

= The Brothers Grimm (film) =

The Brothers Grimm is a 2005 adventure fantasy film directed by Terry Gilliam . The film stars Matt Damon , Heath Ledger , and Lena Headey in an exaggerated and fictitious portrait of the Brothers Grimm as traveling con @-@ artists in French @-@ occupied Germany , during the early 19th century . However , the brothers eventually encounter a genuine fairy tale curse which requires real courage instead of their usual bogus exorcisms . Supporting characters are played by Peter Stormare , Jonathan Pryce , and Monica Bellucci .

In February 2001 , Ehren Kruger sold his spec script to Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer (MGM) . With Gilliam 's hiring as director , the script was rewritten by Gilliam and Tony Grisoni , but the Writers Guild of America refused to credit them for their work , thus Kruger received sole credit . MGM eventually dropped out as distributor , but decided to co @-@ finance The Brothers Grimm with Dimension Films and Summit Entertainment , while Dimension took over distribution duties .

The film was shot entirely in the Czech Republic . Gilliam often had on @-@ set tensions with brothers Bob and Harvey Weinstein , which caused the original theatrical release date to be delayed nearly ten months . The Brothers Grimm was finally released on 26 August 2005 with mixed reviews and a \$ 105 @. @ 3 million box office performance .

This also marks Terry Gilliam 's first film to receive a PG @-@ 13 rating by the MPAA .

= = Plot = =

Wilhelm Grimm (Matt Damon) and Jakob Grimm (Heath Ledger) arrive in French @-@ occupied Germany during the early 1800s . They go to Karlstadt to rid the town of a witch 's ghost . After killing the " ghost " , it is revealed that the Brothers Grimm have actually set up a fake witch to trick the town . Afterwards , as they are celebrating , Italian torturer Mercurio Cavaldi (Peter Stormare) takes them to the French General Delatombe (Jonathan Pryce) . Delatombe forces them to solve a mystery : The girls of the small village of Marbaden are disappearing , and the villagers are convinced that supernatural beings are responsible . The Grimms are charged with finding who is responsible , and they soon discover that it is the work of a real supernatural force : a beautiful , yet evil , 500 @-@ year @-@ old Thuringian Queen (Monica Bellucci) stealing young girls to restore her own beauty . Will and Jake have a complicated relationship ; Jake is the smaller , younger , more sensitive one that Will feels he needs to protect . Will is often very hard on Jake (dating all the way back to their childhood , when Jake spent their money that was to be used for medicine for their dying sister on " magic beans ") and orders him around . Will is somewhat of a womanizer and wants to make money , whereas Jake is more interested in fairy tales and adventures . Jake feels that Will doesn 't care about or believe in him ; but Will is just frustrated about the way Jake acts so spontaneously , making it hard for Will to protect him .

Long ago , King Childeric I came to the forest to build a city while the Queen experimented with black magic to gain eternal life . A plague swept through the land , and she hid in her tower , while her husband and everyone below her perished . Her spell granted her immortal life , but not the youth and beauty to go along with it . Her youthful appearance now only exists in her mirror , the source of her life , as an illusion and nothing more . She needs to drink the blood of twelve young girls to regain her beauty ; ten have already been reported missing . The Queen is working an enchantment to regain her beauty with the aid of her werewolf huntsman and his magic axe , crow familiars , and various creatures in the forest . The Grimms , with the help of Cavaldi and Angelika (Lena Headey) , a knowing huntress from the village , intend to destroy the Mirror Queen . After another girl goes missing , Cavaldi takes the Grimms and Angelika back to Delatombe . Because they have failed , Cavaldi is ordered to kill both the Grimms ; but , after convincing Delatombe that the magic in the forest is actually caused by German rebels , he sends them back . While Cavaldi stays behind with Angelika in the village , the brothers attempt to get into the tower . Jake succeeds and discovers the Queen and the power of her mirror . Meanwhile , another girl , named Sasha , is captured despite Angelika and Cavaldi 's efforts to save her .

