

## 'Prince Caspian' combines superb action with good acting

Film: 'The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian'; Cast: Georgie Henley, Skandar Keynes, William Mosley, Anna Popplewell, Ben Barnes; Director: Andrew Adamson; Rating: \*\*\*

The children in 'Prince Caspian' have grown up and so has the 'Chronicles of Narnia' franchise. The first movie, 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', sought to introduce us to a magical world and we marvelled mainly because we saw it through the eyes of children. But in this second instalment, also directed by Andrew Adamson, the children have a greater responsibility of saving the world and the movie's look perfectly reflects that. It is darker, more violent and less innocent.

The filmmakers clearly enjoyed the money bestowed on them and it shows in the over use of special effects. The action scenes are magnificently staged and we do clearly feel like we have been transported to a whole new world. But this comes at the cost of characterisation. We do not really get to know the children - Peter (William Mosley), Susan (Anna Popplewell), Edmund (Skandar Keynes) and Lucy (Georgie Henley) - any more than when we first saw them in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'.

The movie immediately plunges us into the story and places us in the middle of an epic struggle. The first half is almost slow to the point of being meandering but does well to pick up in time to not leave us bored and unconcerned.

The four Pevensie children have got back to their rather ordinary lives in World War II-era London and clearly miss Narnia. Suddenly, they are transported to Narnia but the place has changed. It's been almost 1,300 years since they left and the country is ruled by the evil humans led by Lord Miraz. The children have to round up the remaining citizens of Narnia who are in hiding and restore peace.

The cast is able, with the youngest actress Georgie being the best in the movie. It's a pity she does not feature in more scenes. The movie focuses too much on the battles and there is not much room to showcase any acting ability.

The evil Lord Miraz is hardly scary or threatening. Even Prince Caspian (Ben Barnes) comes off a bit bland and charmless. One of the movie's failings is its inability in making us connect with Prince Caspian. The actors playing the children do a decent job of portraying the pressures of adolescence and the daunting task of saving the world.

Besides the commendable staging of the action sequences, there are a few memorable scenes that stay a bit longer after having watched the movie. The scene where a character has to resist resorting to black magic is chilling. The movie is low on the emotion quotient but the scene where a few of their friends have to be left behind at the mercy of their enemies as they retreat is touching.

The filmmakers clearly understood the dark nature of this book in the series by C.S. Lewis and have done a fine job in transforming it from print to film. The movie delivers in its action and since it transports us to a magical world, it is worth the watch.

*Sevanand Gaddala* ( © IANS / India eNews)