
SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

SCARLET




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D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

OFFICIAL SELECTION
tiff50
TORONTO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL 2025

A film by Mamoru Hosoda

2025 // Japan // 111 minutes

LOGLINE

SCARLET tells the story of a brave princess who transcends time and space.

SYNOPSIS

From visionary Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker Mamoru Hosoda (MIRAI) comes a powerful, time-bending animated adventure. SCARLET, a sword-wielding princess from a war-torn medieval kingdom, sets to avenge her father's death – but fails, awakening in a mysterious afterlife. There, she meets an idealistic young man from our present day whose compassion challenges her thirst for vengeance. When Scarlet is confronted once more by her father's killer, she must decide: cling to hatred, or discover a life beyond revenge.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As we witness heartbreaking conflicts around the world, I believe that finding love and choosing to live together in unity is what will lead us towards something better. That's why I want to share this new film with the world — now more than ever.

Q&A WITH MAMORU HOSODA

Q: Please discuss the origins of the project. What led you to Scarlet, her transformative journey, and to the incredible world in which she finds herself?

A: Looking at the geo-political state of the world after COVID was a big point of inspiration for me. The idea that people can't forgive these days still continues to this day and that brings a lot of worry. That influenced the start of this project for me, and I would like to pass on a positive message to the younger generation. In terms of revenge stories, Shakespeare's Hamlet is a masterpiece. There's this cycle of revenge that is still relevant today, which is why I weaved Shakespearean elements into the story and characters.

Q: We don't want to give anything away but there are several differences between this story and HAMLET because of the power of forgiveness here. Where did that inspiration come from?

A: In the underlying story of HAMLET, his father comes back as a ghost and tells him not to forgive and encourages him to get revenge. If I gave Scarlet the same directive, that internal conflict would be compounded. The big difference with SCARLET is that her father's last words are, "to forgive." It's a confusing directive because after everything done to her family she wonders how it can be so easy to forgive. The question presented to Scarlet is how to deal with the energy, how to forgive. There are many parallels to our current geo-political landscape and I wanted that

reflected in the screenplay. We don't really have an answer of how to fix that yet but there's this collective desire of mankind to figure it out because of the cost of war.

Q: Please discuss the creation of Scarlet and Hijiri, how they are different both in approach and in physicality (including character design, the way they're drawn, the use of colors, and how these elements help define the characters.)

A: Looking at Hamlet, I wanted to draw from him for Scarlet. There are very dark colors and dark armor. For Hijiri, I drew from Ophelia. I wanted a contrast between her and Hijiri. They come from very different worlds with differences. Hijiri is an optimist. I wanted that difference in physicality. They stand on different sides of the spectrum - male vs female. I wanted the design of the characters to reflect those differences.

Q: How does the animation style for SCARLET differ from some of your previous films, like BELLE and MIRAI?

A: The tools in animation are constantly evolving and improving. Until recently, style of animation was rooted in the country of origin, for example there's this CG style of animation with Pixar in the US whereas in Europe it's more artistic and, of course, Japan is known for anime (cell look). Through COVID and streamers, people were exposed to different animations. Disney and Pixar used to dominate the stage of animation. More recently, different styles have mixed and we've elevated the industry. Scarlet is much heavier on the CG which enables me as a director to get more into the character expression. There's lots of CG, of course, but I wanted the hand drawn to still be preserved. If you look at SPIDER-VERSE, they found a way to mix different styles to have a huge visual impact. I wanted for my film to have a shift in visual style. It feels and looks new and it allows us to show these bigger themes.

Q: Conversely, are there any stylistic or thematic connections between SCARLET and your previous films?

A: For the visual expression of the characters, I always try to make them feel like they could exist in our world. I want them to feel relatable.

Q: Was THRONE OF BLOOD by Akira Kurosawa in mind at all when making this film? This film was also based on Shakespeare's play MACBETH set in the Warring States period in Japan.

A: THRONE OF BLOOD is a very accurate recreation. I love Shakespeare and MACBETH and I think what draws people to it is the simplicity. THRONE OF BLOOD is a different setting. Everything is pretty much preserved from MACBETH in THRONE OF BLOOD. I think that is because MACBETH is a much simpler story. With HAMLET, there's more interpretation. You can place MACBETH in any time and it has the same resolution. I think HAMLET is much more open

to interpretation depending on the landscape. SCARLET was my present-day interpretation of how to resolve this conflict.

Q: There are so many amazing visuals throughout but one that stands out is the dragon. It fills the entire frame. It's wondrous to watch. What did you want the Dragon to represent?

A: I want to toss to the audience because I think it means something different to each person. The dragon is pierced with many different manly weapons because many people have attempted to fight it in many worlds but the dragon is unaffected. I think the meaning is different for each individual. Without giving too much away, it does transform into something else at the end.

Q: What is the "Otherworld"?

A: A place where life and death coexist, and both past and future are all woven together. If you are not strong enough you will disappear into nothingness.

Q: What do you hope audiences experience while watching the film, and what do you hope they feel after leaving the cinema?

A: Looking at the present-day conflicts, this movie is intended to be a thought-provoking experience. I hope it becomes an entry point for conversation. I think many moviegoers will relate to this idea of revenge. For me, it's a romantic idea to many people all over the world. There's always a revenge story. Everyone has someone they can't forgive. Scarlet too suffers from this but there's a transformation. I want the audience to feel the process of change and what helps her realize there's something more important than revenge.

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

MAMORU HOSODA | DIRECTOR

Born September 19, 1967 in Toyama Prefecture, Mamoru Hosoda began his career in animation in 1991 when he joined Toei Doga, now known as Toei Animation. Hosoda reached his first significant milestone as a movie director with "Digimon Adventure" in 1999. Afterward, he transitioned to freelance work and directed the feature animations "The Girl Who Leapt Through Time" (2006) and "Summer Wars" (2009), both achieving long-running box office success. In 2011, Hosoda co-founded Studio CHIZU with producer Yuichiro Saito. He thereafter directed and wrote the screenplay for "Wolf Children" (2012) and "The Boy and the Beast" (2015). His work on "Mirai" (2018) garnered a nomination for the 91st Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film and was also selected for the Cannes Directors' Fortnight. His most recent film, "Belle" (2021), which he directed, wrote the screenplay for, and conceived the original story, has become the

highest-grossing film of his career. “Belle” was also selected for the Cannes Première section at the 74th Cannes Film Festival.

CREDITS

Directed by MAMORU HOSODA

Written by MAMORU HOSODA

Produced by YUICHIRO SAITO
TOSHIMI TANIO
NOZOMU TAKAHASHI

Executive Producer NOBUYUKI IINUMA

Cast MANA ASHIDA
MASAKI OKADA
KÔJI YAKUSHO