

Under the red hood: Why Batman beats Red Riding Hood every time

“Red Riding Hood,” currently in theaters, is an opportunistic film with little to gain and much to lose. There is nothing about this story, which can be reinvented or recreated to give off the slightest aroma of originality. It’s “Twilight,” which makes sense seeing that it’s the same director, Catherine Hardwicke, meets “Bram Stoker’s Dracula”, minus all the brilliance of the latter. They even share a common actor, Gary Oldman and not even he can save this trite, ridiculous film. His character, Solomon, is essentially Van Helsing, but for werewolves. Now, throw in a dash of “The Wolfman” and just a pinch of M. Night’s “The Village” and you’re somewhere near how disappointing Red Riding Hood was. There’s a love triangle involved, per usual, and silly dialogue, which the unconvincing actors can spew back and forth at each other; all the classic signs of a highly successful movie with a predominately pre-teen female audience. These films continue to get made simply because they make money...lots of money. They are well-made and well costumed movies with recycled stories, and they focus on a very specific, but very large market. It goes to show in the end that cinematography and sound design are only the garnishing, the little extras that enhance a film, but do not define them. Story and character development is what decides whether or not a film is truly successful and culturally relevant. An argument to this is: some films are not made for artistic reasons, but exist for entertainment purposes only. A valid point, however entertainment should also be held to a standard of quality and Red Riding Hood falls below it. Visually, it has much to offer, but these things seem arbitrary next to a story that means nothing and leaves the viewer aloof and disinterested.

Now, there is an unusual, but valid remedy to this film dilemma and it involves another red hood. “Batman: Under the Red Hood” released in 2010 by DC Universe Animated Original Movies and based upon the comic book run written by Judd Winick, who also wrote the screenplay, is one of the best DC animated releases to date. With all the buzz surrounding Christopher Nolan’s third Batman installment, “The Dark Knight Rises,” Under the Red Hood provides some relief from the insurmountable excitement. The story surrounds the mysterious reappearance of one of Batman’s most classic foes: Red Hood. Red Hood, formally believed to be the Joker, and with the Joker locked up in Arkham Asylum, causes quite the stir in Gotham City which forces Batman to investigate in a way only Batman can, extremely entertainingly (there’s that word again). The animation is superb, the storyline is engaging and it’s a great way to see those favorite characters which may or may not appear in The Dark Knight Rises.