

## Movie Review: Clash of the Titans

Written by {ga=mitch}

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3D has become all of the rage nowadays, something else to curse James Cameron for. Not that I have any problem with how Cameron used 3D technology in "Avatar", as it was essential in bringing the never seen before world of Pandora to life. No, the cursing comes due to inferior movies trying to use 3D just to jack up their revenue. Exhibit #1 in that category would be "Clash of the Titans".

The movie was not even supposed to be a 3D feature. However, after the success of "Avatar" and "Alice in Wonderland", the studio was blinded by the dollar signs in their future, so they took several weeks to convert the film over to 3D. The results being that a film that is only marginally entertaining to begin with also now has the added notoriety of being the worst use of 3D I have ever seen. The 3D effects add nothing at all to the film, and in fact the movie is worse off for it. Many times during the movie, I slid the glasses off, and enjoyed it more as I could see better contrast and brightness on the screen, with very little blur. I had been tempted earlier in simply attending the regular 2D version...and I should have listened to myself and done just that.

For the movie itself, it has to be one of the bigger disappointments that we'll see this year. In remaking the campy classic from 1981, hack director Louis Leterrier has taken all of the bad parts of the original, while losing the humor, charm, and imagination that made the Harry Hamlin

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film such a wonderful guilty pleasure. Instead, we have a dull, humorless sand and sandals tale that is completely generic and predictable, saddled with so much baggage from bad dialog and stilted directing that even the famed horse Pegasus could not lift it off the ground.

Plot-wise, Leterrier and three different screenwriters haven't varied that much from the original Beverly Cross script. Hero Perseus finds out that he is the son of Zeus, and must go about saving the Greek city Argos from the wrath of the gods after the vain king and queen make, as my father used to say, "a debt with their mouths that their asses have to pay for". But in this case, it's the asses of all the citizens of Argos, not just the sacrifice of the beautiful Princess Andromeda. The tasks Perseus must undertake aren't any different from the first film, and include him meeting up with such characters/creatures as Calibos, giant scorpions, the Stygian Witches, Medussa, and Pegasus, the winged horse. In one change that I found odd, Leterrier chose to make Pegasus a black stallion, as opposed to the all-white horse that he's always previously been shown as, including the original. Another problem with Pegasus is that unlike the first film, there is no chemistry and love between man and horse...the beast is just around to provide transportation.

As mentioned, the plot is an almost point-by-point match of the 1981 film, with the exception of painting Hades as the villain, as opposed to Maggie Smith being the antagonist as Thetis, the goddess dissed by Cassiopeia (played by an almost unrecognizable Polly Walker). Other than that, it's identical...which is a major bone of contention for anyone who studied the old Greek and Roman myths, as both stories have totally butchered the actual tales of Perseus. I won't go into too much detail, but let's just say that it was Hollywood that brought in Pegasus, Calibos, and the Kraken. None of them are found in the original myths.

Perseus is played by Sam Worthington, who showed much more emotion as a cyborg in "Terminator: Salvation". Perseus is not just a reluctant hero, he's a dour, petulant one, the type of "leader" that seems to inspire his men to mock him more than respect him as he grows from fisherman to superhero. That is not to say that Worthington does a bad job of acting in this film; it's just that he isn't given an opportunity to be anything other than an action figure. I know Worthington CAN act after watching him in "Avatar"; he just doesn't get enough material to show anything other than "swordfighter rage".

However, the bad acting awards are reserved for the gods in this film. Liam Neeson is one of my favorite actors, and it simply pained me to see him in this film. As bad as it was for Sir Laurence Olivier to play Zeus in the original, he at least was able to add a bit of dignity to the role; something Neeson is unable to accomplish. But at least Liam fares better than his "Schindler's List" co-star Ralph Fiennes, who was just awful as Hades. Speaking in a strained

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whisper throughout that was a mix of Voldemort and Bella Lugosi, Fiennes' villain was simply horrible to watch, and a complete waste of talent.

In fact, the only actors who can come out of this film with their heads held high are Gemma Arterton, who played a very Lara Croft like lo, as a sort of protector/advisor to Perseus, and Mads Mikkelsen as Draco, the grizzled war veteran assisting Perseus on his journeys. Pete Postlewaite also shines for a brief few moments at the start of the film as Perseus' adoptive father.

As much as Hades is supposed to be the villain, the one the audience should be booing is director Leterrier. The man has already shown that he can mess up both a sequel ("Transporter 2") and a remake (the Edward Norton version of "The Incredible Hulk"). He can't rise up to the occasion in this film either. Even the special effects were below average. While their interpretation of Medusa was very good, as was the Kraken, most of the effects weren't any better than what you'd see on the ScyFy channel. In fact, I'd almost go as far as saying that I liked the effects from the first movie even more. Leterrier tries to go too far with "mood" when it comes to his battle and chase scenes, and they end up being too jerky, without much true suspense or interest. It is all action and no real sense of adventure.

All in all, it's a movie that might still have enough decent moments to make it worth renting when it gets out to DVD, and I'm sure there will be many people who read my columns that will like it more than I did. But for now, if you want to watch a decent movie that has Zeus, Hades, Medusa, and other Greek gods, heroes, and demigods, catch "Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief" before it leaves the theater. The sense of fun "Clash of the Titans" clearly lacks is found in abundance there.

**My rating: Tim Couch (1 ½ Footballs). Poor.**

### Review Key:

Otto Graham: Over 4 Footballs. HOF quality movie

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Bernie Kosar: 4 Footballs. Excellent

Brian Sipe: 3 ½ Footballs. Very Good

Frank Ryan: 3 Footballs. Good

Bill Nelsen: 2 ½ Footballs. OK. Worth renting.

Kelly Holcomb: 2 Footballs. Meh. Disappointingly inconsistent but some bright spots.

Tim Couch: 1 ½ Footballs. Poor. Had potential, but lack of support led to an overall stinker.

Derek Anderson: 1 Football. Piss-poor. Frustrating to the level of throwing objects.

Mike Phipps: ½ Football. "We gave away Paul Warfield for THIS?" level of suck beyond redemption.

Sperguson Wynn: No Footballs. UberSuckitude personified.