

The Curse of Styria, a psychological horror that deserves to be on your list

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Released in Brazil in 2014 at the independent horror film festival FANTASPOA, *The Curse of Styria* is yet another of the hundred adaptations of the book *Carmilla* from 1872. The film, which goes back to the psychological origins of the book, tells the story of Lara Hill ([Eleanor Tomlinson](#) from *Poldark* and *Colette*), the young daughter of a British professor ([Stephen Rea](#) of *Interview with the Vampire*) who moves with her father to the city of Styria, in the countryside of Hungary, in 1989. The purpose of the move is that her father can study murals painted by a doctor and artist in a castle that used to be a sanatorium, to where the Hills move in. While her father deals with his studies, and treats her the way he has always treated her — as distantly as possible —, Lara ventures into the forest and ends up witnessing an accident that almost kills the young Carmilla ([Julia Pietrucha](#)), a mysterious orphan who hides in a basement under the sinister castle.

Adapting several of the myths portrayed in the book *Carmilla* to the 1980s, *The Curse of Styria* also brings back the ancient legends of vampires, as shown by the hysteria that takes the city. One such legend is that when someone commits suicide, they can not have a Christian burial and that this unsanctified burial causes the dead to return as vampires. The city of Styria, nearly a village, believes in such legends and its belief seems to be proven real in several moments of the film, especially when a suicide brings several other young girls to also kill themselves. The fault of those deaths is placed in Lara, the outsider, and in Carmilla, the stray.

The obsessive relationship between Lara and Carmilla also brings to light the mental illnesses of Lara, her background story and childhood traumas, her relationship with her father and how she had lived under the shadow of her mother's crimes since she was a child, being treated as just another hysterical woman in a universe of hysteria that her father thinks he knows so well.

For those who like psychological terror and the limits between the supernatural and the psychological, adding *The Curse of Styria* to the list is almost mandatory, as it is for anyone who does not want to miss any adaptation of *Carmilla*.