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Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

Abigail Packard

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Movie Review

Title: Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them
Main Performers: Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston, Dan Fogler
Director: David Yates
Producer: J.K. Rowling
Reviewer: Abigail Packard
Studio: Warner Bros. Pictures
Year Released: AaBbCcDd
Run Time: 2016
MPAA Rating: PG-13
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Outstanding



Review

While Newt Scamander listens to a fanatic rant about witches lose in the streets of New York City, a Niffler escapes the mysterious case he holds. The Niffler enters a bank and Newt goes after it, bumping into “no-maj” Jacob Kowalski and they accidentally switch cases. Newt is taken into custody by Tina Goldstein, a demoted auror, after creating disturbances while looking for the Niffler. In the meantime, Jacob opens Newt’s case and a few of the magical creatures escape. Newt finds Jacob and switches back the cases and the two find refuge in Tina’s home. Newt and Jacob embark on a journey to recover the missing creatures, but Tina turns them into the Magical Congress of the United States of America. Graves, another auror, questions Newt and discovers an Obscurus—a dark magical force that grows within a child who tries to suppress their magical abilities to evade discovery by non-magical people—inside Newt’s case. Tina and Newt discover that Graves is looking for another Obscurus that has been wreaking havoc in the city. They find a boy Credence and realize he has been possessed by the Obscurus after years of suppressing his magic. Credence is destroyed by the MACUSA. Graves begins attacking the other wizards and after being subdued, Newt reveals that Graves is in fact Grindelwald, a dangerous wizard that wants to expose the wizarding community in order to create a society where wizards and witches rule over non-magical people.

For fans of the Harry Potter franchise this film was true to the Potter world. Moreover, it gave new information and expounded on themes of good vs. evil that Rowling has pushed with all of her works since the beginning. There were moments of darkness (abuse, hopelessness) that drastically contrasted with the scenes of light and goodness and highlighted this particular theme nicely. The setting of late-1920s America is refreshing in its originality and total separation from the present-day English landscape in which the Potter books and movies are set. The subject matter, although similar in theme, is also refreshingly original and separate from the beloved series. Despite these drastic, yet welcome changes, the film is also true to the wizarding world that Potter fans know and love: apparition, wands, spells, charms, amazing creatures based in real lore, even the music alludes to the famous theme from the Potter movies. The acting was stellar; Redmayne played the introverted Newt so well and Fogler’s Jacob was humorous and genuine. Avid fans, both of the generation that aged with Potter and those that are now coming to love Potter, will not be disappointed by this new installation in the Potter canon.

*Contains mild scenes of physical abuse.