

Jumanji

US : 1995 : dir. Joe Johnston : : 100 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
Bradley Pierce; Kirsten Dunst; Adam Hann-Byrd
 Robin Williams; Bonnie Hunt; Bebe Neuwirth; Jonathan Hyde; David Alan-Grier;
 Patricia Clarkson

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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"In 1969 New England, a boy finds a board game buried underground and soon discovers that by playing it a world of terror is unleashed; twenty-six years later, in the same house, two kids start playing the very same game and bring that boy - now a full-grown man - back to life. A phantasmagoria of digital special effects (a virulent vine, a stampede of wild animals, giant attacking mosquitoes, etc) seems to be this film's raison d'être. Unfortunately, we're all too aware that they **are** special effects. The story doesn't seem to have much of a point, except perhaps that one shouldn't play with ancient board games. Followed by an animated TV series. ** "

Time Out review:

"Young Alan Parrish lives in a picture postcard '60s American town. One day, he and his friend, Sarah, find a Victorian jungle-based board game, "Jumanji". That night, as they play, the jungle comes to life, and his throw of the dice takes him into the game, whence he can return only if an opponent throws a seven. Unfortunately, Sarah, terrified, runs off into the night. Cut to the depressed '90s. Two young orphans move into the now decrepit Parrish house and find the game in the attic. They start to play, bringing into being an older Alan (Williams), presumed murdered for over 20 years. This is an SFX movie par excellence: although leading actors Williams and Hunt (as the older Sarah) give competent performances, script, direction and story are all subservient to the extraordinary computer-generated animals

and effects."

Sunday Times review:

"Robin Williams's new film, in which a New England mansion house plays host to rampaging rhinos, monkeys and elephants, takes you back to the world-within-a-wardrobe conceits of some of the best children's literature. It is that rare beast, a movie for children that feels as if it were made while the adults weren't looking."

The Guardian review:

"Robin Williams plays a poor little rich boy who has survived for years in the old board game of the title which releases hordes of giant mosquitoes, monkeys and rhinos. It really amounts to a series of sub-"JURASSIC PARK" special effects - mechanical fantasy, in fact, rather than the real thing."

Daily Mirror notes:

"Robin Williams escapes from a board game, along with a group of wild creatures. If Williams and two kids don't win the game, their town will be wiped out."

"**"JUMANJI"** stars Robin Williams and Kirsten Dunst and opens at cinemas next month [= Jan '96]. The story begins when a young Alan Parrish discovers a board game called "Jumanji" and is sucked into a jungle world. Years later, two kids, played by Kirsten Dunst and Bradley Pierce, discover the game and when playing it they release a now grown-up Alan Parrish. The film features spectacular special effects."

“Robin Williams unleashes the forces of the jungle from a magical board game. Hugely enjoyable fantasy with great special effects. Young ones may find it a mite frightening. ****”

Excerpt from **Radio Times** article on Robin Williams:

“...Now he is successful again and his latest film **"JUMANJI"** – just released in America and opening in Britain next February – sees him in top form as a man "released" from a board game after 26 years in the jungle. The game, which he finds in a loft as a child and starts with a friend, has to be finished if the players are to survive...”

Blockbuster Video promotional leaflet:

“Breathtaking special effects and an exciting storyline all combine to make **"JUMANJI"** a brilliant adventure film. Alan Parrish is a picked-on schoolboy whose rich parents are too busy to spend time with him. Suddenly he’s propelled into another dimension by a weird board game where he’s trapped for 26 years. He only emerges (as a leaf-clad Robin Williams) when two children rediscover the game in 1996. He’s not the only thing unleashed, however. Huge mosquitoes, a snarling lion and rampaging rhinos are brought to life too. Parrish and the two children, orphans that nobody really cares about¹, discover that they have to play the game until the very end – and win – otherwise they will always be under its control. **"JUMANJI"** is a superb family film with Robin Williams at his very best – but be prepared for the fright of your life!”

[no listing in “Film Review 1994-95”, “TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995”, “Variety International Film Guide 1995” or “Variety International Film Guide 1996”]

Radio Times review:

“Though dismissed by many critics as a worthless excuse for some ingenious computer effects, this is absolutely exhilarating. Toddlers, as well as pre-teens, will be held spellbound by

the marauding wildlife that is unleashed when Kirsten Dunst and Bradley Pierce rescue Robin Williams from the sinister board game in which he’s been trapped for 26 years. This is wonderful, escapist family entertainment. ****”

“Fantasy adventure starring Robin Williams. In 1969, a young boy gets trapped in the strange jungle world of a magical board game. Twenty-six years later, two children discover the game and unwittingly unleash its dangerous magic. **** ”

¹ *Poor little lambs!*

Be prepared for the fright of your life – yep, it's another Robin Williams fantasy.

Hann-Byrd was in LITTLE MAN TATE (91) and DIGGER (93)

Sorry to be so obvious about it, but haven't we been there already with "HOOK"? Does the world really need another wacky Robin Williams-and-kids high budget fantasy? After flopping BIG with "POPEYE", "HOOK" and "TOYS", will the man never learn? And since when were young runaways "presumed murdered" back in the pre-paranoid sixties?

See subject index under BULLYING, FANTASY, ORPHANS / ADOPTION and TOYS / DOLLS / MODELS.