

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen



Paramount/Dreamworks Pictures | Starring Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox, Josh Duhamel, Tyrese Gibson, John Turturro

For \$10, you can go to a store and buy a game like Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots; or you can buy a ticket to *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, a movie that throws that same fighting robots concept into a blender along with a couple-hundred million dollars and change. What comes out feels like the cinematic equivalent of a monster-truck rally.

Revenge, one of the most buzzed about films of the summer, is the sequel to the 2007 release, which featured (as you might have guessed) “transforming” robots. A guy behind me in the screening, in fact, said, “I’d better see some transforming going on!”

For you newcomers, the robots are divided into two camps: the Autobots and Decepticons. The former are here to save the earth from the latter, who want to take over this world because they’ve drained the life out of theirs.

Each robot has its own personality, the grandest of which is Optimus Prime, the “Superman” of the bunch (look at me trying to merge geek worlds together). Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf), a college-bound teenager, lands right in the middle of the war and must navigate through a series of challenges to find the secret that the Decepticons are after.

At this point, I’ve no doubt devoted too much space to the story, which really is just an excuse to show off some of the most intense, explosive fight scenes of the summer. The sequences are fast and relentless. When I watched it, the only

clue I had that the good guys were winning was the spontaneous clapping in the theater.

The special effects are the main event, and production company Industrial Light & Magic does not disappoint. Pyramids are pummeled, freeways crumbled, battleships broken and libraries blown up (take that, Ernest Hemingway!).

Any lessons to be learned? Well, if your garbage disposal suddenly detaches itself from your sink and heads your way—run! Other than that, Sam is loyal to his long-suffering girlfriend, played by Megan Fox; and the U.S. military is triumphantly portrayed as smart, brave and strong. One soldier, played by Tyrese Gibson, postulates: “If God created man in His own image, who made [the robots]?”

The movie is quite entertaining, but a few missteps keep it from truly soaring.

First, it runs a little long (2.5 hours); it would’ve benefited from more edits. A long, drug-induced comedy routine from Sam’s mother comes to mind immediately.

Second, twin robots I’ll refer to as “Jar Jar Clinks” are so silly and cartoonish, you wouldn’t really be surprised to see Mater from Cars line up beside them.

For those who know what they’re in for, which probably will be the majority of viewers, *Revenge* will deliver the action and entertainment they’re seeking. It won’t provoke serious discussion or even leave a long-lasting impression, but it’s probably not supposed to—it’s an unapologetic, summer popcorn flick. The legions of fans and rubbernecks coming to see the demolition derby of twisted metal won’t be disappointed.

Content Watch: *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* is rated PG-13 for pervasive language and innuendo, which is extremely unfortunate since every kid will be clamoring to see it.

*DeWayne Hamby is the associate editor of Christian Retailing.
Check out his blog at .*