

## Comic Con Panel Recap: "DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK"

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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Even with Guillermo del Toro co-writing and producing, it seems the remake of the 1973 made-for-TV horror flick, DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK hasn't exactly been on audiences' radars. Most likely, because next to no word has been heard on it. This weekend, once again in Hall H, we got our first look at the Troy Nixey directed film and if what we saw was any indication, horror fans will have something to be very, very excited about come Winter.



Nixey and del Toro took the stage amidst applause louder than all the car stereos in Dr. Dre videos combined (what else would you expect upon seeing the icon of geek and fantasy that is del Toro) and rolled what was one of the best and most effective teaser trailers for a horror film I've seen in years.

The screen goes black and a whisper tells a small tale. Lost in the darkness for quite an extended period, the atmosphere gets uncomfortable and when the story ends, one by one the words of the title come at you with tiny glimpses of footage imposed on the letters. It barely lets you in, doesn't give anything away and then just after DARK hits, it stops and you're lost again. This time, with the film's main character Sally (Bailee Madison), tiny and sickly in a sea of bedsheets, trying to find her way out while you anxiously know that at the end of her mad attempt of escaping a simple bedspread, will be something that shouldn't be. It's safe to say the vast majority of Hall H was certified scared and being in that moment with thousands of other audience members was such a fun feeling, a reminder of why we love dark stories.

Visually, and thematically, DON'T BE AFRAID already looks and feels like a 'son of del Toro' and it's easy to see why the HELLBOY director would be attracted to newcomer Nixey's sensibilities. The film follows a young girl pushed by her mother off to her distant father and his new girlfriend in their brand new house. The house is of course burdened by the creatures underneath it who want to bring Sally down to their world forever.

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Later in the panel, the movie's prologue and opening was unleashed on the attendees. It opens in the accursed house in 1917. Naturally, it's beautiful, but ominous and the camera whisks you around in a fantastical fashion before setting up a bit of history involving a father whose young child has been stolen by the subterranean monsters and will only return her in exchange for children's teeth.

From the little seen, it's clear that DON'T BE AFRAID will be a dark fairy tale, uncompromising in its tone and goal to terrify you. As Nixey and del Toro explained happily, the film was given an R, even as they tried to shoot for PG-13. And it wasn't necessarily due to violence or overall grisliness, but "pervasive scariness." When told there was nothing they can do as far as cuts, Miramax supported the filmmakers asking, "Why ruin a perfectly scary film?"

If that's true (and all signs point to such), DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK just may be the wonderful bit of classic uneasiness genre lovers are constantly searching for.

For more on DON'T BE AFRAID, look for Fango's upcoming video interview with the great Guillermo del Toro on the site this week, as well as our exclusive one on one with director Troy Nixey.

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