

1987's *The Lost Boys* has all the classic clichés of an 80's teen film. A main character who falls in love with a girl he's just met, and she loves him back. A goofy younger brother who's the comic voice of reason. A group of teen rebels that the protagonist comes to a head with and must fight as part of the climax of the film. *The Lost Boys* has all the beats of a standard teen flick. Except that the characters are vampires.

*The Lost Boys* follows brothers Michael and Sam as they move to fictional Santa Carla, California after their parent's divorce. The boys and their mother, Lucy, move in with Lucy's eccentric father, referred to only as Grandpa.

The boys spend their evenings at the boardwalk, where Michael becomes entranced by Star, a girl who seems equally fascinated with him. However, Star seems to be in a relationship with David, the leader of a young biker gang.

Michael is goaded by David into a motorcycle race which ends at a sunken hotel on the outskirts of the beach- the gang's hideout. While at the hideout, Michael is initiated into the group by drinking what he believes is wine. The liquid is in reality David's blood, and in drinking it, Michael has become a vampire.

When *The Lost Boys* was released in 1987, the modern vampire was an relatively unexplored concept. With only 1972's *Blacula* and 1983's *The Hunger* being the only quasi-well-known vampire films that were contemporary to their release time. Three months after the release of *The Lost Boys*, *Near Dark*, another contemporary vampire film, would premiere to less success than *The Lost Boys*.

However, with *Blacula*, *The Hunger*, and *Near Dark*, although the setting is contemporary, the vampires are not. The vampiric characters are all centuries old and are depicted with an old-world aura, and at times are shown to be slightly out of sync with the current time. The vampires in *The Lost Boys* are new. Their exact age (or rather, how long they've been at their current age) is never specified, but their modern attire, knowledge of lingo, and cocky devil-may-care attitude implies that their immortality is relatively newfound.

The film is a horror comedy that feels genuine in its portrayal of teenage drama. The plotline and character dynamic are nothing new, all of the characters could be placed in films of the same 1980's teen flick style with little alteration. But the execution of the character dynamics, and the supernatural framing of the story results in a unique and enjoyable film.

The ending of the film is rather abrupt, with Grandpa acting as a deus ex machina and saving his family. However, his last-minute heroics is in line with his character. The gruesome and comedic ending to the film feels right at home with the rest of the film. The audience has already stretched their suspension of disbelief to believe that not only are vampires real, but that there is a group of teenage bikers in southern California who are vampires, and they immediately try to recruit the new kid in town.

If the belief of the audience has already been stretched enough to believe the supernatural plot elements of the film, it is not much of a stretch to believe that the protagonists' paranoid taxidermist grandpa knows more about the supernatural events in the town than he lets on.

*The Lost Boys* also begins to mark a turning point in the overall portrayal of vampires in media. While vampires still serve as the main antagonist, you have Star, Laddie, and Michael, who are all vampires that haven't killed, thereby separating them from the Lost Boys, who enjoy killing. Although there are two distinct sects of vampires in this film, the portrayal of these non-killing the vampires is nonetheless sympathetic and depicts them more as victims of circumstance than mindless monsters.

*The Lost Boys* is a film that takes the familiar script of an 80's teen classic, and flavors it with supernatural elements, creating a story that was virtually unheard of at the time. The film has compelling characters and is well balanced with moments of comedy and of anxious horror. The story overall is entertaining, the characters are familiar, yet stand out against their forebearers, and the film has an aura of nostalgia for both those who remember the 80's those who don't