

THE SCREEN

A Fantastic Film in Which a Monstrous Ape Uses Automobiles for Missiles and Climbs a Skyscraper.

KING KONG, based on a story by the late Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper; directed by Mr. Cooper; presented by RKO Radio Pictures. At the Radio City Music Hall and RKO Roxy.

Ann Redman.....	Fay Wray
Denham.....	Robert Armstrong
Driscoll.....	Bruce Cabot
Englehorn.....	Frank Reicher
Weston.....	Sam Hardy
Native Chief.....	Noble Johnson
Second Mate.....	James Flavin
Witch King.....	Steve Clemento
Lumpy.....	Victor Long

By MORDAUNT HALL.

At both the Radio City Music Hall and the RKO Roxy, which have a combined seating capacity of 10,000, the main attraction now is a fantastic film known as "King Kong." The story of this feature was begun by the late Edgar Wallace and finished by Merian C. Cooper, who with his old associate, Ernest B. Schoedsack, is responsible for the production. It essays to give the spectator a vivid conception of the terrifying experiences of a producer of jungle pictures and his colleagues, who capture a gigantic ape, something like fifty feet tall, and bring it to New York. The narrative is worked out in a decidedly compelling fashion, which is mindful of what was done in the old silent film, "The Lost World."

Through multiple exposures, processed "shots" and a variety of angles of camera wizardry the producers set forth an adequate story and furnish enough thrills for any devotee of such tales.

Although there are vivid battles between prehistoric monsters on the island which Denham, the picture maker, insists on visiting, it is when the enormous ape, called Kong, is brought to this city that the excitement reaches its highest pitch. Imagine a 50-foot beast with a girl in one paw climbing up the outside of the Empire State Building, and after putting the girl on a ledge, clutching at airplanes, the pilots of which are pouring bullets from machine guns into the monster's body.

It often seems as though Ann Redman, who goes through more terror than any of the other characters in the film, would faint, but she always appears to be able to scream. Her body is like a doll in the claw of the gigantic beast, who in the course of his wanderings through Manhattan tears down a section of the elevated railroad and tosses a car filled with passengers to the street. Automobiles are mere missiles for this Kong, who occasionally reveals that he relishes his invincibility by patting his chest.

Denham is an intrepid person, but it is presumed that when the ape is killed he has had quite enough of searching for places with strange monsters. In the opening episode he is about to leave on the freighter for the island supposed to have been discovered by some sailor, when he goes ashore to find a girl whom he wants to act in his picture. In course of time he spies Ann, played by the attractive Fay Wray, and there ensues a happy voyage. Finally

through the fog the island is sighted and Denham, the ship's officers and sailors, all armed, go ashore. It soon develops that the savages, who offer up sacrifices in the form of human beings to Kong, their super-king, keep him in an area surrounded by a great wall. Kong has miles in which to roam and fight with brontosaurus and dinosauri and other huge creatures.

There is a door to the wall. After Denham and the others from the ship have had quite enough of the island, Kong succeeds in bursting open the door, but he is captured through gas bombs hurled at him by the white men. How they ever get him on the vessel is not explained, for the next thing you know is that Kong is on exhibition in Gotham, presumably in Madison Square Garden.

During certain episodes in this film Kong, with Ann in his paw, goes about his battles, sometimes putting her on a fifty-foot high tree branch while he polishes off an adversary. When he is perceived on exhibition in New York he is a frightening spectacle, but Denham thinks that he has the beast safely shackled. The newspaper photographers irritate even him with their flashlights, and after several efforts he breaks the steel bands and eventually gets away. He looks for Ann on the highways and byways of New York. He climbs up hotel façades and his head fills a whole window, his white teeth and red mouth adding to the terror of the spectacle.

Everywhere he moves he crushes out lives. He finally discovers Ann, and being a perspicacious ape, he decides that the safest place for himself and Ann is the tower of the Empire State structure.

Needless to say that this picture was received by many a giggle to cover up fright. Constant exclamations issued from the Radio City Music Hall yesterday. "What a man!" observed one youth when the ape forced down the great oak door on the island. Human beings seem so small that one is reminded of Defoe's "Gulliver's Travels." One step and this beast traverses half a block. If buildings hinder his progress, he pushes them down, and below him the people look like Lilliputians.

Miss Wray goes through her ordeal with great courage. Robert Armstrong gives a vigorous and compelling impersonation of Denham. Bruce Cabot, Frank Reicher, Sam Hardy, Noble Johnson and James Flavin add to the interest of this weird tale.

Dancing and Singing.

Among the numbers on the stage of the Radio City Music Hall are "Invitation to the Dance," with Patricia Bowman, Nicholas Daks and others. The orchestral overture is "March Slav." The Roxettes contribute their dependable entertainment.

The footlights divertimento at the RKO-Roxy includes "On the Ranch," with the Debonair Quartet; Art Frank, a dancing comedian; Kent Harvey, a banjoist, and others. At both these theatres there is the "Jungle Rhythm," the prologue to the film.