

Take Shelter

Director: Jeff Nichols
2011 (120')



Plagued by a series of apocalyptic visions, Curtis LaForche, a young husband and father, questions whether to shelter his family from a coming storm, or from himself.

As he tries desperately to stay sane, his obsessive actions become ever more erratic, placing his livelihood, his marriage and eventually his health in jeopardy. But the question remains are Curtis' apparitions real? Or is he beginning to follow a past family member down the road to mental illness?

"A remarkable new film. The amazing Michael Shannon's taciturn, haunted performance manages to be both heartbreaking and terrifying. Jeff Nichols has made a perfect allegory for a panicky time." The New York Times

Vocabulary and expressions:

To be able to hold your/one's own: If you can hold your own in a discussion or difficult situation, you can look after or defend yourself in a confident way.

Don't worry. She can hold her own.

To fish something out: To find something that was hidden or concealed
She fished out a board with nails on it.

To take something out on somebody: To turn anger, stress or other negative feeling on to another person, becoming angry or behaving in a negative towards that person.

I'm sorry for taking it out on you.

To stay put: To not move; to stay where you are.

You stay put!

To run an errand: To carry out a domestic job, e.g. go to the shop for some milk.

I had to run an errand.

To fuck up (vulgar): To make a mess of a situation; to ruin something, e.g.

to be responsible for risking or losing a good relationship or job.

I just don't want to see you fuck up.

To raise somebody: To take care of, house and feed somebody, i.e. a child.

My dad raised me.

To bankrupt somebody: To cause somebody (or a company) to lose all their money and, perhaps, all their property and belongings.

A lawsuit like that could bankrupt me.

To flinch: To pull back from someone because of fear or disgust, for example.

You flinched when I touched your hand this morning.

To cut somebody loose: To release somebody because you no longer want that person close to you.

You cut me loose after everything we've been through.

A thunderclap: The sudden, loud noise of thunder.

Some things to consider:

The director, Jeff Nichols, says that just before making the film he became afraid of what would happen in the future, of hard times ahead for the world and a fear he had of losing the things that he had and did not want to lose. He says that these feelings "filtered directly into the characters of this film".

The film alludes to different causes of fear and, in particular, a fear that leads to excessive and non-conformist action. These causes include the current economic situation, media reporting, family ties, and mental illness.

The New York Times review says that "Jeff Nichols has made a perfect allegory for a panicky time" and the principle actor in the film, Michael Shannon, sees the film as "a fable".

A key part in the film is when Curtis loses control in a crowd of people and screams to them, "There is a storm coming like nothing you have ever seen. And not a one of you is prepared for it".

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