

Cobweb (2023 American film)

Cobweb is a 2023 American horror film directed by Samuel Bodin in his directorial debut. Its screenplay, written by Chris Thomas Devlin, was included in the 2018 the Black List, and follows a young boy, raised by overprotective parents, who suddenly hears noises coming from behind his bedroom wall.^{[4][5][6]} The film stars Lizzy Caplan, Woody Norman, Cleopatra Coleman, and Antony Starr.^[7]

Cobweb had a limited theatrical release in the United States by Lionsgate Films on July 21, 2023. It received mixed reviews from critics.

Plot

Peter is a shy, bullied eight-year-old boy living with his overbearing yet emotionally distant parents, Carol and Mark. He earns sympathy from his substitute teacher Miss Devine. Peter wishes to go trick-or-treating on Halloween night, but his parents forbid him due to the disappearance of a young girl several years ago.

Later that night, Peter is woken by the sound of tapping from the inside of a wall in his bedroom. His parents deny these occurrences, insisting that he is imagining them. Over the next few days, Peter talks with a voice coming from the wall. The voice claims that she was trapped in the walls by Peter's parents and calls them "evil". Miss Devine becomes concerned after seeing a picture Peter drew of himself scared in bed with the words "Help me", and Carol admonishes Peter for bringing his delusions to his teacher. As he is harvesting his pumpkins he dug up what appears to be the skeleton remains of a child. At school, Brian, a bully, destroys Peter's prize pumpkin. Spurred by the voice's advice, Peter pushes Brian down the stairs, breaking his leg. After learning he has been expelled, Peter's parents lock him in the basement, where he discovers a pit covered with a grate.

Miss Devine checks up on Peter, but is intimidated and chased away by Mark, who has a gash on his arm. Later, after Peter is released from the basement, the voice explains that she is Peter's older sister Sarah, whom their parents locked away after deciding they did not want her anymore. Carol and Mark had chosen

Cobweb



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Samuel Bodin
Written by	<u>Chris Thomas Devlin</u>
Produced by	<u>Roy Lee</u> <div>Andrew Childs</div> <u>Evan Goldberg</u> <div>Seth Rogen</div> James Weaver <div>Josh Fagen</div>
Starring	<u>Lizzy Caplan</u> <div><u>Woody Norman</u></div> <u>Cleopatra Coleman</u> <div><u>Antony Starr</u></div>
Cinematography	Philip Lozano
Edited by	Richard Riffaud <div>Kevin Greutert</div>
Music by	<u>Drum & Lace</u>
Production companies	<u>Lionsgate</u>

Halloween as the day to imprison her and the girl who went missing years ago had been a trick-or-treater they murdered after she attempted to answer Sarah's call for help.

She convinces Peter that their parents are planning to kill her and will imprison him in the walls next. His only chance to avoid sharing her fate is to kill them, which he does by slipping rat poison into their dinner and cutting the phone line so they can't call an ambulance. Both parents try to stop him, but are unsuccessful, with Mark succumbing to the poison and Carol accidentally stabbing herself with a kitchen knife after Peter kicks her down the stairs. Right before Carol dies, she warns her son "Don't let her out".

Peter unlocks a hidden door behind the grandfather clock in their parents' bedroom. Sarah finally crawls out, revealing herself to be a grotesque, disfigured being. After capturing her brother, Sarah explains that she was born severely deformed, causing her to look like a monster. Terrified by her appearance, their parents locked her away and she was forced to live a wretched, feral existence in the dark. She reveals that she has been manipulating Peter into taking revenge on their parents for locking her away and she was the one who really murdered the girl on Halloween.

Ever since he was born, Sarah has resented Peter for being able to live the relatively normal life she had been denied and wants him dead. Before she can kill him, however, Brian and his cousins show up, planning to take revenge on Peter. But after invading the house, they are all killed by Sarah. Miss Devine arrives and attempts to help Peter escape, but Sarah attacks her and recaptures Peter. As Sarah prepares to finish the duo, Peter manages to subdue Sarah by grabbing her long hair, and they once again imprison the girl in her pit. She vows that she will eventually escape, and will always haunt him.

Cast

- Lizzy Caplan as Carol^[8]
- Antony Starr as Mark^[9]
- Cleopatra Coleman as Miss Devine^[10]
- Woody Norman as Peter^[9]
- Luke Busey as Brian
- Aleksandra Dragova as The Girl (Sarah)
- Debra Wilson as the voice of "monster Sarah"

Production

In May 2020, it was reported that Samuel Bodin would direct *Cobweb* for Lionsgate Films,^[11] and that Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg, James Weaver, Roy Lee, and Jon Berg would produce it.^[12]

	<u>Films</u> ^[1]
	Media Capital Technologies ^[1]
	<u>Point Grey Pictures</u> ^[1]
	<u>Vertigo Entertainment</u> ^[1]
Distributed by	Lionsgate Films
Release date	July 21, 2023
Running time	88 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$8.1 million ^[3]

In September 2020, it was announced that Lizzy Caplan, Antony Starr, Cleopatra Coleman, and Woody Norman would star in the film,^{[13][14][15][16]} with principal photography set to commence in Bulgaria.^{[17][18][19]} Filming occurred in Nu Boyana Film Studios in November 2020.^[20]

Release

Cobweb had a limited theatrical release by Lionsgate in the United States on July 21, 2023.^{[21][22]}

The film was released on digital formats on August 11. It was later released on Blu-ray and DVD on September 12.^[23]

Reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 59% of 94 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.9/10. The website's consensus reads: "This itsy bitsy horror film creeps and crawls."^[24] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 50 out of 100, based on 14 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[25]

Valerie Complex of *Deadline Hollywood* wrote, "the movie's strengths lie in the established atmosphere of intrigue and suspense. However, it can't sustain that as it grapples with missed opportunities and a lackluster conclusion that fails to bring closure to its narrative."^[26] *Variety*'s Dennis Harvey criticized the script and characters, but added, "Still, director Samuel Bodin's first theatrical feature is atmospheric, and departs from stock slasher conventions just enough to make for an entertaining if unexceptional scarefest."^[27] Bob Strauss of the *San Francisco Chronicle* gave the film three out of four stars, writing, "Although derivative, Chris Thomas Devlin's script has enough sick, witty ideas to make the fearsome goings-on seem fresh and immediate."^[28]

The Hollywood Reporter's David Rooney wrote, "The influence of Linda Blair's famous spider walk from *The Exorcist* can be seen in some of the movement, and the title is a tip-off to the creepy-crawly creatures the house's clandestine resident has been studying to hone its lethality. But is it human or supernatural, mortal or monster? *Cobweb* keeps the answers to those questions too vague to be satisfying."^[29] Monica Castillo of RogerEbert.com gave the film one out of four stars, writing, "While the strange and unusual world of Samuel Bodin's *Cobweb* has ample enough unsettling energy thanks to Philip Lozano's ominous cinematography, it fails to reach its scary ambitions."^[30]

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.lionsgate.com/movies/cobweb>)
- *Cobweb* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9100018/>) at IMDb

