

'The Strangers: Prey At Night' Is A Tautly Made Slasher Film

*Film: "The Strangers: Prey At Night"; Director: Johannes Roberts; Cast: Bailee Madison, Christina Hendricks, Martin Henderson, Lewis Pullman, Emma Bellomy; Rating: ***

Director Johannes Roberts' 'The Strangers: Prey At Night' is a slow but chilling, horror thriller, inspired from Director Bryan Bertino's 2008-released film of the same genre called - 'The Strangers'.

Flat and rudimentary in its approach, it is a battle of survival after being hunted by three psychopaths in a desolate trailer park.

The story is just an excuse to set the plot in motion. Teenager Kensey (Bailee Madison) is supposed to join a boarding school soon, so her parents Mike (Martin Henderson) and mother Cindy (Christina Hendricks) plan a weekend trip to a trailer park run by their relative, Uncle Martins. They drag their son Luke (Lewis Pullman) along to accompany his sister during the weekend trip.

There is tension in the family as Kensey resents her parent's decision of sending her to the boarding school. Nevertheless, Luke's presence offsets the tension.

The family arrives at the trailer park late in the evening and find it strangely deserted. And while they settle in their trailer, a stranger knocks on the door. Cindy opens the door and she asks, "Is Tamara home?"



And after Cindy tells her that she has knocked the wrong door, the stranger mysteriously wanders off.

Meanwhile, after some disagreement on some non-specific issue, Kensey walks out of their trailer. Luke follows to cajole her. And while they are bonding in the deserted environment, there is a knock again on the door. Thinking it is their children, Mike opens the door but instead it is the same stranger. She repeats her question. Cindy who overhears the conversation finds this bizarre. She senses something is amiss, so she cajoles Mike to accompany her to bring back their kids who are out in the park.

On the other hand, the kids stumble into an open, abandoned trailer and discover a dead body. They immediately rush back to their parents.

This sets the ball rolling for an atmospheric filled, slow but

tense horror drama, when all hell breaks loose and the family members find themselves attacked by masked strangers.

The writing is simply blasé. With no much ado about character development, the plot propels like a slasher film -- with no rational motive or any supernatural characteristics or scruples among the slayers as they goes straight into the attack of the victims. The senseless attack, though exasperating due to lack of logic, whips up a frenzy among the audience, especially during the climax.

The performances of every character are perfunctory.

On the technical front - Visually the setting and the framing of the shots with its light and shadow effects and the apt sound design, elevate the viewing experience. At the end, the film does manage to keep you at the edge of your seat as you empathise with the plight of the victims.

Witherspoon Prefers To Act In 'Relatable' Films

LONDON: Actress Reese Witherspoon wants to work on "universal and relatable" movies with women at the heart of it.

"I try to find thing that are universal and relatable. My main directive has been, have a woman at the centre of it telling another aspect of the female experience.

'Gone Girl' was like, 'Is she psychotic? I don't know.'

"But it's something that took an idea of the perfect girl and flipped it on its head. With 'Wild', I loved the idea of a woman versus nature, you see man versus nature all the time," Witherspoon told Hello! magazine. The 41-year-

old star believes it's "harder" for women to be at the centre of blockbuster movies now, but she doesn't think that was the case when she started her own career, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "I have to say, when I started it was a good time for women's movies too.

Rosamand Pike Wanted To Play Lead Role In 'Mary Poppins'

LONDON: Actress Rosamund Pike wanted to play Mary Poppins in the franchise reboot, and says she even wrote to director Rob Marshall to show her interest.

Pike, 39, felt it was worth reaching out to the filmmaker to let him know she was interested in playing the magical nanny in "Mary Poppins Returns". But the role went to Emily Blunt, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"I wrote 'Just so you know, I would really love to be Mary Poppins. It's worth putting

your hat in the ring for things sometimes," Pike told Total Film magazine.

When it comes to choosing her roles, the actress wants to work with directors who are passionate about projects.

"I really want to know the director has to make the film. It's not just a job.

"I felt that very strongly with Jose for 'Entebbe'. You want to know, Does this person have a strong take? Is it in their blood'," she said.

Reynolds, Evans Volunteer To Meet With A Dying Child



LOS ANGELES: Actors Ryan Reynolds and Chris Evans, who essay Deadpool and Captain America in the Marvels superhero Avengers universe, volunteered to meet with a dying child on a request that came via Twitter.

Fox News personality Shannon Bream sent a request out via social media in the hope of connecting the dying child with one of the actors who make up Marvel's Avengers, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Need your help Twitverse -- trying to help a young boy who is dying. He probably has just days and all he want is a greeting from one of the Avengers. If you have a celeb connection, please let me know. Otherwise, could you help out with a RT (retweet)? Thank you in advance," Bream tweeted.

Her post got a huge response as it was re-

tweeted more than 10,000 times with numerous people tagging various actors from the Marvel films in the hope one would notice.

Both Evans and Reynolds said they would be happy to connect with the young man. "I'm more of a 'Reserve Avenger'. But happy to help," Reynolds tweeted.

Both actors are known to have huge hearts, both spending time with young fans who suffered from serious medical conditions in the past. Evans will soon be seen in "Avengers: Infinity War" and Reynolds in "Deadpool 2".

"Thank you, everyone. Major progress has been made because of you. A special assist coming in from Jake Tapper (CNN Anchor). I guess Twitter can be full of love when someone really needs it," Bream wrote.

Cannes Bans Red Carpet Selfies

CANNES: Festival director Thierry Fremaux has changed protocol at the upcoming Cannes Film Festival by eliminating morning press screenings of movies before their evening premieres and banning selfies on the red carpet.

In an interview with Film française magazine, published Friday, Fremaux said he and Cannes festival president Pierre Lescure have decided to "outright forbid" selfies for the 71st edition of the festival, which runs May 8-19, reports hollywoodreporter.com.

"The untimely disorder created by the practice of selfies" interferes with the experience of the red carpet and the festival as a whole, Fremaux said, saying cellphone photographing trivialises the grandeur of Cannes and, on a practical level, slows down foot traffic on the carpet, with crowds backed up behind self-clicking celebrities.

Fremaux has been anti-selfie

from the start, calling the procedure "ridiculous and grotesque." But previous calls to stop selfies had little impact.

In another move aimed at restoring Cannes' red carpet prestige, Fremaux said competition films will no longer screen for the press and public ahead of their official world premiere gala in the evening.

Instead, for 7 p.m. premieres, the press and critics will watch competition titles at the same time as the gala audience in a neighboring theater. For 10 p.m. premieres, the press will have to wait until the following morning for a screening.

Cannes and other international festivals have complained in recent years that red carpet screenings have lost some of their allure as festival critics, who've watched the same film earlier in the day, often post reviews before the movie's official world premiere.

Aniston Moves On With Life

LOS ANGELES: Actress Jennifer Aniston is moving on with her life and is doing fine after separating from her husband Justin Theroux.

The two, who announced their separation in February, has "had some contact" after the breakup but "won't get back together", said the source.

"Justin has moved on with his life in New York", while "Jen still enjoys hers in Los Angeles," one of her friends said.

Earlier this month, the actress headed out for writer-producer Molly McNearney's 40th birthday party, where she posed with her friends - including the birthday girl, actor Tobey Maguire's estranged wife Jen Meyer, actor-filmmaker Jason Bateman's wife



Amanda Aanka and her manager Aleen Keshishian - in a photo booth.

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