

Alicia Vikander Has a Case of the Runs in ‘Tomb Raider’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 15, 2018 - 5:13pm

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Movies based on video games are almost never good... even the best ones only ascend to the level of “barely watchable.” By that measure, “Tomb Raider” can be considered a modest success since it didn’t make me want to claw my eyes out. I have to confess I never saw either of the first two films with Angelina Jolie, but after watching this I’m not actually clamoring at the bit to catch up.

Alicia Vikander slips into the crop top and combat boots this time around as Lara Croft, an English heiress modeled a bit after Indiana Jones, and it cribs liberally from that series and others about globe-trotting adventurers. In this story, Croft sets off for Japan to investigate what happened to her father, who vanished eight years prior while looking for an ancient Japanese queen of death called Himako.



Alicia Vikander as Lara Croft in ‘Tomb Raider’

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

“Tomb Raider” exists because it is familiar. No one was exactly clamoring for a franchise reboot, but the first film with Jolie nearly two decades ago was successful, so producers decided to cash in on name recognition and squeeze a few more pennies out of the movie going public. And Vikander follows the same career track as Jolie did by following up her Academy Award win with this less challenging cash grab, and the result is blockbuster filmmaking at its most mechanical. The film seems like it was spit out of a screenwriting program without the

benefit of human involvement... attempts at sentiment come off as clumsy, and forced.

It starts remarkably slowly, taking a good half hour before Croft does any actual Tomb Raiding, while she searches for her dear old Dad. She's introduced by getting the crap beaten out of her at a gym, and works as a bike messenger while barely being able to pay the rent. It is a bike race that serves as a warmup for the running, swimming, and jumping ahead.

Once it does get going, director Roar Uthaug never lets Vikander rest for more than a couple of minutes before inserting another chase. There's so much running here, I half expected Tom Cruise to show up around the bend, but it's not quite as fun as it should be. There are puzzles, a fellow adventurer (Walter Goggins) almost driven mad by the quest, and of course a shadowy evil organization called Trinity.



Think of Lara (Laugh Don't Cry) in 'Tomb Raider'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

Alicia Vikander makes for a strong presence, but the chases, fights, and endless shots of her dangling by one hand over a precipice are more perfunctory than anything else. The only time the story comes close to being as enjoyably ludicrous as it should be involves Lara Croft hanging on to the dilapidated wreckage of a plane teetering over a waterfall.

"Tomb Raider" aims to essentially be a female Indiana-Jones-in-Japan, but this film does accomplish something that Harrison Ford's earlier three part film series never managed. For all its crumbling tombs, ancient curses, and shipwrecks, this Tomb Raider manages to be a bit of a dusty old bore, and makes one long for even the old creaky Indy instead.

"Tomb Raider" opens everywhere on March 16th in 3D, IMAX and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D and IMAX theaters and show times. Featuring Alicia Vikander, Dominic West, Walter Goggins, Kirstin Scott Thomas and Derek Jacobi. Written by Geneva Robertson-Dworet and Alastair Siddons. Directed by Roar Uthaug. Rated "PG-13"



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