

Lifestyles

'Monsters vs. Aliens' is feminist family fun

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Review

"Monsters vs. Aliens," a new 3-D animated feature from DreamWorks Animation, begins with Susan Murphy (Reese Witherspoon), on her wedding day and set to marry egomaniacal weatherman Derek, voiced by Paul Rudd, getting hit by a meteor that causes her to grow several stories tall and turns her hair white.

The government then puts her in quarantine with several other monsters voiced by an all-star cast. There's Bob (Seth Rogen), a blob accidentally created from a genetically altered tomato ranch dressing. He has no brain, and it shows, as he Confuses Susan with a boy when he see her. ("It's a boy; look at his boobies!")

Hugh Laurie is Dr. Cockroach, a mad scientist who tried to give himself a cockroach's ability to survive radio blasts but ended up with the head of a cockroach as a side effect—which comes in handy because some of his experiments don't work, often ending with him blowing himself up. Luckily, cockroaches can survive anything.

Will Arnett is the missing link as a half-fish, half-ape creature who acts like an out-of shape jock. And Corad Vernon is Insatores, a giant grub who is even bigger than Susan and easily distracted by bright lights.

At first Susan is scared of the other monsters (she tries to smash Dr. Cockroach several times when she first sees him), but she warms up to them fast, although she still wants to shrink back to her normal size to be with Derek. When they are allowed to leave in order to stop an alien who has sent a robot to terrorize San Francisco, Susan takes charge of the situation, impressing her monster friends.

But Derek is not impressed and breaks up with her saying he doesn't want to be in anyone's shadow, and Susan has a very big shadow now. Susan then realizes she doesn't need Derek to be happy, because, hey, look at what's she's accomplished on her own. How many women can say they took on a

giant alien robot?

When Susan briefly loses her power she fears she can't help the world any longer, but her monster peers assure her she's still

a very dynamic woman, big or not. Who would have thought that a movie involving monsters fighting aliens would have such a feminist touch to it?



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