

Film Review

TINTIN: SECRET OF THE UNICORN



As a parent I don't always expect to like the films I take my children to see. After all, they're aimed at children, aren't they? Often, I'm right. *Despicable Me* was dreadful, *Cars 2* was a car crash, and as for *Gnomeo and Juliet*? Well, don't get me started!

However, I am sometimes surprised by the quality of kids' movies. I cried all the way through *Toy Story 3*, and I thought Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* was visually splendid – great costumes, and fantastic effects.

So which category did *Tintin* fit into? Well, I'd have to say the second – it was thoroughly enjoyable, for three very different reasons.

The first was its storyline. Based very closely on the original books, the story was detailed, eventful and complex. It required my full attention for the entire hour and fifty minutes. There were several exciting set pieces, too, and I particularly enjoyed Captain Haddock's vivid memory of his ancestor's fight against pirates. Another highlight was the destruction of a town as Haddock accidentally fired a rocket into the wall of a dam, causing a torrent of water to race down the hill.

The second reason I enjoyed it was because it kept my children utterly absorbed for

the whole time. You can tell when a film is bad; kids fidget like a dog with fleas, or ask loudly to go to the toilet, or start rummaging annoyingly into the snack bag. On Sunday, they stared at the screen, barely remembering they had sweets and drinks on their lap. That's worth the price of the ticket!

Tintin is based on a set of cartoon books, so of course the film had to be animated, and this brings me to my third reason for enjoying it. Spielberg didn't try to copy the original style. He created his own computer generated look, although there were a few references to Hergé's originals (Tintin has his portrait drawn at the start, and it's just like the books). The detail of the images was incredible, like Snowy's fur blowing in the breeze, or Haddock's wrinkled eyes. Spielberg also created some beautiful cross fades, where one scene ended and the next began. My favourite was when Haddock and Tintin were in the desert, staring at miles of sand dunes. Haddock began telling the story of his great-grandfather's ship and as he spoke the ship appeared and the dunes slowly morphed into huge waves.

All in all, I'd say that this is a film which will be as popular with parents as with kids. Definitely worth going to see!