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## **ALRAUNE**

**(Germany, 1927)**

**DIRECTED BY HENRIK GALEEN. SCENARIO BY GALEEN AFTER THE NOVEL BY HANNS HEINZ EWERS. PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANZ PLANER. ART DIRECTION BY WALTER REIMANN, MAX HEILBRONNER. WITH PAUL WEGENER (TEN BRINKEN), BRIGITTE HELM (ALRAUNE), AND IVAN PETROVICH. 7 REELS. SILENT (24 FPS) 16mm. WITH DANISH INTER-TITLES: SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION WILL BE READ.**

Henrik Galeen authored (or co-authored) the screenplays for several of the most famous dark works of German screen expressionism: among them *THE GOLEM*, *NOSFERATU*, and *WAXWORKS*. *ALRAUNE* is another exercise in poetic horror, and a stunning rediscovery. The story concerns a scientist (Paul Wegener) who brings into being—by a process of artificial insemination—a woman named Alraune (Brigitte Helm), whose “father” is a hanged criminal and whose mother is a street walker. Raised as the scientist’s daughter, Alraune quickly develops the demonic tendencies of her true heredity, and plots a terrible revenge on the man that created her. Atmosphere and design are realized in the best grotesque tradition of expressionism. When released in America in 1928, *ALRAUNE* gathered this mention from the *New York Times*:

Heinrich Galeen has directed with photographic imagination—no question that the picture has atmosphere. Paul Wegener does what

he can with the conventional role of the scientist; Ivan Petrovich is an acceptable leading man and Brigitte Helm is Alraune. All the promises of *METROPOLIS* (in which Helm played a dual role) are here fulfilled. To the vampire gallery, which runs from Theda Bara to Greta Garbo, let me add the German Brigitte. She lacks Garbo’s delicate weakness but she gives in its place power and depth. A most engaging evening’s display of erotics.