

= Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events =

Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events is a 2004 American black comedy fantasy film directed by Brad Silberling . It is a film adaptation of A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket , covering the first three books The Bad Beginning , The Reptile Room , and The Wide Window . The film stars Jim Carrey as the villainous Count Olaf who adopts three wealthy orphan siblings in an attempts to steal their late parents ' fortune . Nickelodeon Movies purchased the film rights to Daniel Handler 's book series in 2000 and soon began development of a film with Barry Sonnenfeld attached to direct . Handler adapted the screenplay and courted Jim Carrey for Count Olaf . Sonnenfeld eventually left over budget concerns in January 2003 and Brad Silberling took over . Robert Gordon rewrote Handler 's script , and principal photography started in November 2003 . A Series of Unfortunate Events was entirely shot using sound stages and backlots at Paramount Pictures and Downey Studios . The film received generally favorable reviews from critics , grossed approximately \$ 209 million worldwide , and won the Academy Award for Best Makeup .

= = Plot = =

Lemony Snicket ( Jude Law ) is documenting the whereabouts of the Baudelaire children from inside a clock tower . Violet Baudelaire ( Emily Browning ) , her intelligent brother Klaus ( Liam Aiken ) , and their baby sister Sunny ( Kara and Shelby Hoffman ) are orphaned when a mysterious fire destroys their house and kills their parents . Mr. Poe ( Timothy Spall ) , in charge of the Baudelaire fortune , entrusts them to their closest relative , Count Olaf ( Jim Carrey ) , who only wants their money and makes them do harsh chores .

On the day that Olaf receives full custody , he drives to a gas station claiming that he is buying soda . However , it turns out that he parked the car , with the children inside , directly on a railroad crossing next to the gas station in the hope of it getting hit by a train . Thankfully , Violet and Klaus are able to throw a nearby switch in the tracks , causing the train to miss them . Mr. Poe then arrives at the scene , mistakenly thinking that Sunny was driving the car , and takes the children away . Olaf promises that he will find them .

The orphans are then taken to stay with their uncle , Dr. Montgomery Montgomery ( Billy Connolly ) , a kind , caring , and rather lonely ( until the children came along ) herpetologist , who is planning to take the children with him on a study in Peru . However , Olaf arrives in disguise as an Italian scientist named Stephano . Violet tries to tell Monty the truth , but he thinks that Stephano is after a snake called The Incredibly Deadly Viper . Monty is found dead the following morning and the authorities have been tricked into thinking that the viper was responsible , but Sunny is able to prove it is actually a friendly , harmless creature .

Mr. Poe then takes the children to live with their Aunt Josephine ( Meryl Streep ) , an irrationally afraid woman who is obsessed with proper grammar . While shopping at a market , Violet and Klaus encounter Olaf , disguised as a sailor named Captain Sham who pretends to be romantically interested in Josephine . When the Baudelaires get home after shopping , Josephine is gone and a hurricane is approaching . Klaus decodes a note left by Josephine and discovers that she is in Curdled Cave . During the hurricane , the children discover in a secret room that there were people investigating fires . The children escape the house before it falls in to the lake .

The children sail on Lake Lachrymose , finding Josephine . Before they reach civilization , their boat is attacked by leeches ; Olaf appears , takes the children away and abandons Josephine in the boat to be eaten alive by the leeches .

The Baudelaires are then placed back in Olaf 's custody after he " rescued " them . Olaf and Violet are then immediately involved in a play called The Marvelous Marriage , which involves their characters being married . However , Olaf has set up the performance to be an actual legal marriage because the law states that if relatives are married they are entitled to their spouses ' money . Olaf enlists the help of his neighbor Justice Strauss ( Catherine O 'Hara ) to perform in the " play " and unwittingly officiate the marriage . Olaf explains to Violet that Sunny is being held hostage in a cage and if Violet does not say her " lines " or finds a loophole , Sunny will fall to her death . The

ceremony goes as Olaf planned and he reveals that the marriage is legal , to the horror of the judge and audience .

Klaus escapes and finds a secret part of Olaf 's estate . After adjusting an eye @-@ shaped window , Klaus realizes that it was Olaf that caused their family mansion to catch fire . Klaus uses the window to burn the marriage certificate , foiling the Count 's plans . Olaf is tried for his action and sentenced to be put through the hardships he had caused the children , and a life sentence in prison . However , when a jury of his peers overturn his sentence , Olaf escapes . Violet , Klaus and Sunny are allowed to visit their old home one last time . A letter lost in the mail finally arrives , and inside is a spyglass announcing their family 's secret society . Snicket recounts that despite the children 's misfortune , they still had each other thus making them " Very Fortunate Indeed " .

= = Cast = =

The film featured uncredited appearances by Jane Lynch as a realtor , Helena Bonham Carter as Beatrice Baudelaire , and Dustin Hoffman as a critic .

Author Daniel Handler initially viewed Count Olaf as being a James Mason @-@ type . Carrey was not familiar with the book series when he was cast , but he became a fan of the series . " Handler 's books are just a bold and original way to tell a children 's story , " the actor explained . Carrey was also attracted to the role despite self @-@ parody concerns . Director Brad Silberling was open to Carrey 's idea of improvisation for various scenes , especially the Stephano and Captain Sham alter egos . To make his prosthetic makeup more comfortable and easier to apply , Carrey shaved his head bald for the part . The actor 's inspiration for Olaf 's voice was combining the voices of Orson Welles and Béla Lugosi .

Emily Browning was cast as Violet Baudelaire when she auditioned at a casting call in Australia . She was sent Handler 's original script when Barry Sonnenfeld was planning to direct , and she screen tested for the part using an English accent . The actor was not cast until Silberling took over ; her character 's accent was then changed to American . Browning became a fan of the books after reading Handler 's original script .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Nickelodeon Movies purchased the film rights of the A Series of Unfortunate Events book series in May 2000 . Paramount Pictures , owner of Nickelodeon Movies , agreed to co @-@ finance , along with Scott Rudin . Various directors , including Terry Gilliam and Roman Polanski , were interested in making the film . One of author Daniel Handler 's favorite candidates was Guy Maddin . In June 2002 , Barry Sonnenfeld was hired to direct . He was chosen because he previously collaborated with Rudin and because of his black comedy directing style from The Addams Family , Addams Family Values and Get Shorty . Sonnenfeld referred to the Lemony Snicket books as his favorite children 's stories . The director hired Handler to write the script with the intention of making Lemony Snicket as a musical , and cast Jim Carrey as Count Olaf in September 2002 .

The film suffered setbacks in development in December 2002 . Rudin left Unfortunate Events over budget concerns . While Sonnenfeld and Carrey remained , Sonnenfeld admitted he was skeptical of Paramount 's \$ 100 million budget . The studio decided that changing the shoot from Hollywood to Wilmington , North Carolina would be less expensive . The April 2003 start date was also pushed back . Paramount eventually settled the situation in January 2003 by enlisting help from DreamWorks to co @-@ finance the film , but Sonnenfeld vacated the director 's position . Rudin and Sonnenfeld had no involvement with the film afterward , but were credited as executive producers . Carrey remained with approval over the hiring of the next director .

Brad Silberling signed on to direct in February 2003 . He was not familiar with the book series when he was first approached . He quickly read the first three books and was excited that " Hollywood was

taking a chance to put over \$ 100 million to adapt these inventive children 's books onto screen " . Handler , who wrote eight drafts of the script for Sonnenfeld , was replaced by Robert Gordon in May 2003 . Handler approved of the changes that were made to his original screenplay . " I was offered credit on the film for screenwriting by the Writers Guild of America , " Handler continued , " but I didn 't take it because I didn 't write it . I felt like it would be an insult to the guy who did . "

= = = Filming = = =

Filming was set to begin in October 2003 , but it was pushed back . Principal photography for Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events began on November 10 , 2003 , using the sound stages and backlot at Paramount Studios in Hollywood . Director Brad Silberling avoided using too many digital or chroma key effects because he wanted the younger actors to feel as if they were working in a realistic environment . Olaf 's mansion occupied two sound stages , while the graveyard and the ruins of the Baudelaire mansion were constructed on the Paramount back lot . After 21 weeks of shooting at Paramount , production then moved to Downey Studios , a former NASA facility in Downey , California , for eight more weeks . Downey housed the circular railroad crossing set complete with forced perspective scenery , as well as a newly constructed water tank complete with over one million gallons of water . The water tank was instrumental in filming scenes set at Briny Beach , Lake Lachrymose , Damocles Dock and Curdled Cave . Filming for A Series of Unfortunate Events ended on May 29 , 2004 .

= = = Design = = =

Silberling , production designer Rick Heinrichs and costume designer Colleen Atwood all aimed for the film 's setting to be ambiguous , giving it a " timeless " feel . Heinrichs also added steampunk designs to the period . To contribute to the setting , Silberling hired Emmanuel Lubezki as the cinematographer because he was impressed with the trio 's work on Sleepy Hollow .

