Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 22 June 2018 03:34

Rating: «« out of «««««

Running Time: 128 minutes

The latest film in this hugely popular franchise is said to be part of a trilogy. After viewing *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*
, it certainly seems that way. While the movie probably still cost a pretty penny, this feels like a much smaller, darker follow-up. It deserves some credit for trying to deal with a few moral and ethical questions about the creation of dinosaurs and provides some popcorn thrills along the way, but doesn't quite match its predecessor and often feels more like a set-up for the next chapter in the series than its own stand-alone entry.

Four years after the events of the previous film, the island theme park has been abandoned and is overrun with dinos. However, a volcanic eruption on Isla Nubar soon threatens "extinction" for all dinosaurs (it's best not to think about Isla Sorna from *The Lost World* and *Jurassic Park III*, or try to understand why the Jurassic World owners decided to build their massive attraction next to an active peak).

While Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard) does her best to campaign for the rescue of these lab created lifeforms, others wonder if it's simply best to let nature take its course. When a wealthy benefactor (James Cromwell) offers to pay for a rescue mission, Dearing joins immediately. However, her ex, Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) needs more coaxing. They explain his expertise will be needed to extract Blue, one of the raptors he trained.

The excursion does not go as intended, with the leads and their pals being set up by a nefarious

villain with other plans for the creatures. There are some fun scenes on the island as the characters must not only deal with carnivorous dinosaurs hunting them down, but also the massive eruption occurring around them. It results in some impressive visuals and one of the funniest moments in the film, as a heavily tranquilized Owen slowly regains motor function and attempts to roll his way out of the path of oncoming danger.

While these early scenes are large in scope, the story leaves this locale and spends the second hour at a single location, the benefactor's mansion on the mainland. Here, the evil plot and motivations for obtaining the dinosaurs is revealed... and to be honest, it doesn't really make a whole lot of sense or seem worth the time and resources for the bad guys, if you think about it. Let's just say that they're very interested in Blue, specifically her affection for and tendency to follow the directions of her trainer. They're also interested in showing off an all-new dangerous hybrid created in the lab called the Indoraptor. Thankfully for the heroes, the villains not all that bright, at times succumbing to monster movie clichés and doing that absolute worst thing in a life-threatening scenario.

Essentially, the second half of the film becomes a simple monster-in-the-house movie. At least it's a well-made one, featuring a few exciting scenes along the way. One bit involving the Indoraptor tricking a victim is quite funny. Despite the dark, enclosed environments, there's a nifty shot or two, including one impressive camera move that follows the nasty creature as it climbs over the roof of the estate and flips upside down as it peeks into a window. And as in the previous film, Blue is an entertaining and likable dino character to root for amid the carnage.

While some of it comes across awkwardly, at least the movie tries to add some food for thought about the basic rights of all living creatures, between scenes of characters being torn to pieces. At the end of the day, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* is flawed and doesn't possess the grandeur or thrills of the previous installment. However, it does promise something more exciting for the next sequel (should there be one) and provides a few moments of amusing dinosaur carnage for fans of the series.

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun