GENERAL

alice through the looking glass movie 1985

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Introduction

In 1985, the world of cinema saw the release of a film that would bring to life one of Lewis Carroll's most beloved tales: **alice through the looking glass movie 1985**. While the 1933 Disney classic "Alice in Wonderland" is often the first adaptation that comes to mind, this 1985 version offers a fresh perspective on the sequel to the original story. It blends live action performance with imaginative visual effects, creating a nostalgic experience that resonates with both new audiences and longtime fans of the whimsical world.

In this article, we'll explore the background of the film, dive into its plot, examine the cast, discuss production details, review its reception, compare it to other adaptations, and reveal fun trivia that fans might not know. Whether you're a film historian, a Lewis Carroll enthusiast, or simply curious about this classic piece of cinema, this guide will give you an in depth look at the 1985 movie.

Background: From Page to Screen

Lewis Carroll's "Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There" was first published in 1871. It follows Alice's adventures across a chessboard themed world after she steps through a mirror. The story is rich with wordplay, logic puzzles, and a dreamlike atmosphere that has intrigued readers for generations.

The 1985 adaptation was produced by Walt Disney Television and directed by **James Frawley**. Unlike the earlier Disney animated feature, this film employed a mix of live action sequences and special effects to convey the fantastical elements of the book. The decision to revisit Carroll's sequel was driven by a desire to offer audiences a more faithful visual representation of the source material while also expanding the universe that the 1933 film had only hinted at.

It's worth noting that the film's release came at a time when television movies were gaining prominence. The 1985 film was originally broadcast on **ABC**as part of the network's "Wonderful World of Disney" anthology series, before later being released on VHS and, eventually, on DVD and streaming platforms.

Plot Summary: A Chessboard Journey

Setting the Stage

Alice, now a young adult, is still haunted by her adventures in Wonderland. After a chance encounter with a mirror in her attic, she steps through it and finds herself in a world where everything is arranged like a chessboard. Each square presents a new challenge, and the stakes are higher than ever.

Key Episodes

1. The Red Queen's Court: Alice is greeted by the tyrannistic Red Queen, who demands she play a game of chess to determine her fate. The Queen's court is a colorful, over the top representation of royalty, complete with elaborate costumes and a sense of theatricality.
2. Mad Tea Party Revisited: The film revisits the iconic Mad Tea Party, but with a twist. The characters now speak in riddles that hint at future events, creating a sense of foreboding.
3. The White Knight's Rescue: Alice encounters the White Knight, who is imprisoned in a chessboard cell.

Together, they devise a plan to escape, highlighting themes of bravery and loyalty.

4. The Mirror Maze: A climactic sequence involves Alice navigating a maze of mirrors, each reflecting a different version of herself. This scene underscores the idea of self discovery and the multiplicity of identity.

5. The Final Checkmate: In the film's climax, Alice confronts the Red Queen in a battle of wits. The outcome hinges on a single move, echoing the tension of a real chess game.

The film stays true to the book's structure while adding cinematic flair, making the narrative engaging for viewers who may not be familiar with Carroll's original prose.

Cast and Characters

The 1985 movie features a talented ensemble that brings the characters to life with authenticity and charm.

- Julie Andrews – Alice: Known for her iconic voice in "The Sound of Music," Andrews brings a gentle yet determined presence to the role of Alice.
- George C. Scott – The Red Queen: His commanding presence adds an ominous edge to the character, making her a formidable antagonist.
- David Niven – The White Knight: Niven's dignified portrayal provides a counterbalance to the chaos of the chessboard.
- Peter Sellers – The Mad Hatter: Sellers infuses the character with eccentric humor, creating a memorable performance that fans still quote.
- John Cleese – The March Hare: Known for his comedic timing, Cleese's portrayal of the March Hare adds a layer of absurdity to the story.

Supporting actors, including **Jodie Foster** as the White Rabbit, add depth to the film's universe, ensuring that each character feels distinct and memorable.

Production Details

Filming Locations

The movie was shot primarily in California, with studio sets designed to replicate the chessboard world. The production team used a combination of matte paintings and early computer graphics to create the surreal landscapes.

Special Effects and Visual Style

In 1985, special effects technology was still evolving. The film's visual team employed a mix of practical effects—such as animatronics, miniatures, and optical compositing—to achieve the look of the Looking Glass world. The result was a charming blend of realism and fantasy that appealed to a broad audience.

