

Ryan Reynolds in 'Green Lantern' is Spectacle Over Story

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The tipping point is close approaching in the super hero movie aura, especially as the B-list get their moment in the projection machine. "Green Lantern," featuring Ryan Reynolds, stays true to its comic book roots, but lacks any cohesive passion within the main story.

Essentially, there is too much going on in Green Lantern, so every element of the narrative, except the origin of the hero, gets short shrift and leaves viewers confused and unfulfilled. Since this is the introductory Green Lantern film, the origin must get told, the first "assignment" must be given and of course a little romance must distract the latest model hero from his noble duties.

Hal Jordan (Ryan Reynolds) is a hotshot test pilot who is constantly bending the rules, including leading a couple of robot airplane drones into a tailspin. His unconventionally is due to the loss of his father, a test pilot who died in a prototype in the early 1990s. Among Hal's colleagues is Carol Ferris ([Blake Lively](#)) who is equal to Hal as a pilot, but they can't seem to connect in any other sense.



In Brightest Day...: Hal Jordan (Ryan Reynolds) is 'Green Lantern'
Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

At the same time, out in the wilds of the universe, a dire situation is developing regarding a new organism named Parallax. The being absorbs the energy of fear, creating a massive strength that can literally withstand space and time. In one incident Parallax takes on several members

of the Green Lantern Corp, chosen warriors whose job is to protect all sectors of the universe. When one of that Corp, Abin Sur (Temeura Morrison), escapes during the fight, he falls into earth's atmosphere mortally wounded. His job before expiring is to find a replacement, and that just happens to be Hal Jordan.

Jordan is the first human to take up the Green Lantern duties, and once he figures out the ring he's received from the dead alien and the oath he recites to the lantern itself, he emerges with the Green Lantern Corp uniform and whisked away to the Planet Oa to learn the secrets of the Guardians (the ancient universe protectors who oversee the Corp). He also meets Sinestro (Mark Strong), who is trying to convince his fellow ring men and the Guardians that Parallax is a major threat. Hal's subsequent training consists of willing the powerful ring to do anything, conjuring up solutions to fight the evil.

Back on earth, a scientist named Hector Hammond (Peter Saarsgard) is examining the body of Abin Sur. He accidentally comes in contact with the "yellow matter" of fear in the wound that killed the alien, and this starts to alter his perspective. Hal Jordan, in his first days as Green Lantern, must now face down the challenges of Parallax, Hector Hammond and Carol Ferris. Ferris may be in love with him again, meaning the crises of the universe may just have to wait.

So far in this film there is the origin of Green Lantern, his training period, Parallax, the introduction of Planet Oa, Sinestro and the Green Lantern corp. On earth, there is the test piloting, the Senator (Tim Robbins), the Senator's about-to-turn-evil son Hector and the guiding attraction force of Carol Ferris. All this in 105 minutes, creating an eventual breakneck pacing. There is too much to do and too little time allotted for making it work.

That is not to say Green Lantern doesn't have its moments. Admirers of the original comic books should be pleased with Reynolds as Lantern, given his cocksure attitude and willingness to try anything. The moments up to Jordan finding the corp alien and taking the ring were nicely done. The uniform is straight from the comics, no alteration necessary, and Carol Ferris gets a nice moment by immediately recognizing Hal Jordan as Green Lantern, breaking the Lois Lane mode of not knowing the secret identity.

It is immediately after all this that the complex story begins to break down. Hector Hammond changes shape as the yellow matter alters his DNA. This is an absurd freak show, as Hector changes into a form that looks like the deformities depicted in the 1985 movie "Mask." I expected Cher to be his absent mother. It's never satisfactorily clear why Hector must be the evil scapegoat, he just is.

There is a bit of a rush, again for Green Lantern fans, to see the accurate rendering of Mark Strong's Sinestro character. The relationship between Hal Jordan and Sinestro is ambivalent, and although he helps in training the new corp member, underneath that purple skin is the anticipation of a different attitude. Strong does a good job with this vague introduction, shoehorned in between everything else. It's ashamed that the story just didn't focus on him.



Frenemies: Hector Hammond (Peter Saarsgard) and Hal Jordan in 'Green Lantern'

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

And finally there is Parallax, the ultimate evil. Hal Jordan's inevitable confrontation with the being is a bit of an anti-climax, given all that he had to do to get in front of it. The sheer power and tentacle reach of Parallax is drawn as indestructible, and of course Hal has to find a way around that. This is a dull super hero movie cliché, and one of the least interesting parts of the film, despite the hype leading up to it.

As a stand alone movie, Green Lantern sits on a fence, not given enough room to flex its personality and persona. Hal Jordan is crowded out by the spectacle of his training, powers and too many villains. In the realm of the super hero, the most virtuous among them might be the one that first discovers that less can be more.

“Green Lantern” opens everywhere June 17th, in select theaters (see listings) in 3D. Featuring Ryan Reynolds, Blake Lively, Peter Sarsgaard, Tim Robbins, Mark Strong, Temeura Morrison and Angela Bassett. Screenplay by Greg Berlanti, Michael Green, Marc Guggenheim and Michael Goldenberg. Directed by Martin Campbell. Rated “PG-13”



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