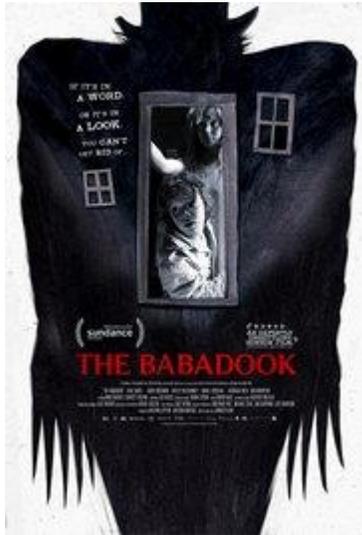


## Spotlight on Film



There's a now famous interpretation of Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening" which declares the poem to be about Santa Claus. What makes this fun is how well the clues seem to fit (the shaking harness bells, the miles to go before he sleeps) even though it's doubtful this was Frost's original intent.

A similar tactic has been employed in interpreting the 2014 horror film, *The Babadook*. At the time of its release, critics applauded this moody story as a brilliant analogy for depression. The titular monster terrorizing a mother and her son could be the crippling effects of loss and parental doubt. It's acted beautifully and the film is as much psychological

thriller as it is a creepy fright-fest.

So how, 3 years later, has the Babadook suddenly become a mascot for Gay Pride? The exact origins are in debate. Some point to a possibly doctored photo showing that Netflix had mistakenly labeled it as LGBT film. Others suggest that it all began as a tongue-in-cheek joke when a Tumblr user asked, "Whenever someone says the Babadook isn't openly gay it's like?? Did you even watch the movie???" Whichever happened first, more than a few memes were spawned and before long went the idea of the Babadook as a queer icon had gone viral amongst a large segment of the LGBTQ community.

But what makes this truly special is the after-the-fact interpretation. Some, such as *Rolling Stone's* E. Young, pointed to Babadook's appearance, "a pale, androgynous humanoid with a flamboyant top hat, black cloak, maniacal smile and splayed jazz hands." Others point to the way the mother tries in vain to suppress the Babadook as being similar to the suppression many queer youth feel in their own families. In any case, I love the way the Babadook has been embraced and I am hopeful we will see some Babadook cosplay in the Pride festivities happening in Yellowknife this weekend. The Yellowknife Public Library will be there!

John Mutford, Library Manager

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