Jake rides into the forest alone after a spat with Will , who follows him . After mistaking a dummy

that is smashed into the tower for Jake , Will realizes that Jake needs him to believe in him and assists Jake in climbing up the tower . On the roof of the tower , Jake notices twelve crypts in which the twelve victims must lie . When Sasha 's body comes up from a well , the werewolf takes her to a tomb . After rescuing Sasha and taking the werewolf 's magic axe , the Grimms return to the village . Delatombe captures the brothers and believes them to be frauds . French soldiers begin burning down the forest , and Cavaldi represses his sympathy to the brothers , but they are eventually saved by Angelika . The werewolf is revealed to be Angelika 's father , who is under the Queen 's spell . It turns out that he is only able to keep on living due to an enchanted spike that is lodged into his chest and , without such , the spell is broken . Angelika is drowned by her father , becoming the 12th victim . The Brothers reach the tower while the Queen breathes an ice wind that puts out the forest fire . Delatombe notices that the Grimms have escaped and goes after them with Cavaldi . When Cavaldi refuses to kill the Grimms , Delatombe shoots him but is later impaled by Will .

Will and Jake enter the tower , where Will falls under the Queen 's spell when the Queen takes the enchanted spike from Angelika 's father and thrusts it into Will 's chest . Jake shatters the enchanted mirror in the tower , preventing the Queen from completing the spell that will restore her youth . With the last of his strength , Angelika 's father destroys the rest of the mirror by jumping out of the window with it ; and Will , attempting to save the Queen , tries to take back the mirror and falls with him , and both men are killed . Outside , Cavaldi survives , having donned the Grimm 's faux @-@ magic armor . He finds Will 's body and recites an Italian curse , and the tower falls apart . Jake escapes , and Cavaldi informs Jake that he can break the spell and awaken Angelika with a kiss , which in turn resurrects the other girls and Will . With the menace gone and their daughters returned to them , the villagers of Marbaden celebrate and give their heart @-@ felt thanks to the brothers . Cavaldi stays in the village and joins the villagers for the feast . Angelika kisses both the Grimms and tells them that they are always welcome at the village . The Brothers Grimm decide to pursue a new profession , presumably recording fairy tales , although they are now wanted criminals of the state . One of the Queen 's crows is seen flying off with the last shard of her mirror , still holding the Queen 's watchful eye and presumably , her living soul .

= = Cast = =

Matt Damon and Heath Ledger as Wilhelm " Will " and Jakob " Jake " Grimm : Johnny Depp was Gilliam 's first choice for Will Grimm , but producer Bob Weinstein believed Depp was not commercially famous enough for the role . Damon joked that Weinstein " was kicking himself because half @-@ way through production , Pirates of the Caribbean came out and Depp was all of a sudden a big sensation . " Ledger met Gilliam in November 2002 when Nicola Pecorini recommended the actor to the director , comparing him to Depp . Gilliam intended to cast Ledger opposite Depp . Damon and Ledger were originally cast in opposite roles before they petitioned to have their characters switched . Damon had wanted to work with Gilliam for years and actively campaigned to land the role of Will Grimm . The actor " grew up loving [Gilliam 's] Time Bandits , the way that movie created this weird but totally convincing world " . Gilliam elected to have Damon wear a prosthetic nose , but Weinstein said " it would have distracted audiences from Damon 's star @-@ studded good looks " . Gilliam later reasoned that " it would have been the most expensive nose job ever " .

Peter Stormare as Mercurio Cavaldi , Delatombe 's Italian associate . Cavaldi originally has a grudge against the brothers , but eventually has a change of heart . Robin Williams was cast in the role before dropping out .

Lena Headey as Angelika : Her father is a woodsman transformed into a werewolf by the Mirror Queen 's spell . Gilliam 's first choice for the role was Samantha Morton .

Jonathan Pryce as General Vavarin Delatombe , a cruel French military commander . Delatombe attempts to burn down the forest and kill the brothers .

