

'Spider-Man: Far from Home' is a fun summer trip

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 129 minutes

Suffering from superhero fatigue? Well, you wouldn't be alone. It seems that so many Marvel movies have come down the pipeline the past few years that it's difficult just to keep up with them all. The latest entry is *Spider-Man: Far from Home*, and it marks the final film in what the studio refers to as Phase Three.

In fact, there will be an almost one-year gap between this and the next feature. Much of the big action occurred in the previous *Avengers* finale, and so this latest sequel doesn't have the same kind of epic stakes. Still, the movie does provide some laughs and a few thrills along the way. It's a perfectly efficient and entertaining popcorn summer movie.

After all the chaos in the previous Marvel adventure, Peter Parker (Tom Holland) misses his previous life as a carefree teenager, and feels uncertain of whether or not he even wants to be a superhero. In fact, his priorities are to put the costume away, enjoy a school trip to Europe and tell schoolmate MJ (Zendaya) how he really feels about her. When Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) appears with superhero-from-an-alternate-universe Quentin Beck/Mysterio (Jake Gyllenhaal) and demands his help in combating a new threat, Parker doesn't want to get involved. However, over the course of his school trip, Peter faces life-threatening danger and complications in his personal life.

The movie juggles a teen romance subplot with comedic bits in which Parker must hide his true

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identity from classmates and save them from imminent danger. Obviously, there are a lot of goofy gags involving school rivalries and the film has an episodic feel as it barrels through photogenic cities like Venice, Prague, Berlin and London. Parker is often the butt of jokes. Some of them, including an unwanted alter ego and a silly new name given for his "Spider-sense," earn laughs.

And humor is also derived from the unexpected complications that have arisen after most of the world's population suddenly returns. Not every quip lands and the film is much sillier than what we've seen from Marvel recently, but the cast of kids is likable enough to eke a few chuckles out of the proceedings.

And the screenplay also attempts to veer off in a few unexpected directions. Things are most certainly not what they initially seem and if you manage to go into the theater without knowing the plot twists, some of the surprise reveals are effective. Through the course of the film, Spider-Man and others also have to contend with a series of psychogenic mirages that play upon the fears and anxieties. These elaborate sequences provide some trippy thrills. It soon becomes clear that manipulating others through trickery (and even media) is the feature's primary theme.

Gyllenhaal's guest role is a little more eccentric than most caped characters seen in previous Marvel films, presenting a little more variety. He also gets in a good zinger or two, and the character's almost obsessive focus on appearances fits in quite well with the premise. As mentioned, there's a lot going on and overall the many elements sometimes come off as a bit of a rushed jumble, but the film wins marks for its boldness and, at the very least, being chock full of wild ideas.

And Marvel enthusiasts will be happy to know that there are two post credit sequences...the first one is the most effective, and features a cameo that most viewers will actually recognize without having to look the reference up on their phones. In summary, this reviewer enjoyed *Spider-Man: Far from Home*

. It certainly isn't the best title in the franchise, but the action and visuals are impressive and the story takes some unexpected chances. This is a good-natured and most importantly, fun superhero flick that should amuse comic book fans young and old.

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