
The Doom Movie

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A video game movie that doesn't suck.

Last night, as part of a homework assignment actually, I attended the major motion picture based off one of the grand-fathers of first person games: Doom. You all should know this, but in case anyone is reading this who isn't keen on video games, Doom, along side Mortal Kombat, helped begin this "Video games and Violence" argument that has been going on for years back in the mid 90's. In fact, it was those games that caused the Federal Government to tell the gaming industry to either regulate themselves or they'll get regulated, which led to the formation of the ESRB.

History lesson aside, the major motion picture Doom seems to pay more attention to the recent release, Doom3, than the original game's classic roots. Doom3 was sort of an alternative re-telling of the story of Doom anyway, so it works.

Overall the film was, in my opinion, excellent. While not anywhere near 100% faithful to the Doom games nor an Oscar winning performance for anyone in it, the movie does an excellent job of remaining "faithful" to the feeling of Doom. The movie takes place on Mars, there are monsters on the loose, and the characters have to shoot them with guns in the darkness. The music also sets up an excellent ambiance that, while never a direct reference to any of the Doom games, definitely carries the right feel.

The high point of the film is when one character "transcends" into becoming the infamous "Doom Marine," and the camera switches into strictly first-person mode for several minutes. In this view you watch the character take down monster after monster, wielding a few different weapons, much in the same way that one would do so in a video game. Though this choice of camera angle results in some confusion in points, the image becoming blurry you can't really tell what happened to protagonist, the effect is great. Any of us who have played through a frantic monster fight in a game like Doom can relate the way the battle plays out during that sequence and the references are just great.

The high points aside, there are some definite issues with the film as well. Some of the characters in the film have these interesting concepts, but when you remember that they are supposed to be Marines-in-the-future, you realize that the Corps would have to go real down hill to let some of these losers in. Some of the other characters are also just flat out disturbing, and some of the things they do in the film, well, we could just do without.

Another real big issue is that the plot is altered in one key way — they never go to Hell. There is a lot of figurative talk as if Mars had become Hell due to the events of the movie, which is fair; but when you go to Hell in Doom to kick Demon tail, you are IN HELL kicking DEMON TAIL, quite literally. Oh well, I suppose that is open to interpretation.

Doom is not a movie for everyone. If you're squeamish or have a general dislike of First Person shooters, I'd stay away from it. If you can't tolerate long droughts of set up before anything real interesting happens, then you'll probably hate the first half of the movie too. But if you're a Doom fan, or hell, even just a first-person shooter fan, you should be able to appreciate the way this movie follows a storytelling and action layout in ways that us gamers should be familiar with.

The movie is also hilarious. There are some great one-liners from the film, most of which are from The Rock.

If nothing else I'd love to see the movie again just to try and remember more of them and to laugh when The Rock dons the evil grin of the Doom Marine from finding his new toy. I wouldn't say that you got to pay full theatre price for this one, but if you get a chance to try it, try it out