

# Godzilla vs. Kong: Exactly What You Expect

Maxwell Walpole, assistant editor

On March 31, Legendary Pictures released the latest entry in their Monsterverse shared universe *Godzilla vs. Kong*, starring Alexander Skarsgård, Millie Bobby Brown, Rebecca Hall, Brian Tyree Henry, and Demián Bichir. As the title suggests, the film pits the fearsome reptilian kaiju Godzilla against the noble giant ape King Kong. A research team led by scientist Nathan Lind (Skarsgård) and Kong expert Dr. Ilene Andrews (Hall) lead Kong to his homeworld of hollow earth to find a power source for an experimental weapon to defend against Godzilla's sudden, mysterious attacks. Meanwhile, conspiracy theorist Bernie Hayes (Henry) and rebellious teen Madison Russell (Brown) attempt to uncover a conspiracy within the Apex Cybernetics corporation.

The sections of *Godzilla vs. Kong* that focus on the human characters are mainly just there to move the plot along. While it may be disappointing for some that most of the human characters receive little focus or backstory, ultimately most viewers (including me) are just there to see giant monsters batter each other senseless. With a speedy and efficient plot with little to no filler, it does not take long for the film to get to the action.

The real heart of the film is, of course, the monsters. While many of the human characters

feel underdeveloped, Kong, Godzilla, and even their mechanical foe Mechagodzilla are brimming with personality. At first, Godzilla takes a more antagonistic role in the film, attacking humans and kaiju alike with relentless ferocity. He looks meaner, too; his ember-orange eyes smoldering with hate, his mouth locked in a spiteful snarl. In combat, he moves with the confident swagger of a prizefighter and strikes with the savagery and cunning of a crocodile. His sudden change in attitude is understandable. His authority has been challenged, and he is not about to let that slide. On the other hand, Kong is a much more animalistic fighter, contrasting his usually gentle disposition when interacting with humans. Their mutual enemy Mechagodzilla is a sadistic brawler, brutally beating and stomping his opponents into submission.

While a more dramatic approach to giant monsters is

more than valid, if a writer or director plays things too straight, they risk losing touch with the inherent wonderful absurdity of kaiju movies. One of *Godzilla vs. Kong's* greatest strengths is that it wholeheartedly embraces the absurdity that makes kaiju movies so enjoyable, to delightful results. The movie is big, loud, and ridiculous, but most importantly, it is a whole lot of fun.

*Godzilla vs. Kong* is currently streaming on HBO Max. Alternatively, the film is also available to watch in theaters.



Photo courtesy of Legendary Entertainment