Lubezki compared the cinematic similarities to Sleepy Hollow , notably the monochromatic look of both films . He also chose a specific color palette backdrop for A Series of Unfortunate Events . " The story is very episodic , so we picked a different color scheme for each section . For example " , Lubezki continued , " Count Olaf 's house has a lot of greens , blacks and grays ; the house of Uncle Monty has a lot of greens and browns and a bit of yellow ; and the house of Aunt Josephine has blues and blacks . " The railroad crossing set was constructed on a cyclorama , which was the most ambitious setpiece for the art department on using elements of " in house " special effects and matte paintings .

= = = Visual effects = = =

Industrial Light & Magic ( ILM ) , supervised by Stefen Fangmeier , created the film 's 505 visual effects @-@ shots . The filmmakers used as few digital effects as possible , though the train and smoke for the railroad crossing scene was entirely created using computer animation . ILM also used color grading techniques for the Lake Lachrymose scene , which required complete animation for the leeches . The digital animators studied footage of the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season to accurately depict Hurricane Herman , which was ILM 's most ambitious use of computer @-@ generated imagery ( CGI ) for the film . Nexus Productions designed the opening " Littlest Elf " animated sequence by modeling it after stop motion animation and completing it with computer animation . The snakes at Uncle Monty 's house were a combination of real snakes and animatronics . The animatronics , primarily the Incredibly Deadly Viper , were used as reference models that ILM later enhanced using CGI . Because working with infants was sometimes risky in producing a film , four scenes involving Sunny Baudelaire required CGI with motion capture technology . Among these are the shot of Sunny hanging on to a table by her teeth , catching a spindle with her mouth and the scene where she is entangled with the Incredibly Deadly Viper . Animation supervisor Colin Brady used his baby daughter for motion capture recording . A remote

controlled animatronic of Sunny was also designed by Kevin Yagher .

= = Release = =

= = = Marketing = = =

In October 2002 , Nickelodeon Movies hired Activision ( who actually had a partnership with DreamWorks ) to create the film 's tie @-@ in video game . The agreement also included options for sequels . Director Brad Silberling delivered his first cut of the film to the studio in August 2004 . Fearing his original version was " too dark " , Paramount and DreamWorks conducted test screenings . The film was then re @-@ edited over family @-@ friendliness concerns . Given its December release , the film 's marketing campaign was criticized for being a deliberately anti @-@ holiday comedy with taglines like , " Taking the cheer out of Christmas " and " Mishaps . Misadventures . Mayhem . Oh Joy . " The premiere for Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events was held at the Cinerama Dome on December 13 , 2004 . A 20 @,@ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 1 @,@ 900 m2 ) tent display on Vine Street was decorated with pieces from the film 's sets .

= = = Home media = = =

Lemony Snicket 's a Series of Unfortunate Events was released on DVD and VHS on April 26 , 2005 . A Portuguese @-@ labeled All @-@ Region Blu @-@ ray was released in 2012 and then an American Region A Blu @-@ ray was released on September 9 , 2014 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

The film was released in the United States and Canada on December 17 , 2004 in 3 @,@ 620 theaters , earning \$ 30 @,@ 061 @,@ 756 in its opening weekend . In its run , A Series of Unfortunate Events managed to stay in the number one position for its first week , before facing competition from Meet the Fockers , The Aviator and Coach Carter . The film eventually grossed \$ 118 @,@ 634 @,@ 549 in US totals and \$ 90 @,@ 439 @,@ 096 elsewhere , coming to a worldwide total of \$ 209 @,@ 073 @,@ 645 . It was the highest grossing film under the Nickelodeon Movies banner until being surpassed by The Last Airbender , Rango , The Adventures of Tintin : The Secret of the Unicorn , Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and The SpongeBob Movie : Sponge Out of Water .

= = = Critical response = = =

Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events received generally positive reviews . On Rotten Tomatoes , the film has a rating of 72 % , based on 160 reviews , with an average rating of 6 @.@ 7 / 10 . The site 's critical consensus reads , " Although it softens the nasty edges of its source material , Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events is a gothic visual treat , and it features a hilariously manic turn from Jim Carrey as the evil Count Olaf . " On Metacritic , gave the film a score of 62 out of 100 , based on 37 critics , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . Robert K. Elder of the Chicago Tribune praised Rick Heinrichs 's production design and Jim Carrey for having a balanced performance as a scene stealer . Elder called the film " exceptionally clever , hilariously gloomy and biting subversive . " Desson Thomson from The Washington Post reasoned over a fellow film @-@ goer 's characterization of Count Olaf , " Olaf is a humorless villain in the book . He 's not amusing like Carrey at all . To which I would counter : If you can 't let Carrey be Carrey , put someone boring and less expensive in the role . In his various disguises he 's rubbery , inventive

