

Fantastic Misery by Charlie Alexander

Fantastic Four

WHEN Dr Reed Richards and his friend and partner Ben Grimm find themselves with ideas but no funding, they are forced to turn to the one person they really don't want to deal with, a successful ex-school mate Victor Von Doom.

When a freak of nature exposes them all to solar radiation they find that their DNA starts to change and they develop powers. Doom finds his company spiralling into decline, while the others either race to find a cure for themselves or revel in their new abilities.



Doom starts to see the other four members of the failed experiment as the reason for his problems and as his mind devolves into paranoia and hate he starts to target his ex colleagues for destruction.

Based on the Marvel comic series of the same name, the story bears some similarities to the X-Men movies, and there was some legal action to prevent the Fantastic Four from being released.

Ioan Gruffudd as the driven Mr Fantastic plays the role of an emotionally retarded pro-



fessor very well to the sexy siren of ex flame Sue Storm (**Jessica Alba**).

The collective short gasp of all the males in the audience when **Jessica Alba** first appears on screen in her suit was confirmation of her success in this role.

Sue's younger brother Johnny Storm (**Chris Evans**) is alternately charismatic and annoying in his role.

It is his desire to explore his powers that ultimately force the other three to join him as heroes in a battle against the deranged Doom (**Julian McMahon**).

This is counterpointed with the pain of Ben (**Michael Chiklis**) becoming The Thing, who finds rejection from his loved ones and solace only with a blind lady.



While very well constructed the Fantastic Four suffers from an extended story development stage and a truncated finale.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the movies end was little more than an excuse to arrange a sequel where the real conclusion of this story will take place.

That said, Director Tim Story has delivered an entertaining and revealing look into one of the superhero icons – The Fantastic Four.

On general release

Mr & Mrs Smith

MR SMITH says he's an engineer. He actually kills people for a living. Mrs Smith is a house wife. Her home is immaculately kept, but she actually also kills people for a living.

Unfortunately this double life is leading to marital problems and worse still when sent by their respective organisations after the same target, the target escapes and their organisations give them each 48 hours to find the other assassin and kill them, or be silenced themselves.



Once they understand that each is the others target a near fatal misunderstanding starts a game of escalating cat and mouse.

This story premise is a wonderful idea that opens up development on so many different levels. Mr Smith (**Brad Pitt**) is kind of a slob, relaxed, has good humour about his job and is quite flamboyant.

Mrs Smith (**Angelina Jolie**) is quieter, deadlier and more precise. She is into technology and has a dedicated team of women in logistical support.

So whilst they are peers that have each others professional respect there is also the competitive edge that starts to drive some passion back



into their relationship while reducing the property values of anything they happen to be standing in at the time.

Shown with humour, the redevelopment of the relationship between Mr & Mrs Smith takes some interesting turns and shows real humanity in a 'world' generally considered to be devoid of it.

The pair eventually find themselves with the real decision about their future, and suitably so during a Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid moment. Director Doug Liman had created a very entertaining movie with Mr & Mrs Smith capturing sex, violence and humour in an equally balanced mix. Mr & Mrs Smith may be flawed but it is one entertaining ride.

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