

‘Kingsman: The Golden Circle’ is High-Flying Spy Fun

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 22, 2017 - 9:41am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Kingsman: The Golden Circle” is a hard “R”-rated sequel with a thoroughly juvenile soul. It pairs silly wordplay, dirty jokes and a startling amount of bloody and gratuitous violence while its tongue remains thoroughly in cheek. This is a James Bond movie as made by an unusually sadistic 16-year-old under the influence of some not entirely legal substances.

Once upon a time the Coen brothers wood chipper scene in “Fargo” and the brains-in- the-backseat-scene in “Pulp Fiction” tested the limits of acceptability and bad taste, but that seems downright tame compared to all the slicing and dicing in this film. In one instance, there’s a magic lasso which is capable of slicing people in half. Additionally, there are not one, but two scenes of people being fed into meat grinders. They’re both so bonkers they’re actually played for sick laughs.



The Cast of ‘Kingsman: The Golden Circle’

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

Director Matthew Vaughn keeps up the same bang/zoom formula from the first film almost immediately when Eggsy (Taron Egerton) is

attacked by a former Kingsman turned bad – an ex-recruit with a robotic arm. The ensuing fight and chase in the back of a London cab has all the earmarks of our ADHD-addled computer generated effects sequences, but Vaughn makes it actually fun. Although the scene starts turned up to 11 and keeps building from there, Vaughn doesn’t contact “Michael Bay Disease” and cut the scene into an incomprehensible mess. It’s always clear who’s doing what to whom, and these days that’s a small pleasure that is far less common than it should be.

The plot this time around centers around a drug cartel called the Golden Circle, which is led by a demented Julianne Moore (ruthlessly issuing kill orders while never letting a plastic smile leave her face.). She lives in a theme park version of 1950’s nostalgia... think malt shops, chrome and a giant donut. Her plan involves holding the world hostage by poisoning all illegal narcotics and demanding legalization to release the antidote. They take out most of the Kingsmen, while leaving Eggsy and Merlin (Mark Strong) as the lone survivors. Then the two head to America to join up with their American counterparts “The Statesman.”

Unlike the Kingsman tailor shop front, this organization just happens to be hidden inside a whiskey distillery. They also uncover Harry (Colin Firth), who despite seemingly dying in the first film turns up here with that old movie trope of amnesia. He eventually snaps out of it, but he’s a little flighty and haunted by hallucinations of butterflies at inopportune times. And although he seems prominently placed in the marketing materials, Channing Tatum (as Tequila) spends most of the movie on ice, and also the character of Champagne (Jeff Bridges) mostly uncorks bottles and explains whole lot of exposition in his scenes as the head of The Statesman. We spend most of film’s running time with an agent named Whiskey (Pedro Pascal doing a “Smokey and the Bandit” era Burt Reynolds impression), who carries that magic lasso and gets a real workout in an over-the-top Kentucky dive bar fight.



Colin Firth Returns as Harry in ‘Kingsman: The Golden Circle’

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

The film presents a theme park version of America to counter its theme park version of Great Britain... and then there’s the 1950s-style drug cartel’s den which may have been borrowed wholesale from a Universal Studios backlot tour. The jokes are big, broad and full of stereotypes. So in this environment, singer Elton John’s supporting role as himself – complete with a knowing wink at the camera in the middle of a Kung Fu flying kick – fits right in.

The first “Kingsman: The Secret Service” was better than it had any right to be, and “Kingsman: The Golden Circle” is as entertaining in the moment as well. But both films aren’t exactly the type you can re-watch over and over. They are thoroughly disposable blockbusters which are fun, when viewed once. They’re so featherweight they seem to dissolve like cotton candy almost the instant they’re consumed. To make a comparison, I’d sooner revisit the Guy Ritchie-directed Sherlock Holmes movies than pull either of the Kingsman out for a second go around.

“Kingsman: The Golden Circle” opens everywhere on September 22nd. Featuring Taron Egerton, Colin Firth, Julianne Moore, Channing Tatum, Halle Berry, Pedro Pascal, Jeff Bridges and Elton John. Written by Matthew Vaughn and Jane Goldman. Directed by Matthew Vaughn. Rated “R”



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By [SPIKE WALTERS](#) [19]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

spike@hollywoodchicago.com [18]

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