

Film Review: 'Final Destination' makes its last trip to theaters

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It can be expected that the fourth film in a series stemming from a mildly entertaining suspense-slasher will not be fresh or inventive, so it comes as no surprise that "The Final Destination" lives up to said low expectations. Despite a 3-D gimmick and a pretty sizeable fan base, the latest "Final Destination" seems a little tired. The only really unique part is the opening credits, which feature an X-ray-like depiction of freak-accident deaths from previous "Final Destinations."

The plot veers very little from previous films. A group of young, beautiful kids (all played by relative unknowns) attend a racing event, when the silent leader of the pack, Nick, sees a vision of a fatal accident, slaughtering him, his friends and a few notable characters around them in the bleachers. Upon returning to reality, Nick makes a huge fuss and is able to lead his friends and a few others out of the stadium mere seconds before a huge ignition of fire emits from the stands. Days later, after hearing of the horrifying

ways fellow survivors of the crash have died, Nick and his girlfriend Lori realize that Death has a plan and he's coming back for them.



In all fairness, the original story line that captured a cult-like following actually has some merit. To think of Death — yes, capitalized — as the menacing killer that is vengeful to those that escape him when it's "their time" is a rather original idea. There's no guy with a mask wielding a knife and hiding behind corners who is usually easily out-witted. Death can come at any time, and in the

case of the "Final Destination" films, by rather trivial occurrences — a few screws loose here, perhaps some combustibles there. This departure from conventional slasher flicks gave the original "Final Destination" a spark, yet also led to sequels that could not keep the spark ignited.

Unlike the original, "The Final Destination" plays up its audiences' perverse enjoyment of the outlandish deaths by making them even more gruesome, albeit fake-looking (insert a severed head here).

Moreover, the dialogue is poorly written and delivered by a group of run-of-the-mill newcomers. Add to that the use of 3-D and the movie becomes a lot less suspenseful and a lot more laughable. The random deaths, intended to shock and scare, become comical when, for instance, we can see a piece of organ rotating on a stick. Shots like this are so hopelessly ridiculous that it's hard not to laugh at them.

The combination of horror and comedy is nothing new — think all the way back to the "Chucky" movies. Since the production of an honest-to-god scary movie is like trying to get lighting to strike twice, producers might be turning to this emerging genre — popularized by films like "Nightmare on Elm Street," the funny-scary movie — to maintain audiences. By inserting a few comedic lines, or making the threatening killer into a sarcastic, one-lining menace, filmmakers hope to ensure that the audience laughs with them, not at them. "The Final Destination" nods to this style of scare-then-joke filmmaking, but the audience still manages to sneak in a few laughs at the movie.

All in all, "The Final Destination" is one last hurrah for a now tired story line. None of the original sparkle or undeniable star power of a cast member is retained in this latest iteration (take Ali Larter in the first two). All that's left is a gimmick and a few hearty chuckles. But for hardcore fans of the series, that just might be enough.

Comic by Karam Boeshaar

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