

BY TRENT DRAKE

WHEN A MOVIE MAKES A LOT OF MONEY, only good taste will prevent a sequel from being made. And we all know how much good taste and integrity are worth in the movie industry, right? Nobody makes an unwarranted sequel just for cash, right? Hollywood respects talent too much to try to cash in, right?

By now everyone knows I'm being sarcastic. Of course there'll be sequels, as long as there's money to be made by cashing in on the previous picture's reputation.

But what if the original movie made no money, has a very bad rep and no one on this side of the Atlantic Ocean has heard of it?

They make a sequel to it! I never said show biz made sense.

This week we're gonna take a look at my choice for the most ridiculous, unneeded sequel of all time: *Lionman II: The Witchqueen*.

I know all you longtime readers are just drooling to run out and rent this flick, especially if you saw the original (reviewed in our first issue of the year). I know you're probably halfway to the video store by now, clenching your hard-earned money in a trembling fist, hoping no one has beaten you there, preparing for the fight you're sure to have when someone else beats you to the last copy, but CALM DOWN AND KEEP READING!!! I haven't finished raving like a lunatic yet.

This is easily the worst movie I've ever seen. My first impression was that someone had given a starving troupe of Gypsies a camcorder and told them to make a movie, but then I realized that even starving Gypsies have their dignity.

Here's the basic plot. Lion Man, now being played by a blonde American (Frank Morgan), decides he's sick of being king of Thracia and sets off for the forest, leaving his son and kingdom in the hands of his brother Altar. With his 'Faithful Companions' Chimp, Angel and Foxy and I (one) Princess in tow, Lion Man heads off into the night.

All of this is great news to King Belisaurus, who has just married Rheasilvea the Sorceress and wants to give her Thracia as a wedding gift. So, with the help of the Witchqueen's magic hawk and King B.'s (I hate long names) seemingly endless supply of disposable soldiers, they set

out to kill Lion Man, kill Altar, kidnap Vulcan (son of Lion Man) and the I (one) Princess, crush Lion Man's friends under various heavy objects, fail miserably and eventually die in a climactic battle at the end of the movie. Now, on to the technical stuff, like acting and costumes and even a couple of special effects. First of all, nobody but nobody in this nuclear bomb can act. Everyone, hero and villain and innkeeper alike, speaks with the same slow, careful, instructive tone you usually associate with every teacher who ever put you to sleep. The innkeeper is especially bad, because in white lab coat he could pass for a dull chemistry teacher. The lousy delivery is taken to the lofty realms of absurdity by the fact that English does not appear to be the first language of several of the actors. Angel (the big strong guy) is very careful to pronounce all the syllables in "vegetables" slowly, almost with reverence. My grade eight nutrition teacher couldn't do better. And the bad guy, King B., occasionally mistakes his banquet hall for the bridge of the Enterprise and lapses into Chekhov-speak: "I'm wery sorry, Lionman, but I've kidnapped your son Vulcan. And lookout for Klingon wessels!" The only person who doesn't talk like a teacher is Lion Man's son Vulcan, whose voice is so irritatingly whiny

you never have to wonder why Lion Man leaves him behind.

The special effects are there. They aren't very effective, and they don't look nearly hokey enough to merit much derision. The exception comes right at the beginning of the movies, when Rheasilvea uses her magic ring to reverse the flight of an axe an irate bad guy throws at her.

The costumes, on the other hand, are really funny. The guards are outfitted with weapons of plastic or painted wood, cardboard shields and armour too flexible to be anything but rubber. The four heroes all wear variations on the same vest and pants ensemble that Lion Man sports. King B. wears a black Sheriff of Nottingham outfit with three metal balls attached to the shoulders. These little balls are actually the hilts to six daggers, and whenever someone tells King B. to put his hands up, these oversize knitting needles do them in.

But the best costume award goes to the Witchqueen, Dee Taylor. It consists of a pink cape held up by an enormous gold-painted cardboard bowtie, a piece of weird hooked metal at the waist that threatens to disembowel her if she bends over, and three strategically placed gold hubcaps held in place by gold yarn. I can't imagine how they convinced the poor



woman to wear such an outfit, but I can imagine how many times it must have slipped during the filming of this opus. You have to see it to believe it, and when you do see it you'll either laugh like a donkey or start writing me nasty letters.

Scenes to watch for: The fight scenes, which are even more outlandish and amateurish than the ones in the first movie (though honestly not as exciting); the William Tell game Lion Man plays with Vulcan (unfortunately, the kid never gets hit); the bit where the captain of the evil soldiers tries to blow up King Altar; Angel getting hypnotized; the idiotic weapons of Foxy (Plywood Sawblades! What a fearsome weapon) and the ludicrous acrobatics of Chimp; the Valley of Death trap sequence (heavy spiked objects); the journey to the City of the Dead (various hungry plants try to eat our heroes); a very strange scene where Lion Man gets a wound on the right side of his chest and immediately sniffs his left armpit (fight scenes are murder on deodorant!); and the part near the end where Rheasilvea chases Foxy up the same staircase two or three times, while holding her hubcap bra in place with one hand.

Scenes to Fast Forward Past: Anything with Vulcan in it. Gag!

Best line: A soldier smashes a log over Angel's head. Angel turns around, grabs the soldier, and yells, "Don't touch my head again. I get very... ANGRY!" The second best line: Lion Man tosses a soldier off a high wall. As he falls, a soundtrack utters the most bored "Argh!" I've ever heard.

The Bottom Line: Not as good as the original, which was incredibly bad. Only for those of us who, like me, have already destroyed their ability to judge between good and bad movies and thoroughly enjoy watching crappy action adventure. Great fun for kids, who can't tell the difference anyway.

Available Locally At: Plaza Video, where I rent most of my crappy movies.

Next Week: Lock your car. Chain it in your driveway. Cover it in cement and drain the gas tank, or it could be *Gone In 60 Seconds!* Be here for perhaps the longest continual car chase ever when *Turkey Dinner* returns (and changes its name).

The Annual UPEI-Holland College DEBATE

Be it resolved that the PEI government should introduce balanced budget legislation.

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 1994
4:00 PM **Kelley 237**