



Power Rangers Is A Mighty Fun Mix Of Superhero And Teen Movie Tropes

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POWER RANGERS

RELEASE

03/24/2017

CAST

Dacre Montgomery
Elizabeth Banks
Ludi Lin

STUDIO

Lionsgate

DIRECTOR

Dean Israelite



For fans of the numerous 1990's *Power Rangers* television series, the recently released *Power Rangers* movie reboot is likely a welcome addition to the *Rangers* canon, especially since (before now) the Zord-riding heroes hadn't appeared on the big screen since 1997. For non-fans, it'll be more difficult to identify exactly what makes the new film different from any other special-effects heavy action flick despite its obvious John Hughes-inspired characteristics.

Power Rangers follows Jason, Kimberly, Billy, Trini, and Zack—five unassuming high school students who happen to find themselves at the same gold mine on one fateful night and develop powers after an unexpected explosion. With the help of former Red Ranger Zordon ([Bryan Cranston](#)) and his robot assistant Alpha 5 (voiced by Bill Hader), the Rangers-in-training prepare to defend themselves against the wrath of scorned Green Ranger [Rita Repulsa](#) (Elizabeth Banks).



Interestingly, the film embraces both high school movie and superhero movie tropes while also, in part, trying to subvert audience's expectations about those tropes. For example, the undeniable sexual tension between Jason and Kimberly (played by Australian Dacre Montgomery and Brit Naomi Scott with incredibly convincing American accents) immediately had me betting that they would share a kiss before the movie's end, but their lips (shockingly) never make contact. That's not to say that this couldn't change in a potential future sequel, but the restraint shown by the *Power Rangers* writers (at least when it comes to romance) had me impressed.

Another scene in which Kimberly jokingly tosses a note to Billy saying "we should start a band" got me thinking that *Power Rangers*, despite its overly sentimental *Breakfast Club*-esque vibes, (three out of the five Power Rangers meet during weekend detention, for crying out loud) is self-aware enough to poke fun at the very conventions it embodies.



But then Krispy Kreme kept getting mentioned, and all my other theories went out the window. Because the movie is more about the Power Rangers trying to protect a life-saving crystal from Repulsa as opposed to where that crystal is being kept, it's not too much of a spoiler to say that Repulsa and the Rangers end up making their way to a Krispy Kreme shop to retrieve the powerful gem hiding underneath. At first I tried to give this narrative choice the benefit of the doubt—maybe showcasing a brand so clearly is their way of highlighting the blatant consumerism that pervades our culture?

But after a quick Google search, I found out that Krispy Kreme does, indeed, have a [brand deal](#) with *Power Rangers*. The reveal that the crystal with the power to save or destroy life is hidden under a Krispy Kreme as opposed to a mysterious cave or high tower was, admittedly, pretty funny, but it would have been funnier if we were given any information as to why and how the crystal ended up there.

Fortunately, the Krispy Kreme of it all doesn't take away from the film's more enjoyable elements. The writers were able to introduce several character and plot elements with a certain degree of subtlety—the reveal that Zack hangs out around the mine to try to deal with the stress of having to care for his sick mother, for example, was both illuminating and sweet.

However, other reveals are a little too on-the-nose. We already know that Jason resents his dad for wanting him to become a star athlete, and that fact becomes painfully obvious when he actually goes into his room and breaks one of his old football trophies in half. We also had a vague idea that Rita was evil *before* she dramatically declared "let's kill everyone" to her sentient gold sidekick/weapon, Goldar.



The [much-talked about reveal](#) that Yellow Ranger Trini (played by musician and actor Becky G) is gay or bisexual (or at least questioning), on the other hand, was maybe a little *too* subtle. Featuring a major LGBTQ character in a blockbuster action movie that will likely be seen by millions of people is definitely a huge step. But Trini's reveal is [easy to miss](#) if you aren't paying close-enough attention, and its lack of definiteness might make it easy for naysayers to deny that Trini is an LGBTQ character at all.

As evidenced by the fact that the original *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* theme song comes on for all of 10 seconds and then turns right off again, the movie's biggest problem is that it can't decide whether it wants to be a mirror of its former over-the-top 1990's iteration, a 1980's feel-good teen comedy, or a modern-day action film. But, ironically, that's also what makes it so damn fun to watch.

Power Rangers morphs into theatres Friday, March 24. For another take, check out Teddy and Ajay's *InnerSpace* review below:

