

Journey to the Center of the Earth

First thoughts...

Wow! This was a movie I couldn't wait to review. I mean 3-D, how much cooler can you get. Well I liked the movie, in fact I liked it a lot. Unfortunately for you guys the critics from Hollywood.com thought the same thing I did. However lucky for you, my loyal readers, People magazine didn't like it so I have some contrast. This was part of my triple header at the theatre today and through being hungry and tired I was still able to enjoy it.

What Happened...

Trevor (Brendan Fraser) is a scientist at a university whose lab is about to be shut down, and his nephew Sean (Josh Hutcherson). Sean is a 13 year old kid who is annoyed that he has to stay with his uncle for 10 days before going to Canada. Sean's father (who is Trevor's brother and also a scientist) Max disappeared in 1997 and is presumed dead. Both Trevor and Max rise out of their slumps when they find Max's copy of the book Journey to the Center of the Earth by Jules Vern. In it are notes Max took about finding the center of the Earth. The duo realize that Max was looking for the Center of the Earth when he turned up missing. So what do they do? They head to Iceland where they meet up with gorgeous mountain guide Hannah (Anita Briem), whose father also believed in the existence of the Center of the Earth. In not too long the now trio arrives at the Center of the Earth where they encounter tons of adventure while trying to get out.

What I think about...

The story.

I've never read the book on which the movie is based. Like Sean, it was on some reading list sometime as a classic. I rolled my eyes first because I thought "Crap another remake". However then I realized this isn't a remake it actually incorporates the book into the plot. In other words in this movie's world the book actually exists. The movies does not tell retell the book's plot with its characters; simply its premise and setting taking new and different characters who discover the "earth" as experienced by the characters in the book. This is a new concept for a movie based on a book and I liked it a lot.

The acting.

The world has always had unsung heroes. We have some from the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Vietnam, and then we have the standalone... Brennan Frasier. I believe he is the unsung hero of movies. The mummy movies were great, he has many other good movies, and who can forget Blast From the Past? Now I'm not saying people don't like his movies its just that people don't show a great interest in him even though I believe that he is one of the top 10 in Hollywood. He is great in this movie. The way he plays his character is Rick O'Connell meets George of the Jungle. Next on the chopping block is Josh Hutcherson. I think this kid has now officially reached star level. He has a lot of popular roles to his name; Zathura, Bridge to Terabithia, and RV are just a few; and this one should be added to the list. He plays the part very well-- he even pulls off the solo action scenes they gave him. Finally, we have the newcomer Anita Briem. She wasn't my favorite person in the film but she did as well as that part could be. She and Frasier had great chemistry and you believed that they were awkwardly starting to like each other.

The Direction.

This is where the movie got on my bad side. The director could have done a lot more with the 3-D. Also I felt like a lot of the scenes weren't as well done as they could be and I actually agreed with People Magazine when it says "Brevig never imparts a sense of awe or danger". You never feel like anything bad is going to happen. I really feel like the actors pulled the director through this movie.

What the critics said.

People Magazine called the trio's journey "drably rendered by low-rent special effects". I believe that the special effects were good. In fact the entire movie seemed off screen and 3-D; unlike most 3-D movies where the 3-D comes in randomly. A Seattle Times writer said "The absence of star charisma in *Journey* denies the audience some focus..." I think these three worked great together and I'm confident most of you will agree. Finally Hollywood.com said "And even without the glasses prepare to hold your breath and hang on for a great time at the movies" This I agree with, the movie has enough story and cool scenes that it doesn't have to use 3-D as a vehicle to make you enjoy the movie. This movie is actually a good movie whether seen with or without the 3-D effect.

Bottom Line

Take a date (the kids of course).

Hollywood.com 3 out of 5

People 2 out of 5

Rotten Tomatoes 3 out of 5