

## The Last Airbender

Written by Alaina Lewis

---



Like clockwork, every two years during the summer Indian born writer/director M. Night Shyamalan comes to the cinematic table with a film of intrigue and suspense that proposes to raise eyebrows and ignite questions from its audience.

But since the late summer release of his 1999 chilling mega hit “The Six Sense,” he’s often failed to pull in Hollywood’s beloved box office numbers. These numbers don’t necessarily speak to one’s ingenuity, but they mark the difference between being known for the ability to draw viewers to the box office, versus suffering from the seething point of view of Hollywood’s finest film critics who can make or break the success of a film in one short review.

Yes, a Shyamalan feature hasn’t always been the upside of a conversation, rather a maze of wonderment surrounding the idea that maybe his films “*The Six Sense*” and “*Unbreakable*” were as good as it gets.

Well, that was until July 1st...

Shyamalan’s newest feature, “*The Last Airbender*,” Nickelodeon’s live action adaptation of their popular cartoon entitled “*Avatar*,” has more than impressed audiences with its high flying action, impressive stunt artistry and icy landscapes. To date, the film has grossed more than \$111 million.

The film tells the tale of a young boy named Aang, who with command over the four elements of the world --fire, water, earth, air – and is said to be the chosen Avatar; the sole person tasked with keeping order and maintaining peace among the Four Nations. Yes, this is a tall order for a 12-year-old whose life is put in danger by the Fire Nation who want to kill him so they can take over the Four Nations and enslave the world.

## The Last Airbender

Written by Alaina Lewis

---

Out of the gate, the film had the veil of controversy on its shoulders due to some of Shyamalan's Caucasian casting choices –there were questions as to why he didn't cast the characters as they appear in the popular cartoon which is set in Asia. But, as Shymalan stated in an interview, this feature far surpasses race. Maybe with the film's popularity growing each day due to a properly executed storyline, the world is ready to trade colorlines for 3D glasses and two hours of pure fun and entertainment.

Recently, two of *The Last Airbender's* cast members, the lovely Nicola Peltz (who plays Katara, a Waterbender of the Southern Water Tribe) and the incredible Jackson Rathbone (who plays her warrior brother Sokka) gave *Insight News* a few minutes of their time to give us a taste of what we can expect in this summer feature.

"We wanted to make it more realistic. We wanted to have the drama really hit and have those moments of levity lifted up," said Rathbone of the difference between the slapstick nature of the cartoon in comparison with the live action film.

During the same week, Rathbone saw profound success from another incomparable feature with the opening of *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*; a franchise that he's been with since the beginning, portraying the role of Jasper Cullen. The new installment has seen a gross of 458 million dollars worldwide since it hit theaters on June 30.

But with *Last Airbender* opening alongside another one of the most anticipated films of the summer, it's still gaining incredible momentum as the cast and crew go around the world premiering the feature to new and excited audiences everywhere.

"Everyone used a lot of greenscreen, because it allowed you to use your imagination, and I think that's really important," Peltz says of the CGI work in the film, "I'd never worked with greenscreen before, so it was an experience, but it was fun. But we really did go to Greenland, so in the trailer when you see all those icebergs, that's real."

The movie also stars taekwondo champion Noah Ringer as Aang, and Dev Patel (*Slumdog Millionaire*) as Prince Zuko. The entire cast is looking forward to the possibility of bringing the rest of the four-part series to theaters in the future.

*The Last Airbender* is a mark of good times in the world of cinema. With a pleasing plot, and a visually stunning canvas, it is well worth the time and money.