

IT Makes An Impression At SXSW



Who doesn't enjoy a good clown show? Especially the fun dancing type who are out to murder children? Apparently, Stephen King. This year Warner Bros. is releasing *It: Part One - The Losers' Club*, the first of two movies based on King's 1986 novel *It*. And if recent reports are any indication, director Andres Muschietti's version will make the 1990 miniseries seem like a kid's show.

Originally the studio wanted to make *It* a single film; however, producer Dan Lin announced it would be split into two shows, one following the group of children known as The Losers' Club in the 1980's and the second revisiting the group as adults as they return to finish It off. Muschietti wanted to expand the story, adding plots and scenes that didn't appear in either the book or the miniseries but still using the town of Derry. He wanted to tap into the dread he felt watching the miniseries and take the story in a new direction. He states:

My first instinct was to basically be true to my own emotional experience with the book. I read it when I was a kid, so it was all about me trying to hit the core and the heart of the story, and the characters, too. I don't want to spoil the plot, but you will notice that the story swerves into different directions. The arc of the Losers' Club is a bit wider in range, and you will notice there are things that happen to them in this movie that weren't in the book or in the 1990 miniseries. So, I think it'll be a refreshing experience for fans, and a terrifying one, too

The story follows a group of outsider kids who call themselves The Losers' Club in Derry, Maine. They join together to hunt down a shape-shifting child-killer they call It, who emerges every 30 years for a killing spree. It changes its appearance to prey on the fears and phobias of the victim. Its most regular guise is Pennywise, The Dancing Clown. When It kills Georgie Denbrough, it prompts his brother Bill to gather his friends for revenge.

This time around Swedish actor Bill Skarsgard is playing Pennywise, with a cast of Jaeden Lieberher, Jeremy Ray Taylor, Sophia Lillis, and Finn Wolfhard as The Losers Club.

Not only did Muschietti want to expand on the *It* universe, he also wanted to have Skarsgard's Pennywise stand separate from Tim Curry's portrayal from the miniseries. His clown was a

cartoonish nightmare who needed some good dental work. Skarsgard's has a more sinister edge, marked by piercing yellow eyes and contorted movements.



The new-look Pennywise from the new-look *It*, getting a first sneak peek at SXSW

Wanting to keep Pennywise's secrets, Muschietti has kept very quiet about the character, even to the young cast. This proved to be very effective. They did not think they would be afraid of their co-star, however, "The day that he showed up on the stage, they f—ing freak out" said Muschietti. "Bill is like, seven-foot high, and I can't describe how scary he looks in person. He's a wiry man, crouching, making sounds, snotting, drooling, speaking in Swedish sometimes. Terrifying."

Now after nearly seven years in production due to numerous rewrites, re-castings, and a change in directors, Muschietti debuted a teaser at the South By South West film festival this week. The trailer is not available online but horror website *Bloody Disgusting* gave a report from the event:

The trailer opens with footage of Bill Denbrough making a paper boat for his little brother Georgie. We then move outside, where Georgie is chasing his boat in a rainstorm as it floats next to the curb.

Suddenly, Georgie runs right into a street barrier, which knocks him down on

the ground. He then watches as his boat sails into a gutter. He runs to the gutter and tries to see if he can see his boat.

Then we are shown the members of the Loser's Club meeting each other and realizing that they've all been seeing the same entity, before one of them finally says 'The Clown.'

Once that happens, the teaser then moves into its centre-piece, which shows the members of the Loser's Club looking at pictures on a carousel slide projector that suddenly acquires a life of its own and begins moving through the slides at an increasingly alarming speed.

The pictures are of Georgie and his parents, and each slide zooms in on Georgie's face before cutting to his mother, whose hair is covering her face.

As the projector moves from slide to slide, the hair moves out of his mother's face, and her face is revealed to be that of Pennywise himself.

The teaser ends with Bill walking down into his flooded basement, where Georgie's ghost taunts him by repeatedly screaming... before Pennywise rises from the water and rushes at him in a moment that had the entire audience screaming.

Not only is this promising, but the fact that King himself has given the film his stamp of approval must make the team feel good about their project. Especially since in the past he has been critical with projects, like *The Shining* and *Dreamcatcher*.

<https://twitter.com/StephenKing/status/839233720280309761>

The first *It* movie will be released on September 8, 2017.

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