

'The Lossen'
Dir: Colin Skevington
UK • Fantasy • 26 Mins



In the dead of night, while Linda Marlowe's Sylvia Cappleman sleeps, an ominous yet familiar figure slowly creeps toward her front door, ready to take her away to a new realm of existence. From this opening, the exceptional and engaging cinematography, sound design and sound mix draw you in entirely, not only hooking you immediately but also letting you know that you're in for a short film experience like few others.

Almost immediately, after the wonderful opening, our expectations are subverted with some brilliantly timed and perfectly observed comedy with the sound design, score, editing and performance all working in perfect synchronicity. Nothing about this short feels like it might be the result of a happy accident or an element trying to compensate for something else. Everything working and ticking along does so in unison, with finely tuned precision.

The production values from top to bottom, at every level, are exemplary and clearly made with a budget that most short films would be extremely envious of. And because of this, The Lossen feels much more like a short movie than a short film, or at the very least an episode of a big-budget TV show. Indeed, from the visual aesthetic to the script, it does evoke a slight Good Omens vibe.

From here we're taken on a trip down memory lane, reliving the less desirable and heart-breaking times of this very successful woman's life and then taken on a detour to see what might have been.

Linda Marlowe's performance is nothing short of magical, and it's a joy to go on this journey with her as she effortlessly deals with both the comedic elements and the more heart-wrenching moments. Sylvia is a woman, who on the surface is not quite ready to let go but looking into Linda Marlowe's eyes, passed the denial, there's a whole other performance subtly playing out as we begin to understand her tortured past and she begins to accept her fate. Marlowe skilfully avoids relying on over-sentimentality in her performance and allows the natural emotion to seep through creating a more endearing, fully realised character who by the end, you just want to give a massive hug to. Sean Knopp too, as her guide into the next phase of her existence, is terrific, having an unexpected emotional arc of his own which he delivers masterfully.

Colin Skevington has assembled an incredible team both in front and behind the camera, and like any great director, acts as a conductor knowing exactly when to bring any one of his orchestra in to play their part. He displays a great understanding of each discipline and knows exactly how to effectively bring the best out of everyone around him to complement his vision.

The cinematography from Hatti Beanland is exceptional. It's simultaneously grounded, yet otherworldly as we flit between present, reality, past and the great beyond. Everything has its own unique aesthetic but it all feels part of the whole. The editing from Skevington perfectly blends the comedy and suspense at the beginning of the film and later commands our attention throughout the more tense and emotional scenes as the film progresses. The engaging score from Tom Linden too moves with great ease between the changing moods of the film, complementing everything perfectly. With so many exceptionally realised and executed elements all at play, it would be easy, on first viewing at least to overlook many of the other key components, such as the clever costume choices, use & selection of location and the highly effective sound design.

The fun and witty script, from director Skevington, lulls you into a false sense of security with its initial comedic tone, so much so that when the emotional ending kicks in, it hits even harder and will leave you with a lump in your throat, if not a few tears rolling down your cheek. The precision of the scenes, dialogue and pacing, along with the originality of the story combine to make this one hell of a journey not only from a storytelling perspective but also as a film-watching experience as well.

Tackling loss, regret and our own mortality in a fun and imaginative way, The Lossen is a warm, funny, original, emotional and carefully-crafted piece. Quite simply, short films don't get much better than this.

What a joy and honour it was for us to be able to screen this film at our 2022 festival.

10/10

The Lossen won Best Fantasy and Best Sound, and was nominated for Best Writer, Best Actress (for Linda Marlowe), Best Cinematography and Best Score at our 2022 film festival.

Reviewed by Philip Pugh, Festival Director, IndieFilmopolis Film Festival, Birmingham, UK.