Tomáš Hanák as Woodsman

Julian Bleach as Letorc

Monica Bellucci as the Mirror Queen , a beautiful , evil queen who experimented with black magic

before being struck by the Bubonic plague , her spell giving her eternal life but not the eternal youth she had expected . Nicole Kidman turned down the role over scheduling conflicts .

Mackenzie Crook and Richard Ridings as Hidlick and Bunst : Duo sidekicks for the Grimms ; they are eventually beheaded by French soldiers .

Roger Ashton Griffiths as the Mayor , who is duped into employing the Grimms to rid his village of its haunting .

Anna Rust as Sister Grimm

= = Production = =

Ehren Kruger 's screenplay was written as a spec script ; in February 2001 , Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) purchased the script , with Summit Entertainment to co finance the film . In October 2002 , Terry Gilliam entered negotiations to direct , and rewrote Kruger 's script alongside frequent collaborator Tony Grisoni . However , the Writers Guild of America refused to credit Gilliam and Grisoni for their rewrite work , and Kruger received sole credit . After Gilliam 's hiring , production was put on fast track for a target November 2004 theatrical release date . The budget , originally projected at \$ 75 million , was to be Dimension Films ' most expensive film ever . The studio had trouble financing the film , and dropped out as main distributor . Weeks later , Bob Weinstein , under his Dimension Films production company , made a deal with MGM and Summit to co finance The Brothers Grimm , and become the lead distributor .

= = = Filming = = =

The original start date was April 2003 , but filming did not begin until 30 June . It was decided to shoot The Brothers Grimm entirely in the Czech Republic over budget constraints . Gilliam reasoned that " this is an \$ 80 million movie , which would probably cost \$ 120 ? \$ 140 million in America " . The majority of filming required sound stages and backlots from Barrandov Studios in Prague . Filming at Barrandov ended on 23 October . Location filming began afterwards , which included the Křivoklát Castle . Along with Alien vs. Predator and Van Helsing , The Brothers Grimm provided work for hundreds of local jobs and contributed over \$ 300 million into the Czech Republic 's economy . Gilliam hired Guy Hendrix Dyas as production designer after he was impressed with Dyas ' work on X2 . Gilliam often disputed with executive producers Bob and Harvey Weinstein during production . The Weinstein Brothers fired cinematographer and regular Gilliam collaborator Nicola Pecorini after six weeks . Pecorini was then replaced by Newton Thomas Sigel .

" I 'm used to riding roughshod over studio executives , " Gilliam explained , " but the Weinsteins rode roughshod over me . " Gilliam got so upset , filming was shut down for nearly two weeks . Matt Damon reflected on the situation : " I 've never been in a situation like that . Terry was spitting rage at the system , at the Weinsteins . You can 't try and impose big compromises on a visionary director like him . If you try to force him to do what you want creatively , he 'll go nuclear . " The feud between Gilliam and the Weinsteins was eventually settled , although Bob Weinstein blamed the entire situation on yellow journalism . Filming was scheduled to end in October , but due to various problems during filming , principal photography did not end until the following 27 November .

Due to the tensions between the filmmaker and the producers during production , Gilliam said in retrospect about the film , " [I] t 's not the film they wanted and it 's not quite the film I wanted . It 's the film that is a result of [...] two groups of people , who aren 't working well together . " With regards to the Weinsteins also producing Martin Scorsese 's film Gangs of New York (2002) , Gilliam stated : " Marty [Scorsese] said almost the exact same quote I said , without us knowing it : ' They took the joy out of filmmaking . ' "

= = = Visual effects = = =

Post production was severely delayed when Gilliam disagreed with the Weinsteins over the final cut privilege . In the meantime , the conflict lasted so long that Gilliam had enough time to shoot

another feature film , *Tideland* . To create the visual effects , Gilliam awarded the shots to Peerless Camera , the London @-@ based effects studio he founded in the late @-@ 1970s with visual effects supervisor Kent Houston . However , two months into filming , Houston said that Peerless " ran into a number of major issues with The Brothers Grimm and with the Weinstein Brothers " . He continued that " the main problem was the fact that the number of effects shots had dramatically increased , mainly because of issues that arose during shooting with the physical effects . " Meanwhile , the Queen 's chamber inside the tower was actually built by the Art Department as 2 sets . One set was resplendent and new while the other was old and decrepit . The sets were joined to each other by the central mirror , a piece of transparent glass giving the illusion that a single set was reflected and used to create the effect .

