

## ‘The Mummy’ is a Marvel of a Muddled Mess

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 9, 2017 - 6:36am

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Universal Studio’s “Dark Universe,” which is centered around its stable of classic movie monsters, isn’t a bad idea. But in the darkly inauspicious debut feature called “The Mummy,” everything unravels. This is a mixed, muddled, marvel of a mess that contains an assembly of special effects, but precious little life. Someone apparently forgot to tell those involved, in this exercise in building a blockbuster, that monsters can be fun.

Tom Cruise’s character of Nick aims for irresistible rogue, but can’t quite hit the mark. He’s an American soldier with a profitable side job ripping off antiquities to be sold on the black market. After an airstrike in modern day Iraq (played for laughs) he uncovers an ancient Egyptian tomb. Turns out an ancient princess (Sofia Boutella) went on a murderous spree when she learned she wouldn’t get to be queen, and massacred her father, half brother, and stepmother in a quest for power. There’s also some silliness about a magic dagger that will bring about an ancient Egyptian god of ultimate evil. As punishment she was mummified alive, until the soldier of fortune Nick and his deeply annoying sidekick Chris (Jake Johnson) set her free.



All Eyes Are on Tom Cruise in ‘The Mummy’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures



From there the action moves to modern day London, where Russell Crowe's Dr. Henry Jekyll is operating a S.H.I.E.L.D. sort of organization, hunting down monsters who threaten civilization. Crowe deserves special scorn here, because Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is supposed to be a hammy treat. But Crowe is content to merely put his glasses on the end of his nose and speak in a tone of bored sophistication.

And even during the eventual emergence of his evil alter-ego, Crowe's bloated physique can't muster much in the way of effort. He doesn't so much fumble his attempt, as he barely seems to make an attempt at all. Watching this performance it was hard to remember what made him an interesting actor in the first place.

Tom Cruise is all too willing to put himself into peril for audience's amusement. Plus he's in "Mission Impossible" running and jumping mode here, but this would-be blockbuster can't figure out how to make it pay off. The action set pieces lack dazzle, innovation or pizzazz. It says something about the production when even a plane crash that throws Cruise around like a ragdoll, bouncing off the ceiling, fails to get the heart racing.



One Mad Mum: Sofia Boutella as the Title Character in 'The Mummy'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The story and screenplay – credited to six different writers – suffers from the filmmaking-by-committee directives, and can't find a consistent tone. At one minute it aims for the common gritty blockbuster, and another Tom Cruise's Nick is cracking wise with a groan-inducing line that seems to have been imported from some earlier draft. And let's not even get into the ending, which suggests the creators are fundamentally confused as to what makes a "mummy" movie appealing in the first place.

Director Alex Kurtzman has spent plenty of time in the franchise trenches creating installments of the Transformers, Spiderman, and Star Trek series that critics and audiences loved to hate. And in his first turn in the director's chair, he clearly has not learned from his mistakes. It all adds up to a movie that seems twice as long as it actually is... this mummy never should have left her tomb.

*"The Mummy" opens everywhere on June 9th, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for the 3D theaters and showtimes Featuring Tom Cruise, Sofia Boutella, Annabelle Wallis, Russell Crowe, Jake Johnson and Courtney B. Vance. Screenplay by Dylan Kussman, David Koepp and Christopher McQuarrie. Directed by Alex Kurtzman. Rated "PG-13"*



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