developing characters that were quite secondary in the film), far wilder and much scarier. Perhaps it's the actress, but the cinematic Eli seems very human at times. In the book, you never forget that she's essentially inhuman. The author has an interesting knack for making even the most reprehensible characters (worse than the vampire) sympathetic, including a zombie pedophile, sadistic violent children, and a crew of pathetic alcoholics. I only wish the translator's prose style wasn't so plain, the story could definitely use a little juicing up - not in terms of plot, so much as language. The current film adaptation's stays close to the first half of the book (though for reasons of emphasis, much has been condensed, compressed, combined and left out - esp. the supporting characters - who add a lot to the original story) up to about the halfway point in the story, when some disturbing possibilities hinted at by the author play out, taking the story in two potentially difficult to take scenes, into JT Leroy-ish, "The Heart is Deceitful Among All Things" territory. Those interested in reading the book be forewarned. However if you can handle those elements, action and pure horror elements get more plentiful and far, far wilder in the second half of the novel. It's a far harder ride than the movie. In a way this is a great response to the surfeit of Buffy imitators on the popular fiction shelves these days. After all you'd have to be in pretty f_@kin' dire straits to let someone as utterly "other" (not to mention lethal) as the book's Eli into your life. And Blackeberg (the public housing estate Oskar edures) ain't Sunnydale. It's gotta' enough monsters even without the supernatural ones. (Think, Hubert Selby-Lite, with Vampires).

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