

JURASSIC WORLD Delivers Plenty of Dinosaur Thrills

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: <<<< out of 4 stars

Running Time: 2 hrs., 5 min.

It has been over 20 years since the original Jurassic Park, but feverish fandom for the film and all things dinosaur haven't ceased. In fact, the property appears to have grown in popularity - those who enjoyed the original as kids are high on the nostalgia for the adventure, and the series has added new young fans courtesy of its frequent airings on TV. Thankfully, Jurassic World is a sequel that generally works. It's simple, escapist entertainment with plenty of thrills and chills that are guaranteed to impress most viewers.

In the decades since the original tale, the Costa Rican island where the dinosaurs were created has been developed into a fully operational theme park, with rides featuring all sorts of prehistoric creatures. However, in order to spark new interest in the old hat attractions, the park's latest top secret creation is super-predator Indominus rex, spliced together with DNA from a few mysterious sources. Of course, it's a really bad idea.

When the beast gets loose from its pen, it creates massive problems for the park manager, Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard). Not only is the menace killing everything in its path, but it is headed directly for the heavily populated tourist zones, where Claire's nephews Zach (Nick Robinson) and Gray (Ty Simkins) are vacationing. The manager and park employee/dinosaur trainer Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) desperately attempt to search for the kids and solve the even bigger issues before everything gets out of hand.

What follows are a series of creatively shot action scenes that place characters in all sorts of

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dangerous situations. The young boys become trapped in a Gyrosphere (a giant “hamster ball” of sorts), where they are attacked and bounced around. Cages are breached and attendees are picked off in wild fashion by all kinds of land, sea and air predators. And even the dinosaurs themselves fight each other. All of these sequences are fun and excitingly rendered, taking full advantage of the dramatic potential. The finale, involving a melee of species going toe-to-toe, is an absolute blast to witness.

For those who love the original, there are plenty of nods to first film, both in the background and in the way events play out. The script does a clever job of showing viewers a familiar situation and then putting an interesting new spin on it. Grady’s work onsite involves training the Velociraptors to follow his lead. In the process, these creatures begin communicating with both humans and dinosaurs. Over the course of the film, their alliances flip and change, adding an extra unexpected element of drama.

As for the characters, they’re not particularly deep but they are likable enough to follow. Pratt is fine in the straight-man hero role, although there are a few brief moments that left this reviewer questioning if the intent of a few lines was to be tongue-in-cheek or serious. Pacing wise, are a few lulls early on and anyone watching will be able to guess from the get-go which characters are destined to be dinosaur dinner. There are also a couple of brief subplots (one involving the parents of the kids) that don’t seem to go anywhere.

And while one wishes the movie had made a little more of the themes it raises (like the queasy relationship between science and commerce), the omission doesn’t take too much away from the overall experience. Minor quibbles aside, *Jurassic World* gives audiences exactly what they want from a summer popcorn film. Not only is it a worthy follow-up, but it actually stands as the strongest sequel in the series.