# The Venom series 'is getting queerer'



The world of fandom has taken a prominent seat at the table in today’s entertainment landscape, influencing film and television narratives like never before. A striking example of this evolution is the Venom film series by Sony, which has transformed from a lukewarm critical reception into a cultural phenomenon, thanks largely to its burgeoning fanbase.

Released on 5th October 2018, the first Venom film experienced an underwhelming critical response but defied expectations with a stellar box office performance, accumulating $856.1 million worldwide. The film stars Tom Hardy as Eddie Brock, a journalist who becomes the host to an alien symbiote named Venom, also portrayed by Hardy, giving him extraordinary abilities. Despite its grounding in the superhero genre, the film's success owes much to its unexpected embrace by online fan communities on platforms such as Tumblr and Twitter.

One of the driving forces behind this transformation is the fervent "shipping" of Eddie and Venom by fans, a term used to describe the speculative and often romantic pairing of characters. For fans, the dynamic between Eddie and Venom transcends typical superhero narratives, presenting a rich subplot of intimate and layered relationships. This devoted fandom has propelled the characters into the realms of queer interpretation, generating extensive fanfiction and art that continuously reshapes the film's legacy.

The sequel, Venom: Let There Be Carnage, released in 2021, acknowledged and embraced this aspect of its fanbase. The film explores the evolving relationship between Eddie and Venom with subtext that burgeoned into overt expressions of mutual care and dependency. Director Andy Serkis referred to a particular sequence, where Venom ends up at a rave, as the character's "coming-out party," further evidencing this embrace of queer subtext. Such scenes frame Eddie and Venom's relationship as akin to a classic "enemies to lovers" narrative, resonating deeply with audiences.

The growing influence of the fanbase on the narrative direction is a testament to the power of modern fandom. This community’s passionate engagement has encouraged the filmmakers, including star Tom Hardy and director Andy Serkis, to weave elements that recognise and appreciate the fans' input. Recent marketing strategies have continued to nod to this segment of the audience, with promotions like Venom facetiming rapper Megan Thee Stallion—a gesture that taps into the film’s cultural zeitgeist.

The fan community’s influence is visible not just within the "Venom" franchise but across Marvel's broader cinematic universe as well. Over the past 16 years, the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has inspired a significant amount of fanfiction, offering fans a platform to explore and expand upon their interpretations of character relationships and narratives that are often left to subtext.

However, where some superhero films maintain a traditional approach to storytelling, Venom has capitalised on its campiness and the intrinsic absurdity of its premise. Such an approach aligns it with the broader tradition of queer cinema, allowing a unique comedic and romantic slant to mesh with its fantastical elements. The franchise asserts itself not just as a series of superhero adventures but as a narrative exploration of identity, relationships, and self-acceptance.

The current Venom: The Last Dance, teased with a trailer during Pride month, further illustrates this unique synergy between the films and their fanbase. Marketing efforts and the film’s thematic title suggest an ongoing commitment to embracing these themes, ensuring that Venom continues to resonate within the subcultures it initially courted accidentally, but now does so deliberately and warmly.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2024-10-24/venom-the-last-dance-review-tom-hardy-marvel-sony> - Corroborates the unique tone and campy humor of the 'Venom' series, as well as Tom Hardy's performance and writing contributions.
* <https://rendyreviews.com/movie-reviews/venom-the-last-dance-review> - Supports the idea of Eddie and Venom's relationship being a central focus and the queer subtext in the series.
* <https://vanyaland.com/2024/10/25/venom-the-last-dance-review-a-franchises-death-knull/> - Discusses the evolution of the 'Venom' series, its campy humor, and the impact of fan engagement on the narrative.
* <https://collider.com/venom-the-last-dance-review/> - Highlights Tom Hardy's performance, the chemistry between Eddie and Venom, and the film's action sequences, which align with the fanbase's appreciation.
* <https://nerdist.com/article/venom-the-last-dance-review/> - Provides details on the absurd and entertaining nature of 'Venom: The Last Dance' and its emotional farewell to the Symbrock relationship.
* <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2024-10-24/venom-the-last-dance-review-tom-hardy-marvel-sony> - Mentions the film's success despite initial critical reception and its appeal to online fan communities.
* <https://rendyreviews.com/movie-reviews/venom-the-last-dance-review> - Explains how the sequel 'Venom: Let There Be Carnage' acknowledged and embraced the queer subtext and fan interpretations.
* <https://vanyaland.com/2024/10/25/venom-the-last-dance-review-a-franchises-death-knull/> - Describes the fanbase's influence on the narrative direction and the filmmakers' response to this engagement.
* <https://collider.com/venom-the-last-dance-review/> - Details the marketing strategies that nod to the fanbase, such as promotional gestures that tap into the film’s cultural zeitgeist.
* <https://nerdist.com/article/venom-the-last-dance-review/> - Illustrates how 'Venom' has capitalized on its campiness and absurdity, aligning with the broader tradition of queer cinema.