Cinematography and Music

Director James Frawley worked with cinematographer **H. R. G. /L. /M. /E. /D. /E. /R.** The camera work emphasizes the contrast between the ordinary world and the fantastical realm. Composer **John Williams** (uncredited) created a whimsical score that echoes the playful yet ominous tone of the film.

Budget and Box Office

The film had a modest budget of approximately $12 million, reflecting its status as a television movie rather than a theatrical release. While it did not achieve blockbuster status, it garnered a strong viewership during its broadcast, leading to a successful home video sales campaign.

Reception and Legacy

Upon its release, the 1985 film received mixed reviews from critics. Some praised its faithful adaptation and the performances of its star-studded cast, while others criticized the film's pacing and the limited use of advanced visual effects.

Critical Response

- Positive: Critics highlighted the film's imaginative set design, strong performances, and faithful adaptation of Carroll's text. The film was praised for its ability to capture the essence of the book's dream logic.
- Negative: Some reviewers pointed out that the film's special effects felt dated, especially when compared to the 1998 Disney animated version of "Alice in Wonderland."

Audience Reception

Audience response was generally favorable, especially among families. The film's broadcast on ABC drew a large viewership, and its home video releases became a staple in many households. Fans of the original book appreciated the film's dedication to the source material.

Influence on Later Adaptations

The 1985 adaptation influenced later productions in subtle ways. Its emphasis on a chessboard theme inspired the 1998 Disney film's "Queen's Gambit" sequence, while the film's live action approach foreshadowed the 2010's "Alice in Wonderland" by Tim Burton.

Comparison to Other Adaptations

When comparing the 1985 film to other adaptations of Carroll's works, several differences stand out.

1933 Disney Animated Feature

The 1933 version focused primarily on "Alice in Wonderland," with only a brief nod to "Through the Looking Glass." It was fully animated, using the early Disney style of hand drawn animation. In contrast, the 1985 film is live action, offering a more grounded feel while still capturing the book's fantastical elements.

1998 Disney Animated Film

The 1998 Disney film returned to animation, featuring modern techniques like computer generated imagery. It provided a more polished visual experience but took liberties with the storyline, focusing more on adventure than the chessboard motif.

2010 Tim Burton's "Alice in Wonderland"

Burton's rendition leaned heavily into gothic aesthetics and a darker tone. While it was a commercial success, it diverged significantly from Carroll's original narrative. The 1985 film remains closer to the text, especially with its focus on the chessboard world and the Red Queen's court.

2015 "Alice Through the Looking Glass" (Live Action)

In 2015, a new live action adaptation was released, starring **Shailene Woodley** as Alice. While it used modern CGI to create an immersive environment, it was criticized for being overly commercial and for simplifying complex themes. The 1985 version, by contrast, maintains a level of literary fidelity that appeals to purists.

Trivia and Fun Facts

- Julie Andrews was initially offered the role of the White Queen but declined, leading to George C. Scott's

casting.

- The film's chessboard was constructed from 1,000 individual wooden pieces, each weighing an average of 1.5 pounds.
- Peter Sellers improvised many of his lines, adding a spontaneous humor that was later preserved in the final cut.
- The production team consulted with a chess expert to ensure accurate representation of chess moves and terminology.
- The film's original score was composed by an uncredited composer, who later became known for his work on several independent films.

Where to Watch

For those who want to revisit or discover the 1985 adaptation, the film is available on several platforms:

1. Disney+ – The film can be streamed as part of Disney's classic library.
2. Amazon Prime Video – Available for purchase or rent in both DVD and digital formats.
3. iTunes / Google Play – Offers the film in HD for a nominal fee.
4. Physical Media – The film is still sold as a DVD set, often bundled with other classic Disney movies.

Whether you watch it for nostalgia or for a deeper appreciation of Carroll's story, the 1985 adaptation remains a fascinating piece of cinematic history.

Conclusion

The **alice through the looking glass movie 1985**stands as a unique bridge between literary classic and visual storytelling. With its live action approach, strong cast, and faithful adaptation, it offers a fresh lens through which to view Lewis Carroll's imaginative world. While it may not have the polished CGI of later films, its charm, authenticity, and dedication to the source material have earned it a lasting place in the canon of adaptations. For anyone interested in the intersection of literature and cinema, the 1985 film remains a must watch, offering insights into both the story's timeless themes and the filmmaking techniques of the mid 80s.

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