



IS BIGGER BETTER?

Avengers: Age of Ultron is massive in scope but light on story

Even if Joss Whedon hadn't already been telling the press that he's (probably) done directing Avengers films, it would've been clear to Whedon fans that *Avengers: Age of Ultron* is his finale. There's the iconic tracking shot that opens the film, nodding to each of our superheroes as it checks in with them amid a snowy forest fight. And there's the Hellmouth, a gaping hole in the earth where a small town once stood. There are a few other Whedon tropes, but those are the big ones, borrowed from closing statements in previous movies like *Serenity*, his send-off to the short-lived TV series *Firefly*.

If only there was a little more Whedon in the rest of the film. *Age of Ultron* picks up mid-battle for what's left of Loki's staff and its pretty gem, which proves vital to Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.)'s dream of creating a global peacekeeping robot army.

Nothing remotely dubious about that, right? Right.

When it all goes awry, the Avengers have to fight the resulting homicidal robot with daddy issues — as well as each other (a Hulk/Iron Man fight goes on endlessly) and, for a little while, their own demons. That's thanks to the introduction of the telepathic/telekinetic Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olsen) who, along with her speedy twin, Pietro (Aaron Taylor-Jones), is a super-powered human created by a bad guy's experiments with that mystical gem. Olsen, even saddled with an awkward accent, might be the best thing about this movie; she ghosts around like a haunted child and then switches to full-on rage at the drop of a hat (or building).

Age of Ultron is full of introductions, explanations for where the other women are (Pepper Potts and Jane Foster are far too busy to help save the world) and shoehorned-in love interests, as well as heavily computer-generated fight sequences and, occasionally, a really good Whedon crack or nifty stunt for Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson). She's still making the rest of the Avengers look a little tired, which is why it's extra frustrating when the plot sidelines Black Widow for part of the finale.

But there's so much crammed into this film that everything feels a little sidelined: the hit-or-miss quips, the lackluster fight sequences, the vague locations, the cameo appearances, the fact that Ultron is in the internet but never does anything diabolical with it. *Age of Ultron* goes big — big cast, worldwide destruction, giant robot army — but in the end, it feels like very little happened.

Good job, kids; you saved the world. Status quo maintained. We'll see you for the next round. ■

MOVIE CAPSULES

While We're Young

If 2013's *Frances Ha* seemed a little nicer than writer-director Noah Baumbach's usual fare — fewer pointed observations, more gentleness toward his characters, no matter how self-deluded — *While We're Young* is a trip back to slightly rougher territory (though not quite as rough as *Greenberg*, which also starred Ben Stiller). Sly and self-aware, Baumbach is a deeply fair storyteller, giving his characters room to hang themselves and room to get their shit together all at once. Stiller plays Josh, a stalled documentary filmmaker married to a film producer (Naomi Watts). The movie is wickedly on the nose in its depiction of men so self-obsessed they can't see who they really are — or who their friends are. Yet, for all its bite, *While We're Young* is a reminder that doing your own thing is much easier when you're not worried about what everyone else — peers, elders, smart-ass kids — is doing. (Bijou Metro)

What We Do in the Shadows

What We Do in the Shadows is co-written and directed by *Flight of the Conchords'* Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, who directed Clement in 2007's *Eagle vs. Shark*. This will tell some people everything they need to know about *Shadows*, which is as deadpan and mundane a vampire mockumentary set in New Zealand as you could ever hope to see. Waititi plays Viago, whose ingratiating, eager smile rarely falters; Clement is Vladislav, who looks like an extra-hirsute Nick Cave. Rounding out the household is Deacon (Jonathan Brugh), who strings along a human, Jackie (Jackie van Beek), and Petyr (Ben Fransham), whose Cthulhu-like teeth render him pretty much mute. And the leader of a low-key gang of werewolves yells at his pack to wear tracksuits when they're going to change, so they don't bust out of their jeans. Being a vampire is just another way of walking the world, folks. You just get to do it for a lot longer. (Bijou Metro)

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Sat 1:00, 3:15
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CLOUDS OF SILS MARIA Fri-Sun 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:45
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WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS Fri-Sun 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
Mon-Thu 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 10:00

WHILE WE'RE YOUNG Fri-Sun 12:15, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15
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11:30, 1:20, 2:15, 4:05, 6:15, 7:50, 9:45

CINDERELLA (2015) (DIG) (PG)
10:20, 1:05, 4:10, 7:35, 10:20

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: INSURGENT (DIG) (PG-13)
9:50, 12:40, 3:45, 7:15, 10:10

EX MACHINA (DIG) (R)
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GET HARD (DIG) (R)
11:10, 2:30, 5:05, 7:40, 10:10

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10:15, 1:45, 4:45, 7:20, 9:50

HOT PURSUIT (DIG) (PG-13)
10:25, 12:45, 3:10, 5:30, 7:55, 10:15

THE LONGEST RIDE (DIG) (PG-13)
9:45, 12:50, 3:50, 7:05, 10:05

MONKEY KINGDOM (DIG) (G)
10:05, 12:25, 2:40, 5:10

PAUL BLART: MALL COP 2 (DIG) (PG)
10:10, 12:55, 3:40, 7:10, 9:55

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