

Film Review: ‘Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them’ Relies on Second-Hand Wonder

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 17, 2016 - 7:37pm

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CHICAGO – It’s been five years since the last Harry Potter film, and for fans eager to scratch that itch for a dreamworld of magic again “Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them” will probably suffice. It’s this story’s tangential connection to the Harry Potter universe that is its biggest asset – but the film unfortunately can’t muster up much wonder on its own.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Essentially “Fantastic Beasts” is one long scene setter, introducing audiences to the world of wizards across the pond. Hogwarts graduate Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) stumbles off an ocean liner in 1920’s New York City with a briefcase full of mischievous beasties. We’re introduced to a world where Wizards are completely underground in a country full of “No-Mags” (the American version of a Muggle). There’s a puritanical organization run by Samantha Morton...which aims to exterminate magic in all its forms, there is Percival Graves (Colin Farrell)...the head of the wizard council’s secret police, and there is yet another black cloud of doom that threatens to set the Wizard world at war.

Redmayne plays his character as more of a researcher than wizard. He’s exactly the kind of creature you’d expect to be called Newt – who is generally ill at ease with others – and is more at home among the specimens he studies and collects. He’s working on a field guide for Wizards about the fantastical creatures to give his them a greater understanding of the world around them. But when a few of the beasties escape at a bank, because of a mixup involving identical suitcases and an aspiring baker (Dan Fogler), Redmayne must travel all over town trying to get them back again. He teams up with a low level Wizard Investigator (Katherine Waterston), who’s been busted down to wand registration duty, but dreams of getting back to the big time.

“Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” opens everywhere on November 18th. Featuring Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston, Alison Sudol, Dan Fogler, Colin Farrell, Zoe Kravitz, Ron Perlman, Samantha Morton and Jon Voight. Screenplay adapted by J.K. Rowling, from her novel. Directed by David Yates. Rated “PG-13”



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Eddie Redmayne in ‘Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them’
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

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