

## Danny McBride, James Franco Falter With Dreadful ‘Your Highness’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 8, 2011 - 2:10pm

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Your Highness” just makes me sad. Rarely have so many talented people been sucked into such an unfunny disaster as what will surely be one of the biggest disappointments of the year. Director David Gordon Green has not only not made a bad movie before now, he had only made great ones, including the spectacular “All the Real Girls,” “Snow Angels,” and “Pineapple Express.” To say this is Green’s worst movie is a massive understatement. With that context, it’s more of a tragedy than a comedy.

Danny McBride has proved his spectacular comic timing in work like “Pineapple,” “Tropic Thunder,” and “Eastbound & Down.” James Franco is one of the best actors of his generation and should have been Oscar-nominated for “Pineapple.” Natalie Portman, Zooey Deschanel, Justin Theroux — all incredibly talented. And don’t get me started again on the greatness of David Gordon Green. Imagine an All-Star team who gets completely shut out by the competition as they commit error after error after error. You can literally see “Your Highness” go wrong again and again and again. You can see the jokes hit the floor with a thud. And you’ll cringe in embarrassment more than you’ll laugh. After most David Gordon Green movies I couldn’t wait to see them again. Unless I’m being tortured, I’ll never see “Your Highness” again.



Your Highness

Photo credit: Universal



Prince Thadeous (McBride) is the black sheep of the royal family. He’s always overshadowed by his handsome, chivalrous brother Fabious (Franco) and spends his time getting stoned with his man Courtney (Rasmus Hardiker) and chasing sheep. When Fabious returns from yet another successful battle with the head of a Cyclops and a lovely virginal fiancé (Deschanel), Thadeous just sulks as his brother prepares to marry. During the wedding, the evil wizard Leezar (Theroux) wreaks havoc and steals the new lady love for an upcoming ceremony involving moon alignment and a dragon. Fabious, Thadeous, and Courtney head off to save the damsel in distress and run across a gorgeous warrior (Portman) to serve as love interest for our portly hero.

Mel Brooks used to make parodies like this more commonly in the '70s and '80s before the day when all satires had to be filled with pop culture references. Not every comedy needs to be self-referential and it’s to the credit of McBride & Ben Best’s script for “Your Highness” that they don’t specifically parody films like “Lord of the Rings,” playing with fantasy concepts more than specific works. Imagine your stoned best friend in college going on a fantasy book-reading bender and then being told he had to write a movie — he might come up with something like “Your Highness.”

To say “Your Highness” falls into lowest common denominator humor would be an understatement. This is the kind of material that works great if you’re lit up but not so much if you’re stone cold sober. Watching Franco and McBride give a puppet wizard a handjob or an extended bit with a minotaur’s severed penis is the kind of material that the makers of “Your Highness” clearly thinks is much funnier than it actually ended up.



Your Highness

*Photo credit: Universal*

That’s the biggest problem with “Your Highness.” One can sense that McBride, Green, and the rest of the crew think this is absolutely hilarious. Can you believe it? A minotaur penis?!?! There’s a desperation to the comedy that has never even been hinted at before in Green or McBride’s work. And, worst of all, it’s just not funny. I’ve laughed more at ten minutes of “Eastbound & Down” than the entirety of “Your Highness.” Low-level humor can still be funny, but the writing here is just abysmal. It’s on a quality level that I never thought McBride or Green would sink to.

And neither have failed this miserably with their timing before either. Bits go on way too long and the few jokes or sight gags that do work are brushed past quickly. The film never finds a rhythm, lurching uncomfortably from one gross-out joke to another, and there’s certainly no relief in the action scenes, which are simply horrendous. You know that common complaint that the last act of “Pineapple Express” doesn’t really work because Green can’t handle the action as well as the comedy? I never agreed with that criticism but the action here is horribly conceived, staged, and executed. And there’s a lot of it. When Fabious & Thadeous have to pull out their swords, you’ll roll your eyes at the loud, nonsensical, poorly-done action that’s about to follow.

“Your Highness” is the kind of film that everyone involved should just forget ever happened. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and move on to the next project. Franco & Portman are bullet-proof here, especially after reaching career peaks in 2010, but I worry about McBride & Green. If you’re a producer considering funding their next project, please consider this the anomaly. It’s the bad game that they just had to get out of their system. It would be best if we all just forget it ever happened.

*“Your Highness” stars Danny McBride, James Franco, Natalie Portman, Rasmus Hardiker, Justin Theroux, Toby Jones, Damian Lewis, and Zooey Deschanel. It was written by McBride & Ben Best and directed by David Gordon Green. It is rated R and runs 102 minutes. It opens on April 8th, 2011.*



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