

## **‘Eternals’ looks good, but the action is slow**

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun  
Friday, 12 November 2021 05:43

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Rating: ««

out of «««««

Running Time: 157 minutes

This feature from Disney is being released exclusively at movie theaters on Nov. 5.

Critics can be awfully fussy, myself included. While many just see going to the movies as a way to escape for a couple of hours, our job is to determine what goals are being attempted in a movie and then determine how successful it is at achieving its mission. “Eternals” is the latest Marvel comic book adaptation to hit the big screen. It’s a polished and beautiful-looking movie that will find plenty of supporters.

However, more persnickety viewers, such as myself, will find something lacking in the final product, which I believe can be mainly blamed on one specific facet.

This title follows a group of secret immortal aliens from another world, who arrived on Earth thousands of years ago. We learn they were sent to protect humanity from evil monsters known as Deviants. For a time, they lived on Mount Olympus and inspired the Greek Gods of legend, but disappeared after finishing the creatures off. Ordered not to get involved in human struggles, they have stayed hidden for centuries.

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Sersi (Gemma Chan) is one of these Eternals, now working in London as an historian. When Deviants appear again and begin slaying members of the team, she and other Eternals like Sprite (Lia McHugh), Ikaris (Richard Madden), Ajak (Salma Hayek), Thena (Angelina Jolie), Kingo (Kumail Nanjiani), Phastos (Brian Tyree Henry), Makkari (Lauren Ridloff), Druig (Barry Keoghan) and Gilgamesh (Don Lee) are reunited. Then, a massive threat to the planet called the “Emergence” is revealed, leaving Sersi and the others to decide whether to step in and save the planet or allow it to be destroyed.

There are even more characters and subplots involved than in the summary above, including a love triangle between Sersi, co-worker Dane Whitman (Kit Harington) and Ikaris. It’s all a bit silly and overstuffed, but at least the story does allow for some unique introspection with a few of the Eternals. Between the hokier moments, a few of the supernatural leads must come to terms with being immortal, not fitting in with humanity, and witnessing horrific acts over the centuries. Some shy away from the public, while others try to embrace some aspects of life of Earth.

This allows the movie to occasionally address how some heroes might not initially feel compelled to help planet Earth.

The photography is top notch, with images of the universe, enormous spaceships and giant otherworldly beings looking appropriately epic and spectacular. The effects work is also impressive and the choreography as each individual superhero displays their gifts early on is attractive to watch. There are some gorgeous shots in the film and even though the final act separates the protagonists from the average humans they’re supposed to be looking out for, the grand scale does detail just how devastating things will get if the heroes aren’t victorious.

So, what is this reviewer going to gripe about? While it all looks very impressive, the action is curiously flat during the fight scenes. When the Eternals are doing battle and showing off elaborate moves, it all looks slower than it should. Scene after scene unfolds with the same effect and this reviewer believes that the issue is the editing itself.

Thrusts or elaborate maneuvers are frequently completed before the camera cuts to the following shot. It may not seem significant, but images hang onscreen for too long and an extra frame or two passes between a lunge and its result on the enemy. When the cuts don’t occur on movement, there’s a stagger in the process that makes things feel logy. As a result, moments

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that should be exciting and dynamic don't have the impact they should.

And even the occasional reaction shot is protracted, resulting in dead air during exposition scenes.

This comic book feature has a fine cast with individual characters who will go on to more thrilling escapades. It has plenty of great individual images and is a reasonable superhero flick. However, some of the editing choices work against the film, literally lessening the excitement and impact of seeing immortal warriors in combat. For that reason, “Eternals” just doesn't have the same kind of lasting effect on viewers as other Marvel adaptations.

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