

Knock at the Cabin (2022)



Wen & her gay parents are held captive by a team of 4 who believe the end of the world is happening. (c) Universal Pictures

The stakes in director M. Night Shyamalan's new film, based on the 2018 novel by Paul Tremblay, are high. In most horror films it is just the survival of the protagonists, but in this tale it is nothing less than the survival of the whole world—and it will cost the life of one of them.

The three protagonists are eight-year-old Wen (Kristen Cui) her adoptive parents, Eric (Jonathan Groff) and Andrew (Ben Aldridge), enjoying a vacation in the mountains. Wen is happily gathering grasshoppers in a big jar when the towering Leonard (Bautista) approaches her in the woods. He is so gentle, offering to help her catch more of the insects, that the girl lays aside her parents' warning not to talk with strangers. But then he is joined by three others— ex-con Redmond (Rupert Grint), restaurant cook Adriane (Abby Quinn) and nurse Sabrina (Nikki Amuka-Bird)—and the course of events take an ominous turn.

The four intruders, insisting they don't want to hurt anybody, quickly take hostage Wen and her parents. Leonard tries to convince the two men that unless they act, a world apocalypse will wreak havoc. Each of the four of them has received a

dream or vision convincing them that they are being sent on a mission to save the world, and that Eric & Andrew's family are the key to its salvation. To back this claim they turn on the TV set, and sure enough a devastating event is being reported. But is it coincidence, or—? As the men hold out each of Leonard's companions does something horrible, until...

Like most horror films, this is not for the faint-hearted, but it leaves the beaten path at several points. First, it is what the four intruders claim that Eric and Andrew must do—sacrifice one of their family for the sake of the world. Second, as the two men refuse to make such a decision what, one by one, the intruders then do is surprising. And third, the two men believe at first that it is because of their homosexuality that they have been singled out, which their captors deny.

Once again director M. Night Shyamalan shows his mettle as a master of a tale of the unexpected and suspenseful. The denouement, which does celebrate self-sacrificial love, is inspiring. The theme of the apocalyptic is always worth probing, especially the difference between the Biblical view, which teaches it is to be welcomed, and the Hollywood version in which it is to be prevented because of its negative affects on humanity.

No questions for this film.