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Daily Egyptian

Radcliffe blends too easily with 'Black'

Daniel Radcliffe had his first big-boy movie role this weekend in "The Woman in Black," but it wasn't quite enough to help the young actor outgrow his wizard shoes.

In fact, the film should really just be called "Harry Potter and the Haunted House."

Its plot revolves around a very somber and downhearted Arthur Kipps (Radcliffe), a widower lawyer who travels to the east-coast United Kingdom town Crythin Gifford to settle the late Alice Drablow's estate. What he doesn't know, however, is that an evil spirit that takes its revenge against young children haunts the town, and Arthur's arrival resurrects all of the terror the residents thought was finally over.

Radcliffe's first appearance without a lightening scar on his forehead was absolutely not a bad one, but Potter fans are lying if they say they weren't waiting for the door unlocking spell on at least one occasion. Much of the actor's time was spent scouring the same hallways and entering and re-entering rooms so as to find the source of all the whispers and banging, and he spent just as much time keeping a solemn look and uttering very few lines when the haunted house was involved. While this make for adequate suspense, the producers could have gotten a little more creative with his character.

It's almost as though they didn't know what to do with Harry Potter if his pals Ron and Hermione weren't going to be there with him.

As far as the film's scare tactics go, there were a few good jumpers. Once viewers get past the first 45 minutes of buildup, the frightening moments seem to come one right after another and it becomes a choice between the lesser of two evils to either keep watching or look away. Looking away wouldn't be the worst choice in the world, though, because there is enough screeching and clanking to give the audience a more-than-good enough idea about what's happening in the house.

Even though it's fairly standard for a scary movie to have darker-than-normal lighting, this movie works it well. There are multiple occasions where viewers could easily miss the woman in black if they weren't looking in the right place, and that helped tremendously with the film's scare factor.

It was also very commendable for the scriptwriters to assume that not every audience member is too dense to understand a storyline. There was no drawn out conversation between any two characters that explained the plot's every detail, nor were there any out-of-place scenes to explain the woman in black's history and reason for revenge. That made the house scenes worth much more than simply waiting for the woman to surface and cause trouble, and the final scene couldn't have been nearly as bittersweet if it were any other way.

There were a couple ridiculous clichés that bear mentioning, though. First off, it was completely poor judgment on Radcliffe's part to think a lonely house that is surrounded by a very active tide and covered in vines was a good one to stay overnight in, no matter if his work was there or not. Also, the woman in black's

shrieking was convincing the first time around but just became more bothersome with each ear-splitting screech. We get it. The volume knob works.

For a modern horror movie, though, this one is a keeper. It's not the best one out, but it will absolutely get your date throwing popcorn in the air and jumping into your arms for security. Just be sure to have those hands ready to cover your eyes, because it is definitely likely to happen at least once.