



Snow What?

Stupid, silly, pretty, sloppy, dopey, stubbly & dull

SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN: Directed by Rupert Sanders. Screenplay by Evan Daugherty; screen story by Daugherty, John Lee Hancock and Hossein Amini. Cinematography, Greig Fraser. Editors, Conrad Buff IV and Neil Smith. Music, James Newton Howard. Starring Kristen Stewart, Charlize Theron and Chris Hemsworth. Universal Pictures, 2012. PG-13. 127 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

When a movie poster trumpets not the film's stars but that it's "From the producers of *Alice in Wonderland*," we should see that as a bright and telling signpost: The film to come will be full of brief flashes and thin shadows, hollowness and pretty costumes, a mass-produced print hung in an antique frame.

Snow White and the Huntsman looks like the dark, capital-S Serious flipside to March's *Mirror, Mirror*, though Tarsem Singh had a better handle on the story's emotional complexities. This one opts for a rather more Narnian take: Early in the film, poor Snow (Kristen Stewart), locked away in a tower for something like a decade, recites the Lord's Prayer as she lights her fire. This is your cue, darlings. Snow White is totally Jesus. She's the chosen one, the spirit of life, the very embodiment of purity, and all will be in her kingdom as it is in heaven.

There is, actually, something to be said for someone — someone more creative and brave than the makers of this film — wildly reinterpreting "Snow White" as a feminist Jesus, but this movie doesn't do that. It just sloppily crosses the streams of myth and fairy tale with no regard for logic, sense or good storytelling. The nonsensical things in

Snow White and the Huntsman range from the silly (how does a girl locked in a tower for so long know how to stay on a galloping horse?) to the borderline offensive: There's something deeply uncomfortable about the sight of Ian McShane, Toby Jones, Nick Frost and others done up as dwarves. Was their relative star power really so vital to the film?

Charlize Theron growls and shouts and glowers as an underwritten evil queen; Stewart is a passable Snow, but Snow is a blank slate of innocence. It's hard to attach anything to her other than a ribbon sash proclaiming her goodness. Evil wants her heart, good wants her on the throne and the Huntsman (Chris Hemsworth) gives her the advantage. Hemsworth, playing a drunken lout with stubbly, sensitive abandon, swings an axe and lets his hair get greasy with equal enthusiasm, and it's not his fault the film is so certain it's getting a sequel that it doesn't finish his story.

It barely finishes its own story, for that matter. Director Rupert Sanders, in his first feature film, is perfectly competent at pretty, *Lord of the Rings*-influenced shots of travelers traipsing across the land (these shots make little sense unless you assume it always takes twice as long to leave a Dark Forest as it does to enter it). He does a nice thing or two with a bridge troll and some CGI birds, but much of the film — action sequences and otherwise — is repetitive and choppy, and never more so than at the end, when good defeats evil, puts on a pretty dress and calls it a day without so much as a graceful speech. When you're Jesus/Aslan/the Chosen One, I guess you assume we've heard it all before. **EW**

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