

# TRAIN TO BUSAN (Busanhaeng)

South Korea (2016) 118 minutes

Director & Screenplay: Yeon Sang-ho

Cast: Gong Yoo (Seok-woo), Kim Soo-an (Soo-an),  
Jung Yu-mi (Seong-kyeong), Ma Dong-seok (Sang-hwa)



Screening 28 March 2018 at Swindon Arts Centre

## Synopsis

Like all classic zombie movies, this is a wonderfully over-the-top slice of surreal social commentary.

Investment manager Seok-woo is a divorced man who lives in Seoul, with his daughter, Soo-an, and his mother. He is a workaholic and neglects Soo-an, who misses her mother. On Soo-an's birthday, she asks to visit her mother in Busan, and Seok-woo travels with her, with the intention of returning after lunch. They board the fast train, but a sick woman also boards another car. During the journey, the woman attacks a member of the train staff and soon all the passengers in the car are attacked, turning into zombies. Seok-woo realises to his horror that there is a zombie outbreak taking place throughout the country. So along their journey the passengers have to fight the zombies as well as the selfishness of their fellow 'normal' human beings...

## Reviews



Characters you can't help but care about? Check. A spot of amped-up social commentary? Check. Lashings of bloody, bite-y mayhem? Check.

Yeon Sang-ho's *Train to Busan*, a South Korean horror film about a train journey disrupted by an on-board zombie outbreak, achieves the dual feat of (a) making Southern Rail look like quite a reasonable train line, and (b) being pretty much everything you could possibly want a zombie film to be.

There's a stylish, splattery flair to Yeon's zombie apocalypse as ordered public spaces, all cool blue tones and clean lines, are taken over by the slaving, crooked-limbed horde. On the train, zombies surge from carriage to carriage like seawater flooding the compartments of a sinking ship, while an ill-advised stop at an en route station only adds to the claustrophobic horror.

Ultimately, however, the film's greatest strength is its surprising humanity: *Train to Busan* forces you to care not just about Seok-woo and Soo-an, but about all of the individuals caught up in the chaos.

*Rebecca Hawkes, Daily Telegraph*

Yeon has come up with a take on zombies that is rooted deep in the genre but still feels innovative. Like Romero's undead, these are an inescapable evil spreading across the world to offer a sly commentary on our modern society. Like the 'infected' in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, they're fast and strong. Like the swarming hordes of *World War Z*, there's something insect-like about their ravenous pursuit of these few uninfected hold-outs.

However in the end, Yeon Sang-ho goes back to the human story and delivers a surprisingly emotional climax – maybe family ties were the point all along...

*Helen O'Hara, Empire*

*Train to Busan* delivers a thrillingly entertaining take on the zombie genre, with fully realised characters and plenty of social commentary to underscore the bursts of skilfully staged action.

*Rotten Tomatoes*

## Film Facts

- The film premiered in the Midnight Screenings section of the Cannes Film Festival in 2016.
- The genre is not labelled as horror. It is categorised instead as action, suspense and thriller as it is not deemed to include a theme of gore.
- It has been watched by more than 11 million movie-goers in South Korea.

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