

## King Kong

I am sure many of you have already heard about King Kong.

*King Kong* is the most influential and famous classic Hollywood film of all time. It belongs to the fantasy/action/ adventure and partly horror genre, and is about a gigantic prehistoric gorilla, brought from a remote island to New York City to be exhibited as a natural wonder. It escapes to cause mass destruction and in the end, dies by falling off the Empire State Building.

King Kong **was based on a story** by **Edgar Wallace** and **Merian C. Cooper**, who had a dream about a massive gorilla attacking New York City. It was directed by **Merian C. Cooper** and **Ernest B. Schoedsack**. **Bruce Cabot**, **Robert Armstrong** and the woman who became famous with King Kong, **Fay Wray**, starred as the leading actors in it.

The film is notable for, at that time, superb **stop-motion** animation, an excellent musical score and actress Fay Wray's performance as Kong's **improbable** love interest. In the finale, which has become an **enduring pop** icon, Kong carries a screaming Fay Wray to the top of the Empire State Building but is gunned down by a **swarm** of Army **biplanes**. *King Kong* premiered in New York City in 1933.

And now a little more about the story itself.

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The story line begins when the famous movie director Carl Denham is looking for his next big hit. After hiring an out of work **starlet** Ann Darrow, Denham and company set sail for the mysterious Skull Island to begin shooting.

When they arrive, they find the island is inhabited by a primitive tribe who worships a mysterious god called Kong. The part of the island where the natives have their village is separated from the rest by a giant wall to keep danger on the other side. There is a giant gate in the wall, so the natives can sacrifice one of their own to Kong as his brides. The natives are in the middle of a sacrificial **ceremony** and kidnap Ann as an **offering** to their god, Kong...a 50 foot tall savage gorilla. When Kong sees Ann for his first time, he is amazed at her beauty, especially her golden hair, which he had never before seen because there were no blondes among the natives. Kong therefore decides not to eat Ann as he had done with his previous victims, but carries her off into the wild jungle with him. A rescue party, lead by Ann's love interest Jack Driscoll, **is sent in** to save her.

They **pursue** Kong through the jungle encountering various gigantic, horrific monsters which **decimate** the group. These include dinosaurs and giant spiders, as well as pterodactyls, huge snakes and many other unusual creatures that the group comes across. Even Kong is attacked by some of the creatures. Later, a Tyrannosaurus Rex discovers Ann and wants to eat her. Kong defends his lady and a terrible battle **ensues**, in which Kong kills the T-rex by breaking off his lower jaw. Of the search party, only Jack survives to rescue Ann. When Kong finds out Ann is gone, he becomes **enraged** and sets out to find her. He arrives back at the giant wall, smashes the door and goes on a **rampage** through the village killing everyone in his path. Denham eventually manages to use sleep bombs to capture him.

A few weeks later, Denham opens a live show in New York City, featuring a chained Kong as the main attraction. But Denham underestimates the ape's strength and Kong is able to escape. Kong then finds Ann and **begins** a destructive **rampage** through the city which **culminates** in his climbing the Empire State Building where he desperately tries to fight off several biplanes. Unable to hold on because of his wounds, Kong falls to his death, 400m below.

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King Kong is often credited as being Adolf Hitler's favourite film.

It is one of the few films with so many **remakes** and related films.

In 1933, a sequel *The Son of Kong* was released. Then came *Mighty Joe Young*, *Konga*, *King Kong VS Godzilla*, *King Kong Escapes*, *King of Kong's Island*, *APE*, *Queen Kong*, *King Kong Lives*, and *The Mighty Kong*.

King Kong has been **spoofed** many times in films and literature; one of the more effective satires of the film was by British author [Terry Pratchett](#), whose book *Moving Pictures* **climaxes** with a giant woman carrying a screaming ape up a tall tower.

## 2005

And now, after 72 long years, 3 remakes and numerous related films, a new movie is coming to the big screen. King Kong will once again scare and move the audience as he had done back in 1933. But I would like to point out that this is not going to be just another **worthless** remake. This time, it will be directed by Peter Jackson, the man, most responsible for creating the three breathtaking Lord of the Rings movies.

To make a King Kong movie was Jackson's lifelong dream. **He originally wanted** to make this film immediately after [The Frighteners](#). When the rights got tied up, he moved on to *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. In fact, it was this film, King Kong that actually pulled Jackson into becoming a film director. He watched it when he was 13 and fell in love with it.

Jackson says that he plans **to go deeper into the personality** of Kong. He and his team are using the same technology that was used in *Lord of the Rings* to create Kong. The person behind Gollum – Andy Serkis – will be responsible for creating Kong with the help of CGI - computer generated imagery.

Peter Jackson was paid \$20 million to direct this film, the highest salary ever paid to a film director **in advance** of production.

The film will be appropriately set in 1933, the same year the original film was released.

Fay Wray was in negotiations to appear in the film. Peter Jackson wanted her to deliver the legendary last line: "Oh no, it wasn't the airplanes. It was beauty killed the beast." But Wray unfortunately passed away on 8 August 2004.

Peter Jackson's King Kong will premiere on 14th December this year all around the world. In Slovenia it will probably arrive in January 2006. I personally am really, really looking forward to seeing it and **recommend** everyone to watch it.

## King Kong

### Useful and Unknown Words

**stop-motion** (n.) = an animation technique which makes static objects appear to be moving. It works by shooting a single frame, stopping the camera to move the object a little bit, and then shooting another frame. When the film runs continuously for more than 15 frames per second, the illusion of fluid motion is created and the objects appear to move by themselves. This is similar to the animation of cartoons, but with real objects instead of drawings.

**improbable** (adj.) = unlikely, unbelievable

**enduring** (adj.) = lasting; continuing

**pop** (adj.) = popular

**a swarm** (n.) = a large number of insects or other small organisms

**a biplane** (n.) = an airplane having two pairs of wings fixed at different levels, especially one above and one below the fuselage.

**a starlet** = a young film actress publicized as a future star

**to pursue** (v.) = to follow in an effort to overtake or capture; chase (→ n. pursuit)

**to decimate** (v.) = to destroy or kill a large part of (a group), so that only one tenth remains

**to ensue** (v.) = to follow as a consequence or result

**enraged** (adj.) = extremely angry, furious

**a rampage** (n.) = a course of violent, frenzied behavior or action

**to culminate** (v.) = to reach the highest point or degree; climax

**a remake** (n.) = something in remade form, especially a new version of an earlier movie or song

**to spoof** (v.) = to do a spoof of (a light parody); satirize gently

### Listening Comprehension

1. What year was the original King Kong released?
2. In the famous last scene, where Kong climbs a building with Ann Darrow in his hand, he is shot by aeroplanes and then falls down to his death. What building does he climb?
3. Who are the three main characters in King Kong and who are they played by?
4. Why didn't Kong kill Ann?
5. What was the giant wall built for and why the gate in it?
6. Who is going to direct the 2005 Kong and what famous movie character did Andy Serkis create, apart from Kong?
7. Why didn't Fay Wray appear in the 2005 King Kong?