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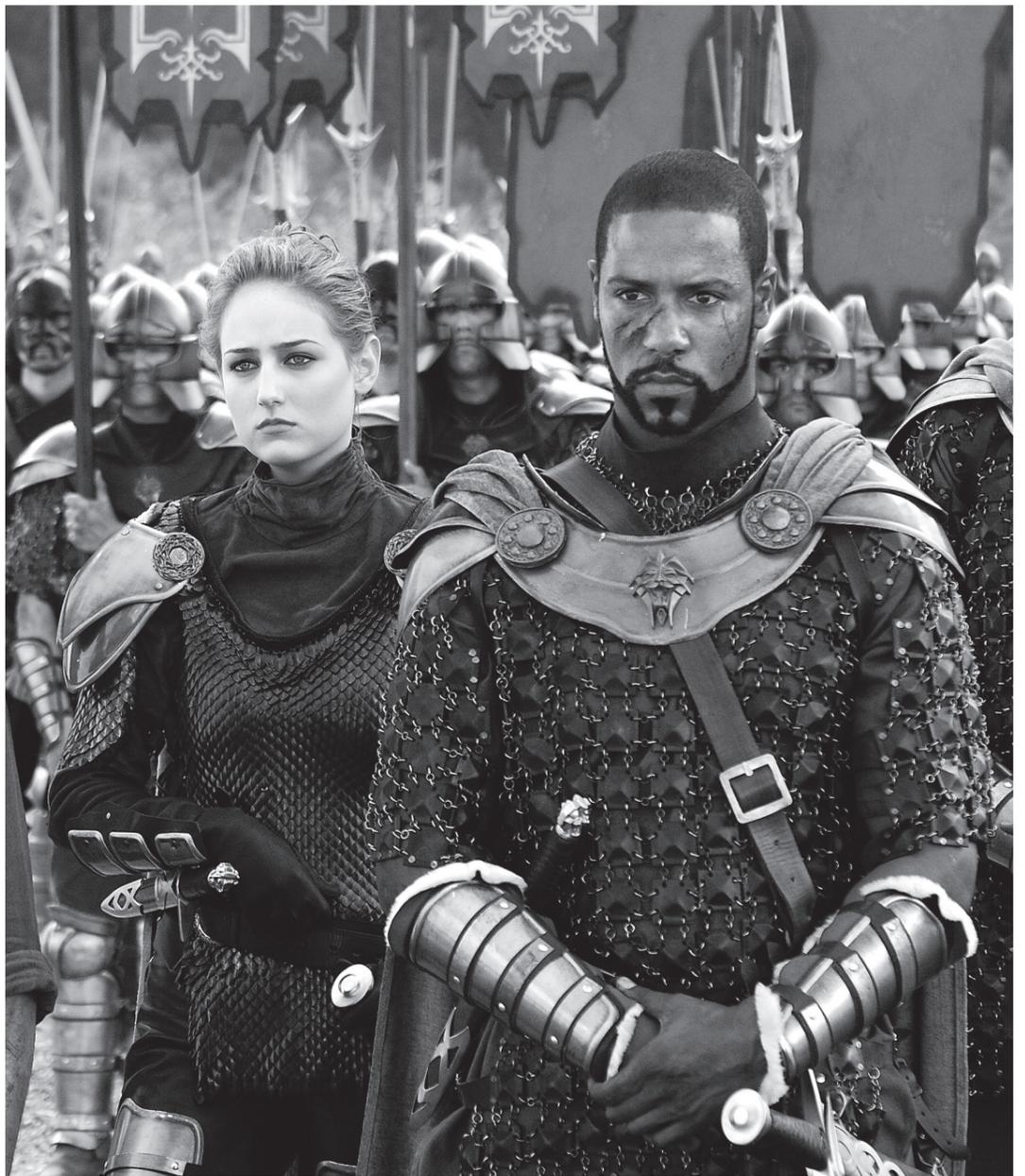
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In the name of the suck

Uwe Boll's latest is an exercise in how not to make a fantasy movie believable

filmreview

In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale

Now Playing
Directed by Uwe Boll
Starring Jason Statham, John Rhys-Davies, Burt Reynolds, and Ray Liotta

JOHN KMECH
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Going into a Uwe Boll film is a little like going into a Chinese buffet after 9pm; you know it's going to be bad, but it's somewhat of a guilty pleasure in seeing whether or not it's palatable and enjoyable or just a hideously cold and greasy mess. Boll has almost as much fame now for his off-camera antics of attempting to box critics and furiously defending his productions as he does for being the most famously derided director of the 21st century.

His latest boondoggle is the exhaustingly titled *In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale*, predictably another video game adaptation (this time of *Dungeon Siege*) that, like Boll's previous films, passes directly into so-bad-it's-good territory.

It's generally not a hopeful sign when the heroic protagonist of your film is named Farmer. But that's exactly who Jason Statham plays, a simple man who alternates cultivating turnips with practicing his sword-fighting, gravity-defying, and troll-decimating skills. Apparently they don't make root-vegetable farmers like they use to.

No sooner do his beautiful, exposition-delivering wife Solana (Claire Forlani) and mop-headed

ragamuffin son go into town than an army of rubber-suited Cavity Creep-like Krugs attack. Led by the evil mage Gallian (a brutally miscast Ray Liotta), they kill Farmer's son and take his wife hostage. He thus sets off on a quest for vengeance and never-ending broadsword theatrics with his sidekicks Ron Perlman and a huskier Legolas lookalike.

Meanwhile, the King (Burt Reynolds) tries to fend off both Gallian's forces and his conniving, wildly gesticulating nephew (Matthew Lillard), who may have some nefarious, predictable ideas in the works. There's also some vine-hanging wood elves led by Kristanna Loken to throw in just for fun.

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That's just how life is in the land of Ehb, a mystical place where there can never be too many scenes ripped from *The Lord of the Rings*. Boll should almost be forced to pay Peter Jackson and the Tolkien estate royalties with the number of set, plot, and character ideas he lifts. He even somehow convinced John Rhys-Davies, who played Gimli, to take on the roll of the gruff, hero-guiding

wizard and deliver lines like "The King has a special interest in this dirt lover."

Boll has been known for his ability to convince star actors into performing in his debacles while robbing them of their dignity, and *Dungeon Siege* is no different, with plenty of big names spouting hilariously ridiculous dialogue. Statham makes as bland of a leading man as is possible, while Burt Reynolds, who looks like he's not sure why he's in the film, spends most of the movie lying in bed, stating absurd credos like "Wisdom is our hammer. Prudence is our nail." Meanwhile, there's only so much of Lillard's grotesque mugging that one can withstand in a two-hour span.

Casting Ray Liotta as a sneering, power-hungry wizard is like casting Joe Pesci as a rugged, ax-wielding dwarf. But Liotta takes the Saruman role and turns him into a flamboyant, painfully overacting stage magician. It's worth-keeping in mind that the man starred in *Goodfellas* and has been nominated for Golden Globes and Emmys when he says things like "How do you like my Krug?" and attacks his enemies with CGI hardcover books.

Ultimately though, the blame for this must lie squarely with Boll, who still shows no understanding of cinematography, editing, or generally what makes a decent film. This doesn't mean that the film isn't enjoyable; however unintentional it is, *Dungeon Siege* is still campy enough to be amusing, and would definitely warrant a rental if you're in the mood for a laugh. If you've seen Boll's movies before, you know what to expect. Whether that's good or bad really depends on you.