Marvel Casts a Spell with Doctor Strange

Since the 2008 release of Iron Man, Marvel Studios has been releasing blockbuster after blockbuster. The movies have found success with new and old fans alike.

In Marvel’s newest release, Dr. Strange, we learn the spellbinding story of Dr. Stephen Strange. Dr. Strange is the an arrogant yet talented surgeon who lost his talents after a car crash ruins his hands. He first appeared in 1963’s Strange Tales #110 where his origin story was first explored.

Stan Lee, creator of Dr. Strange along with many other Marvel heroes, stated that he created Doctor Strange to bring a new side to the Marvel Universe. At the time, most of the heroes were science-based, similar to how the cinematic universe was prior to the Doctor Strange movie. In both the comics and movies, Dr. Strange was the vessel that introduced magic into Marvel’s comic book and cinematic universes.

Dr. Strange is also portrayed very accurately in the film. Benedict Cumberbatch looks like Dr. Strange visually and portrays his arrogance perfectly. Stephen Strange isn’t your happy, heroic character that fans may be used to seeing from Marvel. This is another way the introduction of Dr. Strange changes things.

The film does stray from the comics in some areas. Wong, Strange’s right hand man, is more independent and serious in the film than he was in the comics. In the comics, Wong is more of a servant, but in the film, he acts more independent.

When casting announcements were first made, there was a controversial casting choice for a character called the Ancient One. The Ancient One serves as a mentor for Dr. Strange in both the comics and movies. The biggest difference between the page and the screen is the character’s appearance.

The Ancient One was originally a Tibetan male, but in the film, Tilda Swan is cast as a Celtic female version of character. The character still behaves the same, acting as Strange’s mentor as he learns about the magical world hiding behind the Marvel Universe’s science based foundation.

The comics were always very notable for Steve Ditko, also the co-creator of Spiderman, and his illustrations. His art style gave character to the comic book and helped enhance the magical experience. This film relies heavily on visuals more so than most Marvel movies.

Overall, Marvel’s Dr. Strange makes some notable changes but does not deviate too far from its source material.

The film does stray from the typical Marvel formula, which is one of the weak aspects of it. The Marvel Cinematic Universe tends to produce forgettable villains, with the notable exception of Loki from the first Avengers movie.

Kaecilius, played by Hannibal’s Mads Mikkelsen, is a lesser known character in the comics. He was a disciple of Baron Mordo for only eleven issues. Kaecilius was only ever a minor antagonist, but in this film, he serves as a primary antagonist. Like many Marvel cinematic villains, the audience will likely forget his name by the time the next Doctor Strange film releases.

The movie’s visuals are unique from any other Marvel film. I hope more Marvel movies decide to be more stylistic like this one. This film is an optimistic way