

## Disney Has Another Brush With Greatness in Delightful 'Tangled'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 24, 2010 - 6:00am

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Rating: **4.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Movieland is awash in feature length “cartoons,” with virtually every season cranking out more new entries in this new golden age of animation. The Disney Studios, the granddaddy of the genre, aims to keep the bar high with its latest, the amazing looking and hilarious 3D version of the Rapunzel story, with a post modern title of “Tangled.”

Rapunzel (voice of Mandy Moore) begins her life as a privileged princess, whose mother was saved in childbirth by a magical healing flower. The plant was formerly tended by an old woman, who became young again whenever she was in proximity of the bloom. Rapunzel’s mother had ingested the flower’s essence and passed the healing power to the child and her long hair, which glowed whenever the power would assert itself.

The old woman felt cheated that she lost her youth, so in retaliation she kidnaps Rapunzel and holes her up in the legendary tall tower. The child thinks the woman is her Mother Gothel (Donna Murphy) and is constantly singing a special song that activates her magical hair and keeps her “mother” forever young. All is well until Rapunzel’s 18th birthday, when she desires to see the festival of floating lanterns, ironically started by her royal parents as a memory to her missing status.

Fate plays a hand when a young rogue named Flynn (Zachary Levi) infiltrates the tower while running from both the law and his robber partners (they stole the crown jewels). Rapunzel has never seen an outsider, and knocks him out with frying pan. She hides the crown, and forces Flynn to take her into the royal village for the festival in exchange for getting it back. This new adventure will test the resolve of Mother Gothel to get Rapunzel back to her tower and Flynn’s life of robbery. In between is the freedom of the girl with the longest hair.



Mother Knows Best: Mother Gothel (Donna Murphy) and Rapunzel (Mandy Moore) in 'Tangled'

Photo credit: © Walt Disney Pictures

This is an exquisitely crafted piece of animated art. The colors and overall look are more like a painting, and the 3D technology allows for the nuances to be fully realized. The characters are closer to how real people look in an exaggerated sense, and this gives the emotions some real heft because their expressions communicate the humanity, even down to the several comedic relief roles. Combined with the awe of the kingdom and tower settings, it is magical.

Just like the regular movie rule that it all begins with the script, so does an animated effort rise or fall. Tangled has a perfectly constructed story, marrying modern girl power issues with the traditional story of Rapunzel. It is played mostly for laughs and succeeds as a comedy, where even the most evil of people has some good lines. Dan Fogelman's screenplay is mostly sympathetic to Rapunzel's situation, and lets her play straight man to a bunch of wacky cohorts.

Everybody has a motivation for their journey, and even the kidnapping stepmother can be forgiven for desiring eternal youth (and in that youth she is drawn quite comely). The theme of the film is following your dreams, and there is an hilarious, Monty Python inspired song about that very circumstance, which is a highlight of the film and introduces a rogues gallery of misfits who eventually play into the story (voiced by Jeffery Tambor, Ron Perlman and Brad Garrett). Flynn himself is on the journey to find his true nature, and his vanity adds to the general slapstick nature of his gags, aided by an expression filled horse and lines like "you broke my smolder."

The typical Disney addition of musical numbers is less frequent than other pictures, but veteran songster Alan Menken ("The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast" "Aladdin") adds his talent for showstopper type numbers in the strands of Tangled. Mother Gothel's song, naturally called "Mother Knows Best" may be the best of its subject since Ethel Merman belted "Rose's Turn" in the play "Gypsy." Parents, get ready to have you car CD players co-opted once again.



Take Two: Flynn (Zachary Levi) and the Chameleon Pascal React Comedically in 'Tangled'

Photo credit: © Walt Disney Pictures

And speaking of co-opting, the Disney animation department have completed their melding of other cartoon sensibilities into the attitude and slapstick of Tangled. There are strong elements of the Merry Melody/Tex Avery feel in Flynn's hapless machinations and lines. There is a very funny (karma?) chameleon named Pascal who is Rapunzel's animal friend and would feel right at home in a Looney Tune. This is not to disrespect the Disney formula, merely to point out the the filmmaker generation working on them now has been influenced by the previous comedy of all cartoons.

Tangled will be the essential "family film for the holidays," because truly everyone can enjoy it. There is beauty, sensuality, humor and pop culture references for the adults, for the kids there is the finesse of the princess story, wrapped into a strength and dignity that has us believing that Rapunzel will be the best queen ever.

"Tangled" opens everywhere on November 24th in 'Real D' 3D. Featuring the voices of Mandy Moore, Zachary Levi, Donna Murphy, Jeffrey Tambor, Ron Perlman and Brad Garrett. Screenplay by Dan Fogelman, directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard. Rated "G"



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