

Six Horror Movies With Shocking Final Scenes

Within the eviscerating and spine-chilling landscape of the horror movie, where tension and apprehension unfold in every frame, a certain subset of the genre sticks in the craw like rusty nails in a killer clown's cudgel. This breed of cinematic deviant loiters in our memory long after the screen has faded to black and the final credits have rolled, using the unconventional final scene to subvert expectations and all hope of a good night's sleep.

Here are six examples of the sub-genre, each with an unhappy ending you may not see coming and you certainly won't recover from in a hurry. We've omitted any spoilers so you can check them out for yourself.

The Mist

When Stephen King was asked if he was angry that the movie adaptation of his infamous chiller, *The Mist*, had a different ending to his own story, he famously replied yes, but only because he didn't think to write it that way himself. If you can rattle a giant of the genre like King, you know that final scene has merit.

The Mist is a 2007 production based on King's 1980 novella of the same name and stars an ensemble cast, including Thomas Jane as David Drayton and Nathan Gamble as his son Billy. A monster flick on the face of it, the central theme nonetheless focuses on how ordinary people in an ordinary setting react when extraordinary events unfold around them. Marcia Gay Harden plays Mrs Carmody, a bible-thumping fanatic eager to exploit and prey on the fears of her fellow victims, while Drayton represents the voice and face of rational reason. As the two gather followers to their respective causes, tensions build and nerves begin to fray.

Microcosms of the American left/right paradigm aside, the final scene is the true reason *The Mist* shocked hardened horror fans and wowed reviewers. We can hardly think of a more worthy contender for top spot on this list.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer

A Greek myth, hideously modernized for modern cinema, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is a 2017 psychological thriller film directed and co-produced by Yorgos Lanthimos. The story revolves around Steven Murphy (Colin Farrell), a cardiac surgeon whose failure to preserve the life of a young boy's father causes the boy in question – Martin Lang, played by Barry Keoghan – to curse both Murphy and his family. A dreadful decision must be made by Murphy if his family is to be saved from a mysterious illness which threatens to claim their lives one by one. Either he allows them to all to die or he breaks the curse by taking one of their lives himself.

A twisted play on the quandary of being stuck between Scylla and Charybdis, or a rock and a hard place for those of us less familiar with Greek mythology, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is a ponderously disturbing film which may not boast the most surprising final scene in this list but certainly has one of the most shocking.

The Gift

The Gift is a 2015 psychological thriller written, co-produced, and directed by Joel Edgerton in his feature directorial debut. The film stars Jason Bateman and Rebecca Hall as Simon and Robyn Callem, alongside Joel Edgerton as Gordo, a character from Simon's past who seems to have a sinister agenda.

The unsettling Gordo repeatedly drops in unannounced on the couple, bringing unwanted gifts and slowly ingratiating himself in ways likely to leave anyone with overbearing neighbours cringing in their seat. While we feel Simon's increasing unease, we also empathize with his dismay as Robyn, warming to the newcomer and frustratingly dismissive of Simon's distrust, allows the Machiavelian Gordo to creep ever deeper into their lives.

The final chapter reveals a disturbing history between Simon and Gordo. More than one plot-twist ensues as Gordo ramps up the harassment and exposes the full extent of his cruelty while keeping his true face hidden from an oblivious Robyn. The final scene is less shocking or unexpected than it is a bitter pill to swallow, a harsh take on the notion that 'good guys come last'.

The Thing

John Carpenter's seminal 1982 screenplay, *The Thing*, tells the story of a group of American researchers in Antarctica who encounter an extraterrestrial life-form capable of assimilating, then imitating, other organisms. Kurt Russell plays a subdued leading role as the phlegmatic R J MacReady amidst a talented cast while the story revolves around the alien lurking unseen in their midst and sowing relentless seeds of paranoia.

The final, highly speculative and somewhat anti-climactic scene remains a point of contention to this day, regularly spawning fresh disputes and lengthy discussions online. The 2011 prequel (also called *The Thing*) did little to bring any conclusion to the matter, so we can expect the argument to continue unresolved for the foreseeable future.

Sinister

Sinister is a 2012 supernatural horror film directed by Scott Derrickson which follows the story of struggling true-crime writer, Ellison Oswalt- played by Ethan Hawke – as he moves into a new home with his wife and children. Little do Oswalt's family know that the home was the scene of a gruesome murder about which Oswalt plans to write a career-saving novel. After finding a box in the attic which contains super-8 films depicting snuff reels of the grisly murders, Oswalt begins to piece together evidence for his book, but at the same time he and his family start experiencing terrifying apparitions and ghostly goings-on within the house.

Sinister introduces many mainstay tropes of the horror genre, including creepy children, found-footage and sinister cults, but it also subverts expectations with its horrifying ending and a shockingly bloodthirsty twist.

Midnight Meat Train

A 2008 horror film based on Clive Barker's 1984 short story of the same name, *Midnight Meat Train* features an eclectic cast including a youthful Bradley Cooper as American photographer Leon Kaufman and Vinnie Jones as mute British butcher, Mahogany. The story unfolds in the moodily lit streets of London where Kaufman, keen to capture gritty shots of the city at night, ventures into the subway system and encounters the murderous Mahogany. As he investigates a series of murders, suspecting Mahogany may be behind them, Kaufman descends into an obsession which ultimately reveals a terrible secret hidden under the streets of the city.

Lauded for its subverting storyline, but also overlooked by many fans of the genre as mere torture porn, *Midnight Meat Train* delivers an ending few will see coming. The gore can be graphic, but the narrative is classic Barker and stands the test of time.