

Film Review: 'It Comes at Night' is a Terror-Filled, Nightmarish Delight

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on June 10, 2017 - 11:45pm

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CHICAGO – Good horror films are difficult to find. Last year, we got the extremely satisfying horror film, ["The Witch."](#) [18] with breakout star Charlie the goat, AKA Black Phillip. Horror films that aren't franchised cliches are hard to come by, but "It Comes at Night" delivers. The entire atmosphere is mysterious and foreboding. We go into this film blind as if we were stumbling through a forest at night. That is where we find the terrors, and ourselves.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Trey Edward Shults creates an intimate, atmospheric experience ripe with tension and fear. There is a clever minimalism to the film that creates suspense with nothing more than natural lighting, a forest, and our imaginations. Shults creates a steady, almost eerily meditative pace that not only unsettles us but keeps us in a perpetual state of alert by making every scene feel like it is the calm before the storm. His previous film, "Krisha," followed much of the same approach as it creates an engrossing experience with little more than camera work, sound design, and character interactions. Both films opt to focus one character, often showing us the world through their perspective. In both cases, they are proven to be unreliable narrators, making us question everything they experience and witness. In "Krisha," this technique made us sympathize with her character while making us hate her addiction. In this film, it adds a layer to the psychological warfare the film wages on the viewer, making us question what is real and what is imagined, and dreading the answer the entire way.

The drama in "It Comes At Night" is as heavily influenced by the surroundings as it is by the characters. Shults channels the horror masters of old when telling this tale, and it's obvious, but also refreshing. Influences like George A. Romero's "Night of the Living Dead" are present, especially since the majority of both films take place in a house. The difference is that "Night of the Living Dead" has clear monsters (zombies), "It Comes At Night" leaves that vague. Of course, that means that the focus is placed on developing the human characters and showing them turn into the monsters they fear. Very little about what happened around the world is revealed, which may alienate the average movie watcher. If you like being spoon-fed every detail and crave closure, this film is not for you. This film is an open-ended character study that shows how people react in a post-apocalyptic situation. There is no omnipotent character so we only know as much as the characters we are following.

"It Comes at Night" opened everywhere on June 9th. Featuring Joel Edgerton, Christopher Abbott, Carmen Ejogo, Kelvin Harrison Jr., Riley Keough and Charlie the goat. Screenplay by Trey Edward Shults. Directed by Trey Edward Shults. Rated "R"



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Something lurks in the darkness in 'It Comes At Night'
Photo credit: A24

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