

# Maggie steinmiller

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Maggie Steinmiller ENGL Professor Wolfslayer February 7, 2013 The Hour of The Wolf by Ingmar Bergman Ingmar Bergman's "Hour of the Wolf" is a movie one would have to pay strict attention to from start to finish. It is a twisted attempt at a Gothic horror film that goes against the norm of its time. "Hour of the Wolf" is composed of short scenes, some very dull and others warped. It is somewhat hard to follow because Bergman doesn't separate reality from the illusions experienced in the movie. The film takes place on an island where an artist named Johan and his wife Alma reside. The introductory scene starts off with Alma telling about Johan's diary and that he went insane and disappeared. The film then redirects to the beginning of the plot, where the true madness begins. Johan is an insomniac out of fear of the past and illusions that haunt him at night. He is especially afraid of a certain time at night which he calls the Hour of the Wolf which is where the title comes from. This is the time between 3 and 4 AM and according to the film 'It is the hour where most people die, when sleep is deepest, when nightmares are more real. It is the hour when the sleepless are haunted by their deepest fear, when ghosts and demons are most powerful. The Hour of the Wolf is also the hour when most children are born.' This theory, whether true or not, is a creative reason for Johan's insomnia and also probably an aid for his insanity. As the movie develops, we see the couple's everyday life and relationship change. Johan is growing more unusual which sparks Alma's curiosity. One day she finds Johan's diary, reads it, and finds out that he is being haunted by creatures he calls cannibals. Some of these cannibals are just an annoyance and he either ignores them or slaps them down. Others appear in the image of his past lover, Veronica, whom he had an affair with

and try to seduce him. Johan seems to give in to the illusions of Veronica possibly still being obsessed with her. One of the most impacting scenes is the day Johan goes fishing and is tagged along by a boy in a swimsuit. At first he is just watching Johan fish but then starts making suggestive poses on the rocks. This angers Johan, because he thinks the child is one of the cannibals that haunts him. He starts yelling at him and then boy attacks Johan and bites him. After some struggle, Johan overpowers and kills him. After, Johan heaves the body into the ocean where it sinks into the water. By invitation, the couple take a trip to the castle on the other side of the island. Little does they know that the family, or possibly more apparitions, in the castle are plotting to tear him and Alma apart by slowly bringing back Veronica into his life. They go eat dinner and drink in the castle followed by a small show. After, one of the older women starts to make advances at Johan gets upset and they all go outside to blow off steam. While outside, Johan's past is brought up making him even more uncomfortable, concluding their night. On their way back, Alma mentions she read his diary and is afraid. Although she decides to stay with him, Alma begins to grow more fearful. She breaks down one say saying how afraid she is that she might be his next victim. Three shots from a gun are then fired and Johan returns back to the castle in search for Veronica. His hallucinations are overwhelming him when he starts to see a woman taking off her face and a man walking on the ceiling. He finally finds Veronica, appearing to be dead. He uncovers her body and starts embracing it in attempt of some necrophilic act. She then wakes up and he finds that all of the other cannibals are in the room to and they are all laughing at him. Alma, still alive, later finds Johan wandering in

the forrest insane as ever. She goes to try and help him but he is attacked by the apparitions for the final time. There were many mixed reviews on The Hour of the Wolf. Andrew Hathaway, a movie critic wrote, " When combined these elements, strangely enough, make it both one of Bergman's weaker films but also a decent " starter film" for folks that want to get into Bergman's more psychologically heavy works. " I disagree with him because seeing this film did interest me but did not make me want to watch another film of Bergman's. Another movie critic, Roger Ebert, wrote, " If we allow the images to slip past the gates of logic and enter the deeper levels of our mind, and if we accept Bergman's horror story instead of questioning it, " Hour of the Wolf" works magnificently". This statement can be agreeable. To see a twisted movie like this you must go with an open mind and not think too logically when trying to piece together this story. Hour of the Wolf greatly defied boundaries of its time. Movies in the 60's were not usually dark, and did not accept necrophilia tendencies or graphic murder. Most of the acting was monotone but maybe that is why it was strangely intriguing. The movie was in black and white, which fails to grab your attention. Modern day movies thrive on color and appearance, which make them more attracting. The plot was heavy and puzzling, with little insight focused on the events. His childhood is mentioned but not elaborated on, which could help the audience understand his actions more clearly. If I stumbled upon this movie on my own, I would probably have not continued to watch. On the other hand, it was rewarding in some ways like mystery and plot twists Ingmar Bergman greatly influenced the Goth Horror genre, opening up new doors for future movies to come. Citations 1. Ebert, Robert. " Hour of the Wolf ::

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Hathaway, Andrew. " Ingmar Bergman: Hour of the Wolf (1968)." Cant Stop  
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