

## INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL REVIEW

### **The New Indiana Jones Movie Promises Much, But Delivers Little**

As the first movie to feature Harrison Ford in his iconic role as intrepid archaeologist Indiana Jones

for almost two decades, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" clearly has a lot to live

up to, not just in living up to the heritage of its three illustrious predecessors, but also, in a sense,

attempting to justify WHY the series should be brought back at all, particularly after such a

significant gap. Might the audience, for instance, simply have moved on? Would the younger

generation even be interested? Given the box office takings, it would seem the answer to those

questions definitely lies in the negative. The question that remains, however, is, box office aside,

SHOULD the series have been resurrected in the first place?

On this evidence, sadly, the answer is no. The movie starts well enough (overlooking for the

moment the somewhat absurd "surviving a nuclear blast by hiding in a fridge" malarkey that has

already caused consternation (to put it mildly) in internet fan forums), updating the series time

frame to the 1950s well enough, while still keeping it recognisably the same franchise. Even

more thankfully, Harrison Ford proves he's still well up to the task of portraying arguably his

most famous character. Indeed, when in the traditional Indiana costume, with the coat

and the

hat, you have to look close to see much difference in his appearance at all.  
Unfortunately

for Harrison (and for Indiana) however, what certainly has changed are the attitudