



## Alice Through The Looking Glass



OUT NOW / RATED TBC / 108 MINS.

**DIRECTOR** James Bobin

**CAST** Mia Wasikowska, Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen, Anne Hathaway

**PLOT** Alice (Wasikowska) returns to Underland to find a gravely ill Mad Hatter (Depp) and sets off to solve the mystery of his past after stealing a time-hopping device from Time (Baron Cohen).

### DESPITE MAKING A STAGGERING

\$1 billion-plus at the international box office, it's safe to say that, six years on from release, Tim Burton's take on *Alice In Wonderland* isn't a particularly beloved take on Lewis Carroll's classic children's book. But with that kind of cash haul, a sequel was coming whether it was a good idea or not. *Alice Through The Looking Glass* — which bears little resemblance to the source material — is resolutely not.

Those hoping that director James Bobin (*The Muppets*, *Flight Of The Conchords*) brings his mirthful humour and lightness of touch to proceedings are

in for a deflating disappointment: *Looking Glass* is a grim, joyless slog that sucks any of the imagination out of Carroll's works and spews them

back onto the screen in a sickly torrent of garish CGI, misfired jokes and dour storytelling that rejects all notions of fun in the way that a human body would reject a pig heart during an ill-advised organ transplant.

The nonsensical plot, which fails to hold up to even minor scrutiny, involves Alice (Wasikowska, giving it a red hot go despite the trainwreck going on around her) trying to save The Mad Hatter (Depp, forever finding new sharks to jump) who's dying because he thinks his long-lost family are dead (or something). The illogical solution seems to be stealing a CGI whatsit from Time (Baron Cohen doing a wobbly Borat-esque accent) so she can travel back in time to figure out what happened to the Hatter's family (or something). Never mind that she may destroy everything in existence by doing so — no, she'll brazenly risk it all for the sad Hatter. Cue dull, pointless back stories and time you'll never get back.

**ADAM THOMPSON**

**VERDICT** Like 1985's *Return To Oz*, this is an unnecessarily dark sequel that completely forgoes the fun and frivolity of the source material. It'll still make money on brand name alone — just hope it's not enough to encourage a third chapter.

Hatters gonna hat, hat, hat, hat, hat. Shake it off.



### BONUS FEATURE

## TRULY, MADLY, DEPPLY

### MIA WASIKOWSKA TALKS JOHNNY DEPP AND AN R-RATED *LOOKING GLASS*...

#### The first *Alice* made all the money. Is there more pressure for this to be a success now?

I guess so but it really doesn't make much of a difference to me — I'd do [*the film*] anyway. Of course I hope it'll do well, but after I finish filming there's nothing [*to worry about*]... There probably is [*more pressure in general*], only in the sense that you're more visible in public for like three months.

#### Are you recognised in public more now?

Maybe. I think that'll happen for a few weeks and then fade away in a similar way when the first one came out. I felt a little bit recognised in America, but not here, and it then kind of goes away in a few weeks. I still feel fairly anonymous, which is nice.

#### Is it hard to keep a straight face working opposite Johnny Depp when he basically looks like a walking LSD trip?

I think I've become quite desensitised to that because everybody in that film looks, you know, quite unnatural. But I probably feel more comfortable talking to Johnny when he's like that... I forget that he's underneath that. I know in the first film he came on set once to do off-camera stuff as himself and it was just the most terrifying thing of my life, but as The Mad Hatter he's perfectly comfortable to chat with.

#### How was it working with Sacha Baron Cohen?

Yeah, good. James [*Bobin, director*] puts it best when he says he [*Baron Cohen*] plays the confident idiot really well. Because he definitely does and he plays such a ridiculous character in this. The dynamic between him and Alice is really cute and she's the only one who pulls him up on his idiocy and that was really nice to have that. And he's so funny and improvises a lot so that was quite fun. I liked the scenes with him.

#### James co-created Bruno, Borat and Ali G with Sacha, so they obviously go back a long way. Was there a lot of clowning around on set?

They kept it so professional considering how they have such a long history. But James had to keep him in line because he strays into very not-PG territory, so James had to really keep it 'Disney', which was a challenge!

#### So there could be an R-rated cut?

There definitely could be very easily, of just his scenes. **JAMES JENNINGS**