

'Warcraft' Tries, But Eventually Has Got No Game

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 10, 2016 - 8:22am

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The best that can be said for the video game adaptation “Warcraft” is that it’s not the incoherent, CGI heavy and Michael-Bay-type nightmare it could have been. It’s still somewhat incoherent – full of computer generated cannon fodder – but I am surprised and happy to report it did not induce any headaches, even in pointless 3D.

“Warcraft” is less a video game movie – it’s based on the popular game “Warcraft” – and more of a third rate “Lord Of The Rings” ripoff. This time a group of human knights and kings form an uneasy alliance with a band of pensive, monster-like “Orcs” to take down a greater and deeper magic that threatens to destroy the entire world.

The plot involves a sinister corrupting form of magic known as the Fell. It’s main side effect seems to be bringing a greenish tint to the eyes of all whom it touches, and taking lives to feed its power. An Orc wizard uses this green magic to open a portal to the world of humans when the their own world is sucked dry of life. So the coming Orc invasion plans to take over the human world, and they must use the men and women as fuel to power their green magic.



Orcs Versus Humans in 'Warcraft'
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The glimmering, hulking collection of ones and zeros that are the computer generated Orcs have a serious personality problem – they have none. Thus, it's hard to get invested when one Orc chieftain, with a wife and new baby, starts to question whether the Orc wizard leading them into the land of humans may not be the best leader in the long run. These Orcs are heavy on tusks – in fact that's their defining feature – but they all kind of look alike and run together. Orcs are more hulking menace than memorable villains.

Poor Paula Patton (as Garona) has it worst of all. She's sort of an Orc slave, and the possible offspring of a one off encounter between Orcs and humans. She's an odd and ugly combination of prehistoric cave girl, wild boar, and vampire, with two pointy tusks shooting out of her underbite.

The humans don't have it much better – they're an interchangeable collection of bearded medieval brutes. There's a sorcerer's apprentice type (Ben Schnetzer), and a powerful wizard known as the guardian (Ben Foster), who are there to stare into the abyss while commanding the special effects wizards to create balls of white light or lightning in their grasp. The magic all seems third hand from other better fantasy blockbusters, and this well traveled road doesn't contain anything you haven't seen before.



Paula Patton in 'Warcraft'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

This is a rare misstep for writer and director Duncan Jones after his much better previous films "Moon" and "Source Code." His name on the marquee inspires a hope that a video game movie may be able to transcend its wobegon origins, but alas, he seems to have been consumed by the digital forces himself. The film is full of computer imagery that manages to look sweeping and fake at the same time. To be fair, Warcraft wasn't as bad as I feared, but I'd never want to get anywhere near it again.

"Warcraft" opens everywhere on June 10th, in 3D, IMAX and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D or IMAX showings. Featuring Paula Patton, Travis Fimmel, Ben Foster, Dominic Cooper, Ben Schnetzer and Robert Kazinsky. Written by Duncan Jones and Charles Leavitt. Directed by Duncan Jones. Rated "PG-13"



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