

‘Avatar: The Way of Water’ is a true epic

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 23 December 2022 02:18



Rating: ««««

out of «««««

Running Time: 193 minutes

This feature from 20th Century Studios opens at cinemas on Friday, Dec. 16.

The science-fiction epic *Avatar* arrived at theaters back in 2009 and was an instant smash, earning awards for its groundbreaking visual effects and shattering just about every box office record in the process (it still currently remains the highest grossing film worldwide, earning just under \$3 billion in total revenue). While one would have expected an immediate follow-up, writer/director James Cameron instead spent 13 years toiling on a sequel, or as it has now been made clear, a series of new titles.

There's nothing subtle about *Avatar: The Way of Water* and it does have a few clichéd elements. But it is also a true spectacle in every sense of the word. See it in 3D on the biggest screen you can find and you'll be sure to walk away impressed.

‘Avatar: The Way of Water’ is a true epic

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 23 December 2022 02:18

Years after the events of the first film, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) is living as a Na’vi with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana) and their large family on Pandora. In the ensuing years their time has been spent raising kids. This includes adopted daughter/Dr. Grace Augustine relation Kiri (Sigourney Weaver), teenage sons Neteyam (Jamie Flatters) and Lo’ak (Britain Dalton) and their youngest daughter Tuk (Trinity Jo-Li Bliss). Additionally, the family frequently hosts a human boy named Spider (Jack Champion), who also has a notable family history.

Unfortunately, their peaceful days end when humans, led by General Ardmore (Edie Falco), return to Pandora to take control of the planet. The villains target original rebellion leader Jake with a secret weapon... a group of Na’vi embedded with the personalities of deceased soldiers. Specifically, Colonel Quaritch (Stephen Lang) and his team. Fearing for the safety of his family, Jake moves his family to a sea environment, but trouble follows.

If you’re like this reviewer and haven’t seen the first film in at least a decade, then it might help to refamiliarize yourself with the original movie beforehand. This picture assumes you’ll remember who every lead and supporting character is and rushes right into the story after a brief comment or two about what happened to everyone since the last installment. It’s a little jarring (it took me a few minutes to remember some of the supporting villains and background scientists), but after playing catch up for 10 minutes, the relationships and connections are once again clear.

Much of the thematic material early on involves family dynamics and ex-military man Jake struggling to keep his young boys out of harm’s way. But as the group go on the run and end up in an island village, the younger characters begin to take center stage. There is a bit of corny teen angst and drama as the youngsters try to fit in. Yet bits with one teen encountering and befriending an aquatic, whale-like lifeform works extremely well.

Like in the previous movie the environmental message is unsubtle, but the sea creatures are so likable that they easily win viewer sympathy. And as the kids become a little more developed and the deadly threat arises, one can’t help but be drawn into the conflict.

It also helps that the film is a technical masterpiece. The visuals are frankly jaw-dropping. The forested world from the original has been given extra detail and the island community is even more impressive. These otherworldly environments are completely engrossing, especially in three-dimensions. With this film, 3D technology has risen to new heights.

‘Avatar: The Way of Water’ is a true epic

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 23 December 2022 02:18

Once the characters reach the island and swim under the sea (which was largely created with CGI technology), the images on display are nothing short of jaw-dropping. Higher resolution and increased frame rates were used and while the technique hasn’t always worked well in the past, it looks exceptional here. Simply put, it’s the best 3D presentation of a film that this reviewer has ever seen.

The action scenes are no less remarkable. There’s a phenomenal bit featuring Lo’ak being pursued by a hungry sea creature. And the extended action climax is dynamic and thrilling from beginning to end. It involves all manner of military ships and aquatic machinery squaring off against fantastic flying and seabound alien beings and it’s all remarkably tense. This director has always had a knack for shooting battle scenes and this film continues that trend.

Admittedly, the screenplay intentionally leaves some story threads dangling for the next chapter. If you can forgive a grandiose emotional moment or two and a lengthy running time (you might want to pack a sandwich), you’re likely to have a wonderful time.

Despite my nitpicking, *Avatar: The Way of Water* is a true epic that we haven’t seen in cinemas for some time. It’s a stunning feature that wears its heart on its sleeve and consistently wows with breathtaking visuals.

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun