

Scarlett Johansson Packs a Blockbuster Punch in ‘Lucy’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 25, 2014 - 6:40am

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Lucy” is a piece of high-minded cinematic junk food that manages to be outlandishly weird while still satisfying the lizard brain desires of its audience. It’s a film that knows what’ll get the behinds in the seats, and that appeal can effectively be summed up in one shot. It shows Scarlett Johansson in a tight-fitting white t-shirt walking in slow motion with her bosoms bouncing in unison, carrying two guns and ready to kick some serious ass. But amazingly enough, this is a movie with more than just ass-kicking on its mind.

Mercifully jettisoning some tortured backstory, French schlockmeister du jour Luc Besson instead drops us right into the middle of the action. Johansson stars as Lucy, an American in China who gets caught up in a drug smuggling scheme. She’s taken captive, and turned into one of a group of unwilling drug mules. She wakes up with a large package of an experimental new street drug inserted into her belly. When the pouch bursts inside her, it unlocks the full potential of her own brain. She begins to get smarter by the second as she uses more and more of her brain capacity.



Scarlett Johansson is the Title Character in ‘Lucy’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

We know precious little about Lucy, but then again we don’t really need to know much for the story to work. Johansson infuses her with an every-girl happy-go-lucky energy that morphs into a glare of cold calculation once her transformation begins. Her usual sultry voice changes into a robotic monotone that somehow still manages to be alluring.

There’s a plot here involving a globe-trotting quest to track down the other drug mules, and recover the drugs she needs to continue her own

development. There’s enough shootings, car chases, and the aforementioned badass images to satisfy the action audience, but revenge is not her real objective – she’s more interested in science. Johansson tracks down a leading figure in the field of brain research (Morgan Freeman) to understand what’s happening to her and find a way to use her newfound knowledge to better mankind.

It’s in the scientific elements that comes through the mission of “Lucy” to appeal to both the intellect and our more baser desires. Director Besson intercuts a lot of scientific talk about quantum physics, the origins of life, biology, matter, cells, and the circle of life with a sizzle reel from National Geographic showing animals hunting, animals mating, and animals giving birth. These images cross cultural and language barriers and make sure no one misses the point, no matter what language they speak.



Lucy Meets Professor Norman (Morgan Freeman) in ‘Lucy’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

“Lucy” shares some of the same DNA as the Johnny Depp flop “Transcendence.” That film turned a well-meaning scientist into a monomaniacal madman once his brain was uploaded into a computer and his full potential was realized, but Lucy is no genius. Instead of following that same tried and true path, she tries to pass on her newfound knowledge to improve the human race. This is an admirable aim that leads to some deeply strange images.

The film accomplishes its goal and wraps up in a tight 90 minutes. It’s an efficient, fast-moving night out, with some unforgettable images. Just try not to think about it too hard afterwards.

“Lucy” opens everywhere on July 25th. Featuring Scarlett Johansson, Morgan Freeman, Luc Besson, Min-Sik Choi, Amr Waked and Analeigh Tipton. Written and directed by Luc Beeson. Rated “R”



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