

Saw Queen Of The Ring

So this is the latest big screen adaptation of a wrestling story, in this case the wrestling biography of the same name by Jeff Leen (which I have but haven't read). The film is about the rise of Mildred Burke and is directed by Ash Avildsen, whose father directed Rocky. If you didn't know that coming in, you will absolutely get the feeling as there is a VERY strong Rocky/Karate Kid style to the film.

I won't go step by step with the whole thing, but it's almost a 2/3 falls movie. The first twenty to thirty minutes are a rough sit, as you have stuff like Burke going to a show and having another fan explain the concepts of "heels" and "babyfaces", which she then uses in a conversation with a wrestler, which the wrestler doesn't seem to mind. This would be a stretch today but in the 1930s, it would be a one in a billion chance at best and a complete disaster at worst.

After that though, though, settle WAY down and it turns into a much more traditional film, which does get good in a hurry. You see Burke fighting up through the ranks and trying to make women's wrestling more of a legitimate attraction, plus dealing with her dirtbag husband, who was also her promoter. It feels like a story where you're seeing Burke trying to become a star and fix her relationships with her husbands/son and bringing in new wrestlers and doing all these other things....and that's where the problem comes in.

The biggest issue is there is too much going on in the movie and it's kind of hard to focus on anything. Burke is definitely the centerpiece of the whole thing, but it feels like she's jumping from one thing to another a lot of the time while still going through the main story. They probably could have done a lot of good by cutting some stuff out, as it basically needs a bit more focus. They throw a lot of information at you and it's kind of hard to keep track of

where things are going, especially if you don't have a bit of a background in what really happened.

Overall, it is a good movie and you want to see Burke succeed because she's been through a lot, but the first twenty or so minutes, where a lot of stuff is set up, goes by way too fast. It would have been nice to see things get off to a slower start and build up some more sympathy for her while cutting out some of the things later on. The movie is about two hours and twenty minutes and it flies by, but it gets bogged down at times and that hurts it a bit.

On the wrestling end, there are some things in there that are either flat out wrong or inaccurate, plus some stuff that is WAY out of the timeline (wrestlers tapping out did not become a thing, at least a common thing) until the 90s for example). Some of the stories they tell aren't accurate in the slightest (someone famous enough to be a name in the movie is shown dying due to the negligence of a promoter but in real life, died at 89), including a cameo which I won't reveal (but it's great) where someone says something that is ONLY there as a wink to the audience. Throw in a character saying Scott Hall's "bad times don't last but bad guys do" speech and it's a bit eye roll inducing at times.

There are a lot of cameos, with Naomi, Toni Storm (who plays a fairly important part in the middle), Kamille (who plays a big part) and Britt Baker (who I didn't actually see), plus Mickie James in a non-speaking (or if she spoke it's blink and I missed it). Jim Cornette keeps popping up as well and is rather perfect as an old school NWA representative.

If you can find a screening (it's VERY limited, with only one or two showings a day here), it's worth a look, though you should also read the book, which goes WAY more in-depth about what happened (the director has said the movie ends with 100 pages left in the book). Definitely cool to see this era though, as Burke is one of the actual pioneers who really did

change wrestling forever.