and improvisationally inspired . I particularly liked his passing imitation of a dinosaur . " Ty Burr , writing in The Boston Globe , observed , " Director Brad Silberling has essentially made a Tim Burton movie without the weird shafts of adolescent pain . At the same time , Silberling 's not a hack like Chris Columbus , and Snicket has more zip and inspired filmcraft than the first two Harry Potter films . The film 's no masterpiece , but at least you 're in the hands of people who know what they 're doing . The movie , like the books , flatters children 's innate sense that the world is not a perfect place and that anyone who insists otherwise is trying to sell you something . How you deal with the cognitive dissonance of a \$ 125 million Hollywood picture telling you this is up to you . At least there are no Lemony Snicket Happy Meals . Yet . " Internet reviewer James Berardinelli felt that " the film is first and foremost a fantasy , but there are dark currents running just beneath the surface . I give Silberling credit for not allowing them to swallow the film . Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events manages to remain witty throughout . " Roger Ebert gave a mixed review : " Jim Carrey is over the top as Count Olaf , but I suppose a character named Count Olaf is over the top by definition . I liked the film , but I 'll tell you what . I think this one is a tune @-@ up for the series , a trial run in which they figure out what works and what needs to be tweaked . The original Spider @-@ Man was a disappointment , but the same team came back and made Spider @-@ Man 2 , the best superhero movie ever made . " Scott Foundas of Variety gave a negative review , criticizing the filmmakers for sacrificing the storyline in favor of visual elements such as set design and cinematography . He wrote , " A Series of Unfortunate Events suggests what Mary Poppins might have looked like had Tim Burton directed it . Not surprisingly , Burton 's longtime production designer Rick Heinrichs was responsible for the sets , while ace Emmanuel Lubezki ( Burton 's Sleepy Hollow ) contributed the expressionistic lighting schemes . "

= = = Awards = = =

Makeup designer Valli O 'Reilly and Bill Corso won the Academy Award for Best Makeup . Production designer Rick Heinrichs and set decorator Cheryl Carasik ( Art Direction ) , Colleen Atwood ( Costume Design ) and composer Thomas Newman ( Original Music Score ) were also nominated for their work at 77th Academy Awards . The film lost the Saturn Award for Best Fantasy Film to Spider @-@ Man 2 , but was honored for its DVD special edition release . O 'Reilly and Corso were also nominated for the Saturn Award for Best Make @-@ up , but lost to Hellboy .

= = Cancelled franchise and future = =

Paramount Pictures , DreamWorks Pictures and Nickelodeon Movies hoped the film would become a franchise like the Harry Potter film series . Jim Carrey thought his character would be good as the basis for a film franchise since it would allow him to dive into a new role . " I don 't have a deal [ for a sequel ] , but it 's one that I wouldn 't mind doing again because there are so many characters , " the actor explained in December 2004 . " I mean , it 's just so much fun . It 's so much fun being a bad actor playing a character ... " In May 2005 , producer Laurie MacDonald said " Lemony Snicket is still something Paramount is interested in pursuing and we 're going to be talking with them more . " In October 2008 , Daniel Handler said that " a sequel does seem to be in the works . Paramount has had quite a few corporate shakeups , which has led to many a delay . Of course , many , many plans in Hollywood come to naught , but I 'm assured that another film will be made . Someday . Perhaps . " In June 2009 , Silberling confirmed he still talked about the project with Handler , and suggested the sequel be a stop motion film because the lead actors have grown too old . " In an odd way , the best thing you could do is actually have Lemony Snicket say to the audience , ' Okay , we pawned the first film off as a mere dramatization with actors . Now I 'm afraid I ? m going to have to show you the real thing . ' "

In November 2014 , Netflix was in talks of creating an online television series for all of the books . Barry Sonnenfeld , who was in original talks to direct the film , will direct the series , which is set to be released online in 2016 . Neil Patrick Harris has been cast to play Count Olaf .

= = Video game = =

A video game based on the books and film ( more so the film , as the name and many plot elements seen in the movie but not the book are seen ) was released in 2004 by Adrenium Games and Activision for the PlayStation 2 , GameCube , Xbox , Game Boy Advance , and the PC as Lemony Snicket 's A Series of Unfortunate Events . The player plays as all three orphans at points in the game , and encounters characters such as Mr. Poe , Uncle Monty and Aunt Josephine , along with villains such as Count Olaf , the hook @-@ handed man , the white @-@ faced women , and the bald @-@ headed man . The game , like the movie , follows only the first three books in the series . Although never mentioned in the game , there are some references to V.F.D. , such as in the first level where a package is delivered from the " Very Fast Delivery Service . " The note attached to the package also reads at the end , " P.S. The world is quiet here " , which is the motto of V.F.D.