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REEL WORLD



Low-energy approach drags down latest Marvel superfilm

Despite the fact that she's playing a superhero who has the power to shoot electrical bursts from her hands, Brie Larson's Captain Marvel suffers from a disappointing lack of energy. Larson's turn as the title character, aka Carol Danvers (aka Vers), is plagued by lethargy and bizarre line deliveries, and she gives off a detached vibe that she doesn't want to be in the movie.

Captain ... Meh, I Dunno, Whatever.

Had the film around her been really good, the lead's bored disposition might've been forgiven, but this cosmic superhero origin story and intergalactic war movie is also riddled with some haphazard storytelling and awful special effects.

I went into *Captain Marvel* hoping for a badass superhero movie, but found myself more intrigued by the subplot involving an up-and-coming, low-ranking S.H.I.E.L.D. agent named Nick Fury, played by Samuel L. Jackson. Honestly, the de-aged Jackson in this movie and returning Agent Coulson (Clark Gregg) from the first *Avengers* movie are so good you wish they had their own film.

I'm not putting the blame solely on Larson. The Danvers/Marvel character—a fighter pilot on Earth whose powers are born of other worlds—is a bust when it comes to superheroes. All she does is fly around and send out energy from her hands. She has moments here where she goes full Captain Marvel mode, and this brings on a big light show where she glows and gets white eyes and a goofy-looking mohawk, but overall her superpowers don't register as all that exciting. Plus, the light show isn't helped

any by the film's special effects, which look rushed and cartoonish. As a result, Captain Marvel in her full glory doesn't integrate with the worlds around her; she looks animated and out of place. It's reminiscent of how bad the villain Steppenwolf looked in *Justice League*. It takes you right out of the action.

Part of the film is set on Earth in the '90s, which means Jackson's Fury has a full head of hair and both eyes. It also means there's music by Nirvana and No Doubt, both of which are used in situations that feel awkward and forced. Directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck get a little carried away in their efforts to be cute with the tunes.

There's a big supporting cast, including Annette Bening as a scientist and murky memory in Carol's dreams. Lashana Lynch does good work as Maria Rambeau (pronounced "Rambo"), an Earthly friend of Carol's. Jude Law gets a change of pace with an action role as an alien named Yon-Rogg, while Ben Mendelsohn plays Fury's S.H.I.E.L.D. boss, another character with a few surprises to offer. And then there's the orange tabby named Goose, a cute cat from another planet. Again, however, the special effects are a letdown when Goose goes full Goose.

The film isn't 100 percent devoid of fun, it's just not on par with other Marvel Universe offerings. That's a high bar to hit. As for Captain Marvel, the end of *Avengers: Infinity War* hinted at some major participation for her, so this is just the start for the character. Hopefully things get better. □

by
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Captain Marvel
Starring Brie Larson
and Samuel L.
Jackson. Directed by
Anna Boden and Ryan
Fleck. Cinemark 14,
Feather River Cinemas.
Rated PG-13.



FILIPE DEANDRADE



BANFF FILM FESTIVAL



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent