

Bay's in Toyland: "Transformers: Dark of the Moon"

Written by Mike Schulz

Thursday, 30 June 2011 11:57

- [Buy OEM Adobe Creative Suite 4 Web Premium](#)
- [Discount - Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Autodesk Alias Design 2012 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Sony DVD Architect Pro 6](#)
- [Buy OEM Agile Bits 1Password 3 MAC](#)
- [19.95\\$ Agile Bits 1Password 3 MAC cheap oem](#)
- [Download Lynda.com - Up And Running With Tumblr](#)
- [Download Microsoft Windows 7 Enterprise with SP1 \(32 bit & 64 bit\)](#)
- [Buy Autodesk Softimage 2011 \(en,ja\)](#)
- [Discount - Lynda.com - iOS 5 SDK New Features](#)
- [Download MathWorks MatLab R2009b \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Create an Interactive Map with jQuery](#)



TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON

As long as *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* didn't come off as the worst movie of the year – or rather, the worst movie of *several* years – it would stand as a notable improvement on 2009's

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen

. I'm greatly relieved, then, to say that Michael Bay's latest, ultra-loud toy story is not the foul, nightmarish, jaw-dropping travesty that its predecessor was. Only half of it is.

That's a pleasant surprise, but the bigger surprise of *Dark of the Moon* is that so much of it manages to entertain and even, on occasion, exhilarate, which is no mean feat considering that almost none of it makes a lick of sense. Sure, the film is awful in the expected Michael Bay ways: The storyline is all but completely incoherent; characters switch allegiances and locales shift with no rhyme or reason; the comedic routines – at least the routines that

appear

comedic – seem to have been thought up by a particularly slow-witted fourth-grader. (Was Ehren Kruger's script, by any chance, written in crayon?) Still, I've endured less amusing sights this year than

Dark of the Moon

's image of an enormous, slithering, metallic worm tearing up Chicago's Wacker Drive. And its team of soldiers sliding down a toppling skyscraper like passengers on the

Titanic.

And Alan Tudyk, as a vaguely fey German named Dutch, breezing across the screen in a floral-patterned suit jacket. Bay's movie may be crummy in big ways, but it's kind of great in lots

Bay's in Toyland: "Transformers: Dark of the Moon"

Written by Mike Schulz

Thursday, 30 June 2011 11:57

of little ones.

Do you even care about the plot? There are good transformers, the Autobots, and bad transformers, the Decepticons, and they fight. A lot. There's a narrative thread involving the 'bots home planet of Cybertron being pulled into the Earth's atmosphere. Every so often, Shia LaBeouf throws a hissy fit about not being appreciated for saving the planet – *twice!* – while not recognizing that he might be getting the brush-off for being an obnoxious, dithering ass. (Has any other screen actor degenerated from entertaining to excruciating quite as thoroughly, or quickly, as Shia LaBeouf? Does

anyone

still enjoy watching this guy?) And it all ends with a thunderous battle royale above and within the Windy City. You'll know when

Dark of the Moon

's last scene is starting, because it arrives at roughly the movie's 90-minute mark ... which would be awesome if the movie weren't 150 minutes long. Seriously, the final hour is one extended action sequence, albeit one occasionally interrupted by lame jokes.



Which is, of course, just what the film's fan base wants, and heaven knows Bay delivers as much *Transformers-ness* in *Dark of the Moon* as anyone could *possibly* want. From the cheeky revisionist history of the opening moon-landing to the bowel-loosening explosions of the finale, Bay's movie feels like an attempt to outdo everything the director has previously attempted in terms of scale and visual audacity, and there are moments when he succeeds rather spectacularly. That steel-covered slithery thing – which is called Shockwave, and which is like a more menacing and destructive version of

Dune

's sandworm – is pretty breathtaking, and the Decepticons' casual annihilation of Chicago's citizenry is pretty horrific; terrified onlookers are zapped by lasers (or something) and burst into poofs of smoke, shredded clothing, and bone. While the protracted climax eventually turns into too much of a fine thing, the effects are mostly outstanding, and some scenes feature unexpectedly potent imagery: paratroopers falling from the sky like flying squirrels, a building's slow collapse suggested through the unbalanced water level in a glass pitcher.

As usual, the banter between the transformers, good *and* evil, vacillates between humorless exposition and humorless wisecracks, and the dialogue is occasionally obvious to the point of stupefaction. (When a tiff among a trio of 'bots leads to a Mexican standoff, did we really need one of them to say, "It's a Mexican standoff!?"?) But while no one could conceivably be going to this second sequel for the wit, you might be in shock at just how much wit the movie actually

Bay's in Toyland: "Transformers: Dark of the Moon"

Written by Mike Schulz

Thursday, 30 June 2011 11:57

contains, especially since the screenwriter doesn't appear to have provided any himself.

To be sure, LaBeouf is consistently dreadful, Ken Jeong (must he be in *everything*?!) briefly matches him, and while arm candy Rosie Huntington-Whiteley improves on Megan Fox, that was hardly a tough assignment. (Huntington-Whiteley is an amazing camera specimen, though; her lips seem to encompass half her face.) Still, while you're waiting for the next bit of mind-blowing action spectacle in

Transformers: Dark of the Moon

, take a moment to thank the gods of eccentricity for John Turturro, Frances McDormand, Julie White, Kevin Dunn, Patrick Dempsey, the great Alan Tudyk, and – gulp! – John Malkovich, all of whose sly-comic contributions help make the wait a relatively painless one. Reacting to the unfathomable presence of LaBeouf in his building, Malkovich's uppity business magnate asks, "WTF to

that

?" I asked the same thing about Malkovich's presence but couldn't have been happier to see him.

Follow Mike on Twitter at [Twitter.com/MikeSchulz/Now](https://twitter.com/MikeSchulz/Now) .