



Make It Stop

Only you can stop audience abuse. By not going to this movie.

TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON: Directed by Michael Bay. Written by Ehren Kruger. Starring Shia LaBeouf, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Frances McDormand, John Turturro, Josh Duhamel, Patrick Dempsey, John Malkovich and Alan Tudyk. About as long as three episodes of Game of Thrones. PG-13 for robot porn. I mean, for an ass, and occasional swearing. ☆☆☆☆☆

It's possible that what I took away from *Transformers: Totally Irrelevant Subtitle* wasn't exactly what director Michael Bay intended. I suspect I was supposed to have a response that went something along the lines of, "FUCK YEAH, ROBOTS! And America! Man, that blonde chick was hot."

What I thought about instead was how much I loathed Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf). Witwicky acts as a wholly unnecessary rebuttal to all those earnest, well-intentioned heroes who have things like strength of character, a do-gooder's heart, a romantic streak and an interest in generally doing the right thing. Fuck that nonsense, man! Here's a real hero: An entitled chucklehead who complains a lot about how he wants to "matter" again because, dude, he saved the world.

Witwicky — who I am genuinely surprised is never referred to within the film as "Twatlicky," given that the Bay universe is the kind of place where you goad a robot into kicking another robot's ass by suggesting he might be the opposing robot's "bitch" — poor, put-upon sod that he is, can't get a meaningful job. His girlfriend Carly (Rosie Huntington-Whiteley), to whom we are introduced, shall we say, backwards, lets him live in her palace of an apartment and calls him her hero for reasons never sufficiently explained, seeing as Sam has no discernible talents or skills. Carly, on the other hand, is employed and appears fairly

self-sufficient, so the movie works hard to remind us that she is, in fact, just a hot collectible that Sam had better hold onto.

I'm honestly not sure what purpose anyone serves in this film, except to play a type (Josh Duhamel is especially good as Effective Military Fellow) or chew scenery (as done with gusto by the Johns: Malkovich and Turturro). Who needs ass characters when you have GIANT ROBOTS? The stakes are ostensibly high — just the end of the world, man, no bigs — but after 30 tolerable minutes of backstory regarding the secrets of the moon landing, the film dissolves into incoherent, unengaging nonsense. Bay has zero sense of physical logic; shit blows up, robots fight and are impossible or easy to kill depending on what the scene requires, Carly gets kidnapped so Sam can prove his manliness by rescuing her, and the number of Decepticons on or near Earth is so variable that I'm not sure the Decepticon leaders could tell you the strength of their army.

And we're supposed to eat this up with a spoon and beg for more. Look, I like movies in which things blow up real good, but that doesn't mean I — or you — ought to tolerate films that leave you feeling as if the director has asked you to pay for the privilege of being fed a series of logos dotted with meaningless dialogue while he laughs at you as he gets inducted into some billionaire's club. Action movies can be smart and fun and leave you feeling like you could totally save the world with your robot buddies. That's what they're for. But uninspiring, insipid movies like *Transformers* rake in the dough, and there's always someone willing to make the least creative effort for the largest financial gain. The obnoxious and ungrateful shall inherit the Autobots, the power and the cash. Am I talking about Michael Bay or Sam Witwicky? Honestly, does it matter? **EW**

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