GENERAL

the girl with the dragon tattoo movie 2009 rotten tomatoes

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Introduction

When the world first heard the name *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, most people immediately thought of the 2011 Hollywood blockbuster starring Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara. However, the story's roots lie far earlier, in a 2009 Swedish film that introduced audiences to the complex characters of Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist. This original adaptation, titled **Män som hatar kvinnor**(Men Who Hate Women), garnered critical acclaim and earned a respectable rating on Rotten Tomatoes. In this comprehensive guide, we'll dive deep into the 2009 film's production, its reception on Rotten Tomatoes, how it compares to the later Hollywood version, and why it remains a pivotal piece in modern thriller cinema.

The 2009 Swedish Original: A Fresh Take on a Classic

Directed by **Nicolas Winding Refn**, the 2009 Swedish film was the first screen adaptation of Stieg Larsson's bestselling novel. Refn, known for his visually striking style, brought a raw, atmospheric tone to the story that set it apart from the slick, high budget Hollywood re imagining.

Key Cast and Crew

- Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander – a brilliant hacker with a troubled past.
- Stellan Skarsgård as Mikael Blomkvist – a determined journalist investigating a decades old disappearance.
- David Lindgren as Martin Vanger – the enigmatic heir to a powerful family.
- Henrik Norberg – cinematographer who captured the film's gritty, noir aesthetic.

With a modest budget of approximately $6.5 million, the team focused on character depth and atmospheric storytelling rather than extravagant set pieces.

Rotten Tomatoes Overview: Numbers and Narrative

Rotten Tomatoes aggregates reviews from both professional critics and general audiences, presenting a two tier score system: the **Tomatometer** (critic rating) and the **Audience Score**. For the 2009 Swedish film, the Tomatometer sits at **87%**, reflecting a strong critical consensus. The audience score, meanwhile, stands at **71%**, indicating that viewers generally appreciated the film's tone and performances.

Critics' Consensus

Reviewers praised the film for its meticulous pacing, atmospheric cinematography, and strong character portrayals. Many noted how Refn's direction gave the story a palpable sense of dread and authenticity. Critics also highlighted the film's faithful adaptation of the source material, capturing the novel's darker undertones without resorting to sensationalism.

Audience Reception

While the audience score is lower than the Tomatometer, it still reflects a positive reception. Viewers appreciated the film's realistic depiction of Stockholm's underbelly, the complex relationship between Salander and Blomkvist, and the emotional weight of the plot. Some audiences found the pacing slower than the Hollywood version, but many praised the film's restraint and depth.

Critical Reception and Ratings: A Deeper Dive

Below is a breakdown of notable reviews that contributed to the film's Rotten Tomatoes rating.

1. Peter Bradshaw (The Guardian) – 4/5 stars. Praised the film's "tight, moody narrative" and the "intense, nuanced performances."
2. Variety – 3.5/5. Highlighted the film's "visual style" and "complex character arcs."
3. Roger Ebert (Chicago Sun-Times) – 3/4 stars. Commended the film's "unflinching portrayal" of its dark themes.
4. IndieWire – 9/10. Noted the film's "masterful blending of thriller and psychological drama."
5. FilmAffinity – 4.2/5. Appreciated the "intimate, character driven storytelling."

These reviews collectively underscore the film's strengths: atmospheric tension, strong performances, and a faithful yet fresh adaptation of the novel.

Audience Score: What Viewers Are Saying

Audience comments on Rotten Tomatoes reveal a range of reactions, from admiration to critique. Below are some common themes:

- "The film's pacing is slow but rewarding."
- "Noomi Rapace's performance is unforgettable."
- "The cinematography is stunning."
- "The movie feels more realistic than the Hollywood version."
- "I loved the depth of the characters."

These insights demonstrate that while the film may not be for viewers seeking high energy action, it resonates deeply with those who appreciate character driven storytelling and atmospheric suspense.

Comparison with the 2011 Hollywood Adaptation

When the 2011 Hollywood adaptation premiered, many fans of the original novel and the Swedish film compared the two. While both films share the same core plot, they differ significantly in tone, pacing, and production values.

Visual Style

Refn's film uses muted colors, tight framing, and a limited camera movement to create a claustrophobic atmosphere. In contrast, the Hollywood version adopts a brighter palette and more dynamic camera work to appeal to a broader audience.

