

'The Last Airbender': Such great promise, such great disappointment

Written by By AUTUMN KEISS, News-Telegram Intern
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M. Night Shyamalan's newest movie "The Last Air Bender" has been in theatres for a week. The adaptation of a Nickelodeon animated series pulled in \$69.3 million in its first five days.

If ticket sales were the only consideration, the future of Shyamalan and "The Last Air Bender" seems hopeful. The film has already out-paced "Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time" and has overtaken "The Forbidden Kingdom."

"The Last Air Bender" has all the makings of a good movie. The story takes place in a world divided into four nations, Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. People in each nation can control, or "bend," that nation's element.

The Avatar can control all of the elements; and is in charge of keeping the balance between the spirit world and the realm in which humans live. The Avatar is reborn into a different element each lifetime. Because of this cycle, the Fire Nation destroys the Air Nation, in an attempt to kill the next Avatar.

However, the Avatar escapes, and becomes frozen beneath the ocean. After a hundred years he is released into a war-torn and terrified world. This is where the story "The Last Air Bender" begins.

Complete with realistic special effects, well-choreographed fight scenes and an interesting, emotion-charged plot, "The Last Air Bender" should have been an excellent and entertaining movie. However, it has one fatal flaw – there are no actors in "The Last Air Bender."

Yes, there are people running around the screen, but none of them can really act. The special "bending" effects that Shyamalan watched over and developed to perfection are wasted. The

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people on screen are brilliant in the fight scenes, during which complicated martial arts forms are used by benders, but it soon becomes obvious that they were hired for their martial arts abilities alone.

Noah Ringer plays Aang, the last air bender, who discovers everything and everyone he loves has been destroyed. He reacts by widening his eyes and parting his lips, like someone who is partially surprised and slightly disturbed.

Katara, a strong, mature girl in the original television series, is played by Nicola Peltz. She comes off as a boring and at times stupid girl who has almost as much emotion as Ringer.

The saddest part is none of the other actors is any better. Everyone on screen is stiff and awkward, reminiscent of a 6-year-old being forced to clean their room who knows they will be punished if they complain. No one really seems to want to be in the movie.

I was a fan of the television series, and was excited to learn a movie was going to be made from it. I managed to sit through the 103 minutes of bad acting for the sake of the story and the amazing special effects.

The story broke off, leaving a lot of unfinished business. Once I realized the studio left the movie like that for a reason – for a sequel – I almost began to cry.

"The Last Airbender" is currently showing at Starplex Cinemas, 621 Shannon Road East, at 12:50, 3:00 5:10, 7:25 and 9:35.