

The Postman

Seven years ago, Kevin Costner established himself as an actor-director of stature with *Dances With Wolves*, winner of critical acclaim and seven Oscars. In years since, he has appeared in several films aimed at epic scope (*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, *JFK*, *Wyatt Earp*, the drippy *Waterworld*) which were variably successful. Now, in his second directorial effort, *The Postman*, he again aims at the epic, even the mythic--and falls flat on his face. This futuristic paean to patriotism in the form of an accidental postman who beats the meanies and redeems both the U.S. of A. and government service is a mock heroic mess.

Ripped off in equal parts from *Shane* and *The Road Warrior* (as well as many others) and looking like *Waterworld* beached on dry land (without the gills), *The Postman* places us in the year 2013, in a post-apocalyptic, fragmented United States, where drifter Costner ultimately challenges marauding warrior General Bethlehem (Will Patton) by mounting a postal operation between distressed towns. His example triggers emulators throughout the region (Oregon) who band together to fight the general's forces. This scenario is dimly realized and made at times hilariously funny with the overlay of the Post Office. At a time when "going postal" has taken on grim, comic effect, postal workers as undaunted heroes just produces guffaws. Sadly, the laughs--even unintended--come too rarely in this overlong wind machine.

Please, Mr. Postman: return this baby to sender...

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