MONSTER (12A)
Director: Hirokazu Kore-eda
Starring: Sakura Ando, Eita Nagayama, Soya Kurokawa, Hinata Hiirag
Japan, 2023, 2 hours 6 minutes, Japanese + English subtitles

Monster is Kore-eda's welcome return to Japan, following *Broker* (2022) set in Korea and *The Truth* (2019) in France.

On the surface, another "family drama", the director delivers a beautifully layered and nuanced film, which only gradually reveals the "truth" of what is happening in the life of eleven-year-old Minato.

"Monster is a movie that does not render up its meanings easily in general, and its repeated motif is to replay the same events from a different viewpoint; in another type of film this might deliver the smooth and gratifying narrative click of a twist-reveal falling into place, but here it has a way of raising more questions than answers." **Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian**

The screenplay (Best Screenplay, Cannes Film Festival, 2023) was written by Sakamoto Yuji, but the director has said in interviews that the title, *Monster*, was his, and a central conceit of the film is who, or what, is the monster.

"Yes, of course. I think people who have seen that film go to the point of discussing who the monster really is. When I first read the plot treatment, for the first half or so, I was wondering who the "monster" was, as I was reading it, and then when it came to the part of the children, then I realized that I myself am the monster, because I've been the one who's been searching and trying to label something as a "monster." I was very struck by that structure of the script, and I thought that was necessary to reflect in the film as well, that we ourselves become the monster in the end."

Preview courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment

Notes compiled by Simon Scott

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