

Ass Kicker of the Wrong Kind is Downfall of ‘The 355’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 7, 2022 - 8:53am

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – There’s something to be said for a well done ass kicker in January that provides an entertaining distraction from the ice and snow outside. “The 355” is not it, offering a typical quick cutting action thriller that plods along in the most formulaic and least exciting manner possible. There’s nothing in this movie that hasn’t been done to death already.

The script was at times is so hackneyed and cliched that it could almost pass into self parody, if anyone involved had an inkling of how the whole operation was just ridiculous and tired. The only things missing are the self-destructing tapes, and the line about the secretary disavowing all knowledge of the operation. But the film doesn’t even try to care about making any of this the least bit interesting.



The 355

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Jessica Chastain, Lupita Nyong'o, Penelope Cruz, and Diane Kruger make up this butt kicking collection of spies. They're all elite operatives from four international agencies who must join forces and work through their own emotional baggage to retrieve an all powerful hard drive from falling into the wrong hands.

It's a shame that two Oscar winners, and an Oscar nominee are stranded in uninspired dreck like this. Out of the four, only Lupita N'yongo as a MI6 cybersecurity expert manages to scrape together any kind of a character from the fragments she's been given. Chastain and Kruger seem to have fun getting to kick ass in heels, but both give flat and stiff performances otherwise. Penelope Cruz is along for the ride as an agency therapist who gets dragged along for reasons even the film doesn't seem to fully understand. And the less said about Sebastian Stan's turncoat agent the better. He seems to have settled on playing the character as an alcoholic incompetent idiot who always has a drink in his hand and nothing on his mind.

It takes more to make an entertaining action movie than far-flung locales, espionage, chase sequences, and fight scenes. But co-writer/director Simon Kinberg seems to be dutifully going down a spy movie checklist without the artistic chops to pull it all together. There are a few Jason Bourne-style shaky cam fight scenes, but most of the sequences seem to aspire to be run of the mill, and barely succeed in not being embarrassing.

The turgid dialogue in the script does its four leads no favors either. No one expects Shakespeare in a time waster like this, but if you took a shot of booze every time this film copies an action movie cliché wholesale from other, better movies you'd probably have alcohol poisoning by the end of it. It's the type of movie where a boss tells a lone wolf secret operative that she's good at everything except (wait for it) ... taking orders. Another boss gives yet another operative the directive that she can't be assigned to a case, but if she happened to go out on her own on a mission of vengeance he could see how that could happen.



Hot Guns and Warm Hearts in 'The 355'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

All in all, "The 355" aims to give these talented actresses an ass kicker of their very own, but the novelty of women kicking as much ass as their male counterparts has worn off by now ... "The 355" does nothing to add new life to the premise. And it teases the potential for a sequel in its closing moments, but It's not likely anyone will remember this movie five minutes after leaving the theater, much less months or years later. Jessica Chastain, Penelope Cruz, Lupita Nyong'o, and Diane Kruger deserve better than this.

"The 355" opens in theaters on January 7th. Featuring Jessica Chastain, Lupita Nyong'o, Penelope Cruz, Diane Kruger and Sebastian Stan. Screenplay by Simon Kinberg and Theresa Rebeck. Directed by Simon Kinberg. Rated "PG-13"



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