

Review #07 : *Stardust* (2007)

A wonderful fantasy tale of action, adventure, and love !

TRAILER

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfYBKDyF-Dk>

Stardust follows Tristan, a young man on a quest to find a fallen star and bring it back to the woman he loves. The only catch is that the star had fallen on the other side of the wall, a doorway between England and a magical kingdom known as Stormhold...

This film is just a joy to watch ! It has something in it for everyone. All f the action scenes are played out beautifully and the comedy is spread out through the film, making it funny without being corny. If I had to compare the likes to another film it would probably have to be the classic *Princess Bride* +++



Charming, lovely, engaging : the essence of a brilliant and sprawling fairy tale with the thundering stamina of a marathon horse race.

Stardust is an original, fun and feel-good fantasy tale of romance and adventure, without mentioning beautiful and engrossing, a la unexpurgated 'Brothers Grimm', which means raw violence is not eschewed, but in this film artfully conveyed.

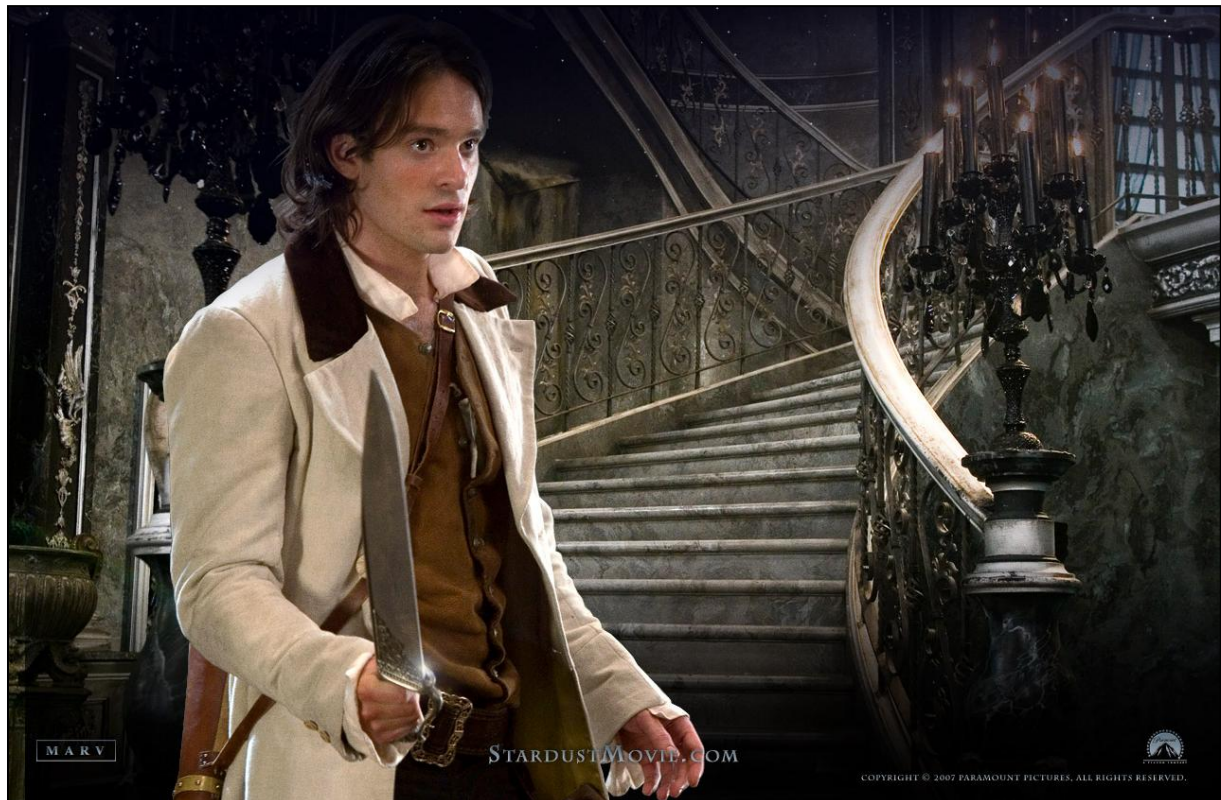


SYNOPSIS

Michelle Pfeiffer is Lamia as deliciously evil a witch as the movies have ever invented. Shooting deadly green lightning from rings on her tapering long-nailed fingers, she suggests a seriously lethal beauty contestant of a certain age who will stop at nothing to seize the crown. As the embodiment of every vain, wicked stepmother in fairy-tale literature mixed with the cauldron-tending crones of *Macbeth*, Michelle Pfeiffer goes for broke with the relish of a star who figures she has nothing to lose.

The eternal youth and beauty she and her sisters covet can be attained only by cutting out and eating the heart of Yvaine (Claire Danes), an actual fallen star that, upon crashing to the ground in the imaginary kingdom of Stormhold, assumes human form. Yvaine must be

found, captured and eviscerated. But since Lamia has only a limited amount of magic to deploy before she begins to shrivel into a grotesque, balding hag, she must conserve her resources. As fire spirals from her hands like serpent tongues, she metamorphoses from a feline beauty with a sickly sweet smile into various stages of decrepitude. Her nightmare image of herself comes and goes as she unleashes and renews her powers. But by all rights Lamia isn't the center of *Stardust*.



The spine of the tale is a conventional initiation story in which Tristan (Charlie Cox), a poor young villager from the English town of Wall, promises to bring the prettiest local girl (Sienna Miller) a fallen star like the shooting one that has just zoomed overhead. She gives him a week to deliver. The town is named after the Wall separating the real world from Stormhold, which humans are forbidden to enter...

REVIEW

Adapted from Neil Gaiman's 1997 Comics, *Stardust* was conceived by Matthew Vaughn, the director of many excellent British gangster films... which leads us to a full-blooded action adventure fairy tale.

Even when the movie goes haywire with an extraneous comic gambit involving an airborne pirate ship, it barrels forward with a fearless audacity. Far too many characters are crowded together for comfort, and there are serious casting errors, but the movie assumes that its churning energy, lightened with whimsy, will carry the day. And, to an extent, it does.



The most glaring of several mistakes in casting is Ms. Danes’s charm-free Yvaine – a cranky older version of her teenage character on the TV series *My So-Called Life*. Even after Yvaine mellows and warms to Tristan, who discovers her in a crater and becomes her gallant protector, Ms. Danes has a distracting habit of scrunching her features into a scowl unbecoming a supernatural heroine who aspires to live *happily ever after*. At a certain point you may find yourself imagining how much better *Stardust* might have been with Gwyneth Paltrow in the role. Yvaine is pursued by an entire hunting party’s worth of characters, whose goals blur into a general stampede. It begins with the death of Stronghold’s cagey monarch (Peter O’Toole), who pits his seven sons against one another for the throne, which can be won only through possession of a ruby pendant worn by Yvaine. After fraternal massacre, three brothers remain to fight it out while the **others’ ghosts amusedly comment from above like a supernatural Greek chorus.**



Beyond Lamia, the movie suffers from a dire lack of strong, clear-cut characters, with one outrageous exception. Halfway through the story, Tristan and Yvaine are rocketed into space, where they eventually plunk down on a pirate ship suspended from a dirigible. Enter Robert De Niro in his all-time campiest screen performance as its skipper, Captain Shakespeare. Wearing a demonic grin and speaking as if playing a caricature, he yanks the movie out of its quasi-medieval Northern Britain past into a farcical nonsense. The fearsome Captain is soon revealed to have dual identities. Alone in his quarters, he exchanges his pirate duds for the costume of a cancan-dancing, boa-twirling Folies-Bergère chorus girl prancing before a mirror to the sounds of Offenbach. If Mr. De Niro's zany drag routine makes as much sense in *Stardust* as a squawking kazoo solo inserted into a Mozart string quartet, it still makes sense if you think of it as a hip response to Johnny Depp's fey, mascara-wearing Jack Sparrow. In that case, this joke about a joke is either a piece of inspired madcap fun or an excruciating embarrassment :s – well who cares I love this film all the same +++

