

Robert Pattinson swoops down in this very dark and long reboot in 'The Batman'

By Moira Macdonald
The Seattle Times

Imagine, if you will, the pitch meeting for "The Batman," Matt Reeves' reboot of the Caped Crusader franchise starring Robert Pattinson.

"Like 'Joker,'" says someone at a conference table, "but more depressing." Someone else pipes up, "We could save money on lighting by just, you know, not lighting it at all." And another joins in, "And what if we made it really, really long?"

Behold "The Batman," which is all of these things: depressing, dark and endless. (I think it's

about seven hours long, to be precise? But I may have blacked out toward the end.) I don't know about you, but this particular time in history does not seem like the moment for a movie that will leave you a) miserable and b) wondering why nobody in Gotham City seems to have heard of light bulbs. Your mileage may vary, but for me — who loved both the Tim Burton and the Christopher Nolan "Batman" universes — this one feels like an earnest but bloated misfire.

Pattinson, joining the mercifully sparse brotherhood of Superheroes Who Are Too Moody to Wash Their Hair, here

'THE BATMAN'

2 stars (out of 4)

MPAA rating: PG-13 (for strong violent and disturbing content, drug content, strong language, and some suggestive material)

Running time: 2:56

Where to watch: In theaters

plays a young, eerily pale and very intense Bruce Wayne. But this is no origin story: Bruce is already Gotham's vigilante hero, lurking in the night and swooping down in his Batsuit to wreak vengeance on criminals. And his efforts are sorely needed;



Warner Bros. Pictures/TNS

Jeffrey Wright, left, as Lt. James Gordon and Robert Pattinson in "The Batman."

this version of Gotham City is a hellhole, drenched in constant sodden downpours (seriously, and I say this as a Seattleite, that is a lot of rain), night-lit in the grim brownish-yellow of tobacco stains, filled with roaming criminals who've taken makeup lessons from the Joker. (I kid. Somebody has to.)

Though Pattinson isn't given the opportunity to bring much to the role other than an impressively chiseled jaw (important for a superhero whose upper face is frequently covered), Reeves has at least surrounded him with an impressive cast with which to table-set a franchise: Zoe Kravitz as slinky cat burglar Selina Kyle; Paul Dano as the film's chief villain, the

serial killer Riddler; Colin Farrell, completely unrecognizable behind a faceful of prosthetics, as nightclub owner/gangster Oz, aka Penguin; John Turturro as Gotham crime kingpin Carmine Falcone; Jeffrey Wright as Gotham cop James Gordon; and Andy Serkis as faithful Wayne butler Albert.

All of these performances are impeccably professional, some of them more so than others. Kravitz won't make you forget Michelle Pfeiffer, but her Selina has an appropriately haunted quality; Dano has a few completely unhinged moments; Wright makes you believe, against all probability, that a smart cop would take advice from a random guy in a bat outfit.

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