

## ‘Transformers: The Last Knight’ is Bizarrely Enjoyable

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 21, 2017 - 1:25pm

- [Anthony Hopkins](#) [2]
- [Autobots](#) [3]
- [Bumblebee](#) [4]
- [Decepticons](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Isabela Moner](#) [7]
- [John Turturro](#) [8]
- [Josh Duhamel](#) [9]
- [Laura Haddock](#) [10]
- [Mark Wahlberg](#) [11]
- [Michael Bay](#) [12]
- [Movie Review](#) [13]
- [Optimus Prime](#) [14]
- [Paramount Pictures](#) [15]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [16]
- [Stanley Tucci](#) [17]
- [Stonehenge](#) [18]
- [Transformers: The Last Knight](#) [19]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Knock me over with a feather kids, but I enjoyed “Transformers: The Last Knight.” Maybe it was in comparison to the others or maybe director Michael Bay has beaten me into submission, but this one had the right story elements and casting to make it work, with exceptions of course.

The two essential things that made the film more tolerable was Anthony Hopkins and Laura Haddock, two Brits who brought some performance parts that made me laugh in their earnestness – Sir Anthony was particularly bizarre. The story is tied into the Arthurian legend, and begins on a knights-of-the-round-table battlefield, and somehow that gave a bit more understanding to what was going on, which was decidedly lacking in previous films. The rest will be pretty familiar to the Transformers’ universe and fan base, which surprisingly I guess I’m in tune with... no thanks to director Michael Bay, who still could have cut a good 45 minutes out of the running time. But this is the very definition of the “summer movie,” no more nutritious than the oil-slathered popcorn and giant Coke, and decidedly critic proof.

The film begins in King Arthur’s time. We find out the source of Merlin (Stanley Tucci) the Magician’s wizardry, which is an Autobot, naturally. The power is contained in a magical staff, which only Merlin can control. Meanwhile, in the present day, Autobot Optimus Prime and the Transformers are barred from earth, and a special military task force has been formed to hunt them down.



Another Day, Another Disaster for Cade (Mark Wahlberg) in ‘Transformers: The Last Knight’

*Photo credit: Paramount Pictures*

But Cade Yeager (Mark Wahlberg) still harbors some Transformers fugitives, and rescues a young girl Izabella (Isabela Moner) because of her sympathies to the crew. During the rescue he is given a talisman that is part of the Merlin staff, and with its power becomes “the last knight.” Cade is then brought to England by the mysterious Sir Edmund (Anthony Hopkins), who teams him up with Professor Viviane (Laura Haddock), a direct descendant of Merlin. They are the last best hope to sway the earth’s destiny, as the Transformers’ home planet, Cybertron, is hurling towards our planet with the intention to destroy.

These plots are needlessly complex, but AT LEAST the Arthurian angle helped with most of the movements of the characters. Sir Anthony Hopkins – a knight portraying a knight in a film about cyber-knights – is the glue that makes all the extremely weird action coalesce into some sort of endgame. Marky Mark’s cohort, the lovely Brit Laura Haddock as Viviane, also is serious enough... and a good enough actor... to actually be more than the woman-window-dressing as in the previous Transformers’ films. Her and Sir A’s addition were the key pieces that assured that this one didn’t suck.

And also I took a step back this time, and relied more on the knowledge of this universe to guide me. Somehow this time I remembered all the personalities of the ‘bots, and the good-vs-evil roles that each play. I also remembered John Turturro as Seymour, who does a hilarious give-and-take with Sir A. from his hideout in Cuba... it literally could have been another movie. Overall, it felt like the kiddie matinees of the 1950s and ‘60s, where special effects and heroic stories were all we needed to enjoy a day at the movies. This may sound sappy, but this Transformers film reminded me of that nostalgia.





Sir Edmund (Anthony Hopkins) and Friend in 'Transformers: The Last Knight'

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

But I ain't done. WHY make these films TWO-AND-A-HALF hours long? It's like Michael Bay wants to keep adding stuff to beat from us any entertainment value that we might enjoy. I also noted there is a new screenplay team (Art Marcum, Matt Holloway and Ken Nolan), and while they wrote the funny stuff described earlier, they also created a needless complexity. The character of Izabela, except probably for sequel purposes, could have been completely cut. But man, complaining about a Transformers movie is like having the windmill blades hit your chin every time it goes around, a critique just can't defeat them.

And so I submit for your approval, I was entertained by the latest chapter of the film series that was adapted seriously – and at great expense – from a children's cartoon. It's on film number five, folks, and the sixth one has just been given the green light. To paraphrase the great Liberace, Michael Bay is not only laughing all the way to the bank, he owns the whole stinking branch.

*"Transformers: The Last Knight" opens everywhere June 21st, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring Mark Wahlberg, Josh Duhamel, Stanley Tucci, Anthony Hopkins, Isabela Moner, Laura Haddock and John Turturro. Screenplay by Art Marcum, Matt Holloway and Ken Nolan. Directed by Michael Bay. Rated "PG-13"*



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