

## More Than a Popcorn Flick, 'Jurassic World' Makes a Climactic Comeback Worth Making

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Blockbuster films are obsessed with bigger, louder and faster. They often think they need to spend more money to outdo what they've done before – especially when coming from a beloved original like "Jurassic Park".

I'm often afraid for new films in such successful franchises to reboot because they so often let us down. After an initial hit with "Jurassic Park" in 1993 and then "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" in 1997, 2001's "Jurassic Park III" could have put the trilogy to bed. In 2015, though, it turns out that executive producer Steven Spielberg had something more to say and much more to show with a reimagining that fully takes advantage of the colossal 3D IMAX format.

I'm usually not a critic to recommend 3D and certainly only potentially widely adopted films are shot and released in IMAX, but you shouldn't spend theatrical money on "Jurassic World" at all unless you see it in 3D IMAX. And you most certainly should see it as it's a follow-up film that's much more than just a bigger, louder and faster popcorn flick.



The Indominus rex dominates all creatures in her path in "Jurassic World".

*Image credit: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment*

Paying homage to what makes these films so lovable to so many people, "Jurassic World" starts where it needs to: with a cute new kid (Ty Simpkins) who's filled with passion and wonder for dinosaurs. Even as he's grappling with the uncertainties and sadness of his parents' impending divorce, trekking to Isla Nublar (the location of the first "Jurassic Park" film) gives him and his brother (Nick Robinson) hope and positive distraction.

Once there, though, things of course go awry. Rather than breeding dinosaurs, now the island is unfortunately but understandably and believably futuristic – running as a business and needing to turn profits for its shareholders. For kiddies, it's yet another "PG-13" film, but as a warning, it's easily the most violent and realistic in the series. Follow-up films always have to up the ante and "Jurassic World" does it with its realistic action violence.

We've got the stone-cold businesswoman, Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard), running the island like a business without falling in love with the animals. And then we have the "velociraptor whisperer" Owen (Chris Pratt) who sees them for what they really are and earns their trust by building a relationship. While their characters are critical to the mission at hand, together their flirtations with each other don't pay off in a convincingly chemical way. The film shouldn't have tried to go there.



Left to right: Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard), Owen (Chris Pratt), Zach (Nick Robinson) and Gray (Ty Simpkins) watch in terror in "Jurassic World".

*Image credit: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment*

With more than 20,000 visitors confined to the theme park, Owen and Claire realistically clash as the park falls into chaos with its new villain: a genetically modified dinosaur hybrid named the Indominus rex. Her true makeup is top secret, but her desire to eat, break free and kill is animalistic. This time, all of the dinosaurs are created by genetics rather than grown, and the film even warns about the dangers of playing god in this way.

The characters all evolve in a plot progression I'd believe – from the curiosity of the brothers to Chris Pratt's heroic role to Bryce Dallas Howard's conversion from a suit to a lady who rolls up her sleeves and gets dirty. Even the military factor is interesting. Aside from the bigger, badder T-Rex, the film's secondary villains are the greedy, violent humans who want to use the fast, deadly and genetically modified velociraptors as dispensable agents of war against foreign nations.

Based on the title, I thought the story might leak beyond the island. From the result of yet another potential theme park meltdown like we've seen in these films before, the military factor is what would threaten that release outside of alleged controlled captivity.



Owen (Chris Pratt) attempts to keep the raptors at bay in "Jurassic World".

Image credit: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment

"Jurassic World" doesn't buck blockbuster trends. Rather, it cleverly plays into them – both by using them to assure its box-office success as well as its shareholder approval within the film. The creation of this new threat works because we have a villain to fear, a visual effects feast to marvel at, and best of all, a human lesson to heed: there's a price to pay for overmeddling with nature.

The film culminates in an unexpected epic climax that had our crowd cheering. While I did figure out the plot twists, I only did right before they'd happen. The film leaves audiences feeling satisfied that bigger, louder and faster pays off. All the while, "Jurassic World" manages to stay true to its roots and has just enough throwbacks to honor the film's initial magic.

The formula, which marries real-world pressures with plot progression that works, is enormously paying off. On a \$150 million budget, the film's global box-office grab is already at \$511 million with only 3 days in 4,274 theatres. But best of all, I left not feeling jipped that yet another previously famous franchise stole our money without something new to show and tell.

"Jurassic World" stars Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Judy Greer, Omar Sy, Ty Simpkins, Irrfan Khan, Vincent D'Onofrio, Nick Robinson and Jake Johnson from director Colin Trevorrow. 124 minutes, is rated "PG-13" for intense sequences of science-fiction violence and peril. It opened on June 12, 2015.



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