



A “small” effort

It's a Black day for a classic novel

Gulliver's Travels 2010 

Rating



Out Now

THIS IS THE FIRST LIVE ACTION MOVIE FROM ROB Letterman (director of Shark Tale, Monsters Vs Aliens), and the newest adaptation of Jonathan Swift's novel, Gulliver's Travels.

Here we see Jack Black, who plays Lemuel Gulliver (although the character could easily be Dewey Finn, from the School of Rock) working as the mail guy at a New York City Newspaper. The movie follows many clichés even at this point, with Gulliver having an awkward crush on an editor, to Jack Black playing guitar hero. Which as I recall, wasn't in the original novel.

Soon the story picks up pace, as Gulliver accidentally picks up an assignment that requires him to travel to the Bermuda Triangle. After some shoddy CGI, we are finally transported to the land of the Lilliputs, although not for the better.

Granted 20th Century Fox have had some good hits, with films such as Avatar and of course, the Star Wars trilogy (we'll exclude the prequels). But lately there have been some terrible flicks, just watch Vampire's Suck, or even worse, Gulliver's Travels.

The problem with the film is that there is no originality at all. From the poor implemented 3D, which was placed in post-production, this always makes for a poor spectacle. To the comedy that relies heavily on Jack Black being, well, Jack Black. To give an example, the funniest moment in the movie is when Gulliver is forced to extinguish a mighty fire, using his “manhood” to do so. Unfortunately this is the comical peak of the movie, and even this has been seen before. If you have ever seen the brilliant Hallmark version of the tale, you will remember that Ted Danson does the exact same thing.

The 1996 Hallmark movie also did a much better job at presenting the thought-provoking journey of Lemuel Gulliver. It stuck closely to the issues that Jonathan Swift implements within his story. It achieved this by telling the whole story of Gulliver, whereas this 2010 adaptation only concentrates on the land of the Lilliputs. The movie briefly enters the land of Brobdingnag (where Jack Black is a small figure in a land of giants) but this encounter is spoiled by the force of comedy that Rob Letterman seems to inject brutally into each scene.

There is a saving grace I'm glad to say. This is found within the full British cast, which includes big names such as Catherine Tate, Emily Blunt and Billy Connolly. Each of which do their best with the material they are given, though none can raise more than a simple chuckle. This is multiplied by the apparent difficulties they had with the green screen effects which are utilized to make Jack Black a giant.

At many points the actors were struggling to look in the right direction, as Gulliver stomped through the streets of Lilliput. Jack Black seems to suffer from the same problem as we constantly see him squinting at the environment, and his fellow cast members.

This is a strange occurrence to notice in a modern movie, especially when this type of effect has been so well implemented in past adaptations. Even in Ray Harryhausen's 1960 version, The Three Worlds of Gulliver. Where the CG seemed smooth and realistic, remarkably given the age of the production.

Maybe these problems are an age issue, as most children seem to find the film enthralling and extremely funny. As I sat in the cinema hall, the laughter at each joke came from the mouth of a child. The parents were less amused mind you, but I can't blame them.

The 2010 adaptation of Gulliver's Travels lacks originality, witty humour and the morals that Jonathan Swift featured within his novel. As a children's movie it seems more successful, or if you're a major fan of Jack Black. But if you are neither a parent or a fan of Jack, and just want to see a good, well thought out, adaptation of Jonathan Swifts Satire. I advise you look elsewhere.

