



# ‘Justice League’ Review: Time for DC to Throw in the Towel

By John Nolte Nov 2017



Clay Enos/Warner Bros.

**Fifteen dollars. That is what it cost me to see *Justice League*. Fifteen freakin’ dollars, and about 20 minutes in I was thinking to myself just how much I would rather be at home watching *Van Helsing* on Netflix, which is a B-grade *Walking Dead* with vampires instead of zombies, but still superior to the \$250 million pile of crap unfolding through those stupid 3D glasses. And Netflix only costs me \$10 a month.**

Thanks only to its lean 120 minute runtime, *Justice League* is not as bad as *Batman v. Superman*, which had a runtime of interminable. Nevertheless, the *Justice League* screenplay still plays out like the first draft of Marvel's much-much-much superior *Avengers*.

We are five titles into DC's extended universe, and Warner Bros., a studio that has been producing movies for around 100 years, is still being serially-humiliated by Marvel Studios, which is only 24 years old and did not really start producing its own films until around 2006.

And while the sycophantic Hollywood trades pretend that *Justice League*'s \$110 million opening is a big win, the truth is that *Batman v. Superman* opened to \$166 million and *The Avengers* opened to \$207 million. Everything is going the wrong way for DC. *Justice League* was supposed to be a climax, the chapter America was building all of its anticipation to see, the one in which our heroes assemble.

The truth, though, is that Thor, a B-character in the Marvel world, just released his third movie and it is probably going to kick the collective ass of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Aquaman, and Cyborg.

And all of this fail comes down to an audience rapidly losing faith in the quality of DC's storytelling, a faith that will not be resurrected by *Justice League*.

To begin with, the villain, a CGI creation named Steppenwolf, sucks. His only motive is that he is a world conqueror. His mission is to bring together three cubes that will create The Unity, an act that turns our world into a hellscape that does not look much worse than Los Angeles. There is nothing to Steppenwolf. All he does is proclaim his proclamatory proclamations.

To stop Steppenwolf, Batman must create a Justice League, which means gathering together anyone with anything resembling a superpower. For all of its flaws, *Suicide Squad* did this gathering part about as well as anyone could. It is the worst part of *Justice League*. You could not care less about these characters.

The Flash (Ezra Miller) is the comic relief, basically a neurotic Woody Allen who runs fast, and grows annoying even faster.

Cyborg (Ray Fisher) is the tiredest cliché of all, a surly black guy in a hoodie, whose primary power is to do whatever the plot needs him to do.

Aquaman (Jason Momoa) is an underwater Thor, but even more of an insufferable badass poser.

Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot) pauses to throw death stares in-between spouting awkward exposition about her lost love, Captain Kirk.

\*\*\*SPOILER\*\*\*

Superman does not show up until about the halfway point, a moment that should be iconic, a thrill that should turn all of us into 12-year-olds again. Nope. And for my money, this failure is one of the great sins in all of cinematic history, an opportunity so squandered someone's mama deserves to be slapped.

\*\*\*\*END SPOILER\*\*\*\*

Batman is Ben Affleck.

The CGI is hideous. Worse, scenes are CGI'd that have no business being CGI'd. Is there no place in Los Angeles to set up some fake cornstalks as the sun sets?

Anyway, after the death of Superman, the world is losing hope. White men are hassling Arab women, the seas are rising due to man-made Global Warming, and adults have lost their ability to banter... Something that is painfully obvious in a handful of scenes where the *Justice League* is about as comfortable with each other as a sleepy woman is in a room with Al Franken.

The scene between Lois Lane (Amy Adams) and Martha Kent (Diane Lane), two very capable actresses, is so bad it is uncomfortable to watch.

That is not to say I was bored. After a terrible 40 minutes, events move fast enough to hold your attention. But the movie is never good enough to justify its own existence.

Sony was smart enough to save its failing Spider-Man franchise by turning it over to Marvel.

If I were Warner Bros., for the next five years of his creative life, I would offer Christopher Nolan a cool billion dollars and complete creative control over all things DC.