

Gorgeous Visuals Lift Mediocre Script of ‘Epic’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 23, 2013 - 11:01pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

“Epic” is the best-looking 3D animated film since “How to Train Your Dragon”. From the very first scenes, it has a mesmerizing visual palette as the natural world comes to life in a way reminiscent of “The Lord of the Rings” and “Avatar.” It’s gorgeous. Sadly, the lurching, generic script doesn’t live up to the look of the film but it’s worth seeing just for the memorable visuals.

Teenager Mary Katherine (Amanda Seyfried), also known as M.K., has returned home to an estranged father (Jason Sudeikis) after the death of her mother. The reason dad has been distant from M.K. for years is simple – he’s crazy. Or at least everyone thinks he is when he talks about the miniature men and women that live in the forest behind his house. He’s set up motion-sensitive cameras and bounds around nature with magnifying spectacles but he can’t find the proof he needs to prove that he’s not crazy.



Epic

Photo credit: Fox

Of course, he’s right. A battle between good and evil is raging right under everyone’s eyes and the future of the forest is at stake. Queen Tara (Beyonce Knowles) has the power of Mother Nature in her hands, able to give life to trees, flowers, and the beauty of the world city-living too often ignores. Queen Tara is at a turning point in her legacy and has to undergo a ceremony where she chooses a pod to be a life-giving force to her people. Naturally, the ceremony makes her a target and Tara is attacked by Mandrake (Christoph Waltz), the leader of the evil Boggans, a tribe that lives on rot, not growth.

In her last moments, Tara gives the pod to a full-grown M.K., shrinking her down and putting her right in the middle of the battle for life against decay. M.K. joins up with the Leafmen, led by Ronin (Colin Farrell) and Nod (Josh Hutcherson), gets some comic relief from a slug named Mub (Aziz Ansari) and a snail named Grub (Chris O’Dowd), and Steven Tyler and Pitbull get involved somehow, further proving that anyone with name recognition value can get one of these gigs. Has someone called Kesha for the sequel yet?



Epic

Photo credit: Fox

So much plot and so little to care about. "Epic" was credited to five writers and the crowd has brought the cluttered approach to storytelling that often comes with so many scribes. "Epic" moves in lurches with major action sequences that work but narrative threads that get lost altogether (Pitbull's character was clearly left on the cutting room floor, perhaps after the directors heard his awful delivery) or aren't developed enough. It feels like Ronin must have been a bigger character at one point and perhaps the character of Nod was even added to create an insincere romance angle to target girl viewers. Everything on a script level is either underdeveloped or overplayed. The bumbling father role gets tiring quickly and the supporting cast ranges from modestly funny (O'Dowd & Ansari) to truly annoying (I pictured hardcore Aerosmith fans hearing Tyler's embarrassingly bad work and just crying in their beer...presuming there are any left after "Idol".)

And yet "Epic" looks BEAUTIFUL. In terms of 3D recreation of the natural world, there's never been a film like it. The growing flowers, the light of the moon on the forest ground, even the character design – "Epic" is a gorgeous movie, enough so that I would recommend seeing it just for its visual strength. Maybe you could wear a headset and make up your own story to go with it. It would probably be better.

"Epic" features voice work by Amanda Seyfried, Colin Farrell, Christoph Waltz, Jason Sudeikis, Josh Hutcherson, Chris O'Dowd, Aziz Ansari, Pitbull, Steven Tyler, and Beyonce Knowles. It was directed by Chris Wedge. It is rated PG and will be released on May 24, 2013.



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