

## The Gift – Review

It's a **tricky** thing, reviewing a film like *The Gift*. By its very design, it's the kind of movie that works best if you know very **little** about it **before** watching; first-time director Joel Edgerton (who also **writes**, produces and stars) has come up with a real edge-of-your-seat, tension-filled thriller here. It's not the kind of **story** that you think it might be during its opening **half**, but as it makes its way through **myriad** twists and turns it stays **remarkably consistent** with the characters and what we learn of their motivations.



Jason Bateman and Rebecca Hall play Simon and Robyn Callum, an outwardly-happy, **successful** couple who have just moved into a beautiful home in the Hollywood Hills, **below** which the city of Los



Angeles shimmers like a - **slightly** alien, slightly **menacing** - **dreamscape**. A chance **encounter** with Gordo (Edgerton), who went to high school with Simon, leads to the odd figure offering the couple a series of **extravagant** welcome gifts, and then... Well, to say any more would **spoil** the **surprise**, but Bateman, Hall - and perhaps Edgerton most of all - are fantastic throughout.

*The Gift* is a remarkably assured debut picture. Influenced by films as **stylistically** diverse as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), Curtis Hanson's *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992), Park Chan-wook's *Oldboy* (2003) and Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005), it's a **subtle**, psychological slow burn, and one that fans of any of the aforementioned would be well-advised to investigate.