There were originally to be about 500 effect shots , but it increased to 800 . The post @-@ production conflict between Gilliam and the Weinsteins also gave enough time for Peerless to work on another film , *The Legend of Zorro* . Four different creatures were required for computer animation : a Wolfman , a mud creature , the Mirror Queen , and a living tree . John Paul Docherty , who headed the digital visual effects unit , studied the animation of the computer @-@ generated Morlocks in *The Time Machine* for the Wolfman . Docherty depicted the Morlocks " as a nice mix between human and animal behaviors " . The death of The Mirror Queen was the most complex effect of the film . In the sequence , the Queen turns into hundreds of shards of glass and shatters . With computerized rendering , this could not happen , as the 3D volume of the body suddenly turns into 2D pieces of glass . The problem was eventually solved due to sudden advances that occurred with Softimage XSI software .

= = Release = =

The original theatrical release date was due in November 2004 before being changed many times ; the dates had been moved to February 2005 , 29 July , 23 November , and finally 26 August . Executive producer Bob Weinstein blamed the pushed back release dates on budgetary concerns . To help promote *The Brothers Grimm* , a three @-@ minute film trailer was shown at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival , while twenty minutes of footage was shown at the 2005 event .

= = = Box office = = =

The Brothers Grimm was released in the United States in 3 @,@ 087 theaters , earning \$ 15 @,@ 092 @,@ 079 in its opening weekend . The film eventually grossed \$ 37 @,@ 916 @,@ 267 in the United States and \$ 67 @.@ 4 million internationally , coming to a worldwide total of \$ 105 @,@ 316 @,@ 267 . *The Brothers Grimm* was shown at the 62nd Venice International Film Festival on 4 September 2005 , while in competition for the Golden Lion , but lost to *Brokeback Mountain* , also starring Ledger .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The Brothers Grimm was released with mixed reviews from critics . Based on 179 reviews collected by Rotten Tomatoes , 38 % of the critics enjoyed the film , with an average score of 5 @.@ 2 / 10 . By comparison , Metacritic collected a score of 51 / 100 based on 36 reviews . The majority of critics believed Gilliam sacrificed the storyline in favor of the visual design . Roger Ebert called the film " an invention without pattern , chasing itself around the screen without finding a plot . The movie seems like a style in search of a purpose , with a story we might not care about . "

Stephen Hunter of *The Washington Post* wrote that " *The Brothers Grimm* looks terrific , yet it remains essentially inert . You keep waiting for something to happen , and after a while your mind wanders from the hollow frenzy up there with all its filigrees and fretwork . " Mick LaSalle from the *San Francisco Chronicle* felt " despite an appealing actor in each role , the entire cast comes across as repellent . Will and Jake Grimm are two guys in the woods , surrounded by computerized animals , putting audiences to sleep all over America . " Peter Travers , writing in *Rolling Stone* magazine ,

largely enjoyed *The Brothers Grimm* . He explained that " if you 're a Gilliam junkie , as I am , you go with it , even when the script loses its shaky hold on coherence . " Travers added , " even when Gilliam flies off the rails , his images stick with you . " Gene Seymour of *Newsday* called the film " a great compound of rip @-@ snorting Gothic fantasy and Python @-@ esque dark comedy " .

= = = Home media = = =

Currently , Disney own home video rights , while Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer holds television rights . The DVD release of *The Brothers Grimm* in December 2005 includes audio commentary by Gilliam , two " making @-@ of " featurettes , and deleted scenes . The film was released on Blu @-@ ray Disc format in October 2006 . Both the DVD and Blu @-@ ray were released by Lionsgate Home Entertainment , under license from Disney .

= = TV series = =

Miramax has hired Ehren Kruger to adapt the film into a television series .