

Film Review: Adam Sandler's 'The Cobbler' a Historical, Stupefying Disaster

Submitted by [NickHC](#) [1] on March 13, 2015 - 9:40pm

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CHICAGO – The newest Adam Sandler film that doesn't feature him dressed like a chubby middle schooler is really bad, but in a special way. Similarly, it is an instant classic in the legacy of bizarre disasters, a footnote in writer/director history that must be witnessed to be fully understood. Part of its perplexity is how the film is always in grasp as it shows itself, and how you can reach out and try to bring it back home, but then it explodes. This is one of those films where its flaws are more believable as a conspiracy than a misjudgment. Someone, please, let the police know that writer/director Tom McCarthy is missing, and someone has his shoes.



Rating: **1.0/5.0**

The key to entering "The Cobbler" is indeed not lead star Adam Sandler but co-writer/director McCarthy. If you've seen his films like "The Station Agent," "The Visitor," "Win Win," or even "Up" (which he contributed to), one knows McCarthy to be an emotionally intelligent storyteller. His tales of surrogates and new families are original screenplays with a warm, assured touch. His third acts in particular, the homestretch that separates the interesting writers from those who are serviceable, confirm his ability for a fine polish.

With all of this said, what McCarthy's storytelling doesn't need is whimsy, as is the case with his latest film and hopefully his worst ever, "The Cobbler." Its prologue begins with someone advising that to truly know a man, you must walk in his shoes. (The man who says this is indeed a cobbler.) This is such a literal and obvious thesis statement that McCarthy's film owns awareness to its storybook context. And even a hundred years later, when Sandler's title character Max (grandson of the wise man) literally turns into another person by putting on their shoes (while still wearing his own clothes, and still thinking like Max), McCarthy's magic is still within bounds.

As humdrum Max discovers this new lease on other lives, a score of clarinets and strings (by John Debney and Nick Urata) provides a nice gloss, and suddenly the tale does have a little spark. Cinematography by Mott Hupfel maintains its storybook expressiveness, like when Max is shown crouched over his magical shoe repair machine, desperately churning away with a single bulb over his head, a desperate dream carved out of darkness.

Unhappy with his life and thrilled at what he can do with an assortment of different identities, he uses the shoes selfishly. While "The Cobbler" errs towards being heir to Paul Verhoeven's "Hollow Man" in the beginning, and uses actor Method Man for ancient stereotypes, through its oppressive ridiculousness there remains a bit of hope. As the score sweetens this albeit very creepy, very racist little trinket, there's a nice scene where Max wears his long-gone father's shoes, to surprise his mother. It's still hokey, kind of weird, but confidence within McCarthy is still there.

"The Cobbler" is now available on VOD. Featuring Adam Sandler, Method Man, Ellen Barkin, Steve Buscemi, Dan Stevens, and Dustin Hoffman. Screenplay by Tom McCarthy and Paul Sado. Directed by McCarthy. Rated "PG-13"



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The Cobbler

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