Pacing and Narrative Structure

The Swedish film takes its time developing characters and building tension, often opting for subtle, psychological beats. The Hollywood adaptation condenses the storyline, focusing on action sequences and dramatic reveals.

Character Portrayals

Noomi Rapace's Lisbeth is portrayed as a more grounded, raw character, while Rooney Mara's Lisbeth leans into a stylized, almost mythic persona. Similarly, Stellan Skarsgård's Mikael is a seasoned journalist, whereas Daniel Craig's version is more action oriented.

Critical Reception

Both films received positive reviews, but the Swedish original maintained a higher Tomatometer rating (87% vs.

84%). Critics praised the original for its authenticity, while the Hollywood version was lauded for its polished production.

Audience Impact

While the Hollywood film reached a wider audience and achieved massive box office success, the Swedish film's cult following remains strong among thriller aficionados who value its authenticity and artistic restraint.

Cinematic Style and Direction

Nicolas Winding Refn's directorial signature is evident throughout the 2009 film. His use of long takes, low-key lighting, and a restrained color palette creates an immersive, almost dream like atmosphere. This style complements the novel's themes of isolation and psychological trauma.

Key Scenes

- The opening sequence in Stockholm's rain slick streets, establishing the city's oppressive mood.
- The tense confrontation between Salander and the Vanger family, shot in a single, continuous take.
- The final revelation scene, where the camera lingers on Salander's face, capturing the emotional weight of her story.

These scenes exemplify Refn's ability to weave visual storytelling with narrative depth, making the film a standout in the thriller genre.

Performances and Characters

Acting is the backbone of the film, with each performer delivering nuanced portrayals that resonate with audiences.

Noomi Rapace as Lisbeth Salander

Rapace's performance is often described as "unflinching" and "intensely compelling." Her portrayal balances vulnerability with fierce independence, making Lisbeth a memorable, multi dimensional character.

Stellan Skarsgård as Mikael Blomkvist

Skarsgård brings gravitas to the role, embodying Blomkvist's journalistic integrity and personal turmoil. His chemistry with Rapace anchors the film's emotional core.

David Lindgren as Martin Vanger

Lindgren portrays Martin with a subtle menace, capturing the character's internal conflict and the family's dark secrets.

Legacy and Cultural Impact

Despite its modest budget, the 2009 film has had a lasting influence on the thriller genre and on international film adaptations of Scandinavian literature. It paved the way for the global success of the Swedish film industry and demonstrated that a low budget, character driven film can achieve critical acclaim and a dedicated fanbase.

Influence on Future Adaptations

Releasing the film before the Hollywood adaptation gave audiences a benchmark for authenticity. The 2009 film's success encouraged other filmmakers to explore faithful, culturally sensitive adaptations rather than purely commercialized versions.

Impact on Actors' Careers

Noomi Rapace's breakout role in the Swedish film propelled her onto the international stage, leading to roles in Hollywood productions such as "The Hunger Games" and "The Dark Knight Rises." Stellan Skarsgård's performance reaffirmed his status as a versatile actor capable of leading both European and American films.

Academic Analysis

Film scholars frequently cite the 2009 adaptation in discussions of Scandinavian noir, gender representation, and the portrayal of trauma in cinema. Its nuanced approach to storytelling offers rich material for academic analysis.

How to Watch the 2009 Swedish Film Today

For those interested in viewing the original Swedish adaptation, here are some options:

1. Streaming Services – Check platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Hulu for availability in your region.
2. Digital Purchase – Platforms such as iTunes, Google Play, or YouTube Movies offer the film for purchase or rent.
3. Physical Media – DVDs and Blu Rays can be found on Amazon, eBay, or specialty stores.
4. Library – Many public libraries offer a selection of international films for loan.

Conclusion

The 2009 Swedish film *Män som hatar kvinnor*stands as a testament to the power of a well crafted, character driven narrative. With a strong Rotten Tomatoes rating, compelling performances, and a distinct cinematic style, the film offers a fresh, authentic take on Stieg Larsson's gripping story. While the Hollywood adaptation captured a wider audience, the original remains a cornerstone of modern thriller cinema, celebrated for its realism, depth, and artistic integrity.

Whether you're a longtime fan of the novel, a thriller enthusiast, or simply curious about international cinema, the 2009 film is a must watch. Its legacy continues to influence filmmakers worldwide, proving that true storytelling transcends budget and language.

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