

Short Review: “Escape from the Planet of the Apes” (1971) by Dr. John L. Flynn



Escape from the Planet of the Apes (1971). 20th Century Fox, 97 min. Director: Don Taylor. Producer: Arthur P. Jacobs. Screenwriter: Paul Dehn. Cast: Roddy McDowall, Kim Hunter, Ricardo Montalban, Eric Braeden, Natalie Trundy, and Bradford Dillman.

This second sequel to “Planet of the Apes” (1968), while clever in rescuing the franchise from the destruction of the planet in the previous entry, was also the weakest of the links in the series. Zira (Hunter) and Cornelius (McDowall) fish Taylor’s spaceship out of the sea before their world is destroyed, and use it to warp back in time to the 1970’s. At first, they are treated as honored guests, but when Dr. Hasslein (Braeden), White House Senior Scientific Advisor, figures out the whole Grandfather-time paradox, he knows their offspring must be destroyed to prevent apes in the future from dominating man. Zira and Cornelius are hunted down and killed, but baby ape Caesar is rescued by kindly circus owner Armando (Montalban). Dehn tries his best to inject humor and satire back into the franchise, but when viewed some thirty years in retrospect, most of it falls pretty flat. A fourth film, entitled “Conquest of the Planet of the Apes,” followed a year later.

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