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Get a clue

Nancy Drew has been updated for the screen, but what do teens think?

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Photo | The Associated Press

Actress Emma Roberts plays Nancy Drew in the recently released movie.

- The spunky, redheaded girl sleuth of the 1930s was back to solving mysteries last weekend in theaters, her first theatrical release since 1939.

The movie, which opened Friday, stars Emma Roberts as the title character who joins her father, Carson (Tate Donovan), as they go to Los Angeles, and she stumbles upon the unsolved case of the death of a movie star.

Jesslyn Duren, 16, a junior at Northridge High School, said she thinks 16-year-old Roberts is right choice for the role.

"She's a great choice for the role [of Nancy Drew] because of her height, weight, and facial structure. She's exactly how I envisioned her," Duren said.

But the question remains, is Nancy Drew still relevant with kids and teens? The once wildly-popular detective was considered a heroine to young girls in her earliest days, but it's been 77 years since her debut.

"We haven't noticed a surge in popularity because of the movie, but we've always been a big promoter [of Nancy Drew]," David Graham, general Manager at Books-A-Million in Tuscaloosa, said. "The Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series are still the most popular mystery books among kids."

The original classic 56 mysteries are still in print today and have sold 200 million copies worldwide. They have been translated into 17 different languages. Jana Fine, youth services coordinator for the Tuscaloosa Public Library, said Nancy Drew is still a "perpetual favorite among young girls."

"The summer reading program at the Tuscaloosa Public Library is 'Get a Clue' and [Nancy Drew] is flying off the shelves," Fine said.

The first edition of the classic is still in high demand. A 1931 edition of "The Secret of Shadow Ranch" is going for \$2,000 on the Web site abebooks.com.

The second half of the original series is now being reprinted, with eight books per year being released.

"Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew" and "Nancy Drew: Girl Detective" are the most recent spin-offs of the classic series, and they are in print.

Jasmin Perkins, 16, junior at Northridge High School, said she prefers the classic series of books.

"They are the [originals]," Perkins said. "They have the Nancy Drew with short, curly red hair I'm familiar with."

The book series spun four movies starring Bonita Granville in the 1930s, a TV series along with The Hardy Boys starring Pamela Sue Martin, another TV series starring Tracy Ryan that lasted one season and a TV pilot starring Maggie Lawson that premiered on ABC in December 2002.

With the latest movie grossing more than \$7 million last weekend, many people may wonder why the sleuth has remained popular. Kala Hurst, 16, a junior at Northridge High School, said she still considers Nancy Drew to be influential.

"She's inspired the mysteries [of today] and other heroines not only in print, but on TV as well, such as Veronica Mars," Hurst said.

Fine said Nancy Drew serves as a positive role model for young girls.

"The reason Nancy Drew is popular is because she's strong, independent, curious and has a strong sense of adventure," Fine said. "She's not afraid to get answers and solve mysteries. I think that's what many adolescent and teen [girls] want to do."

According to boxofficemojo.com, the movie opened in seventh place last weekend and took in \$7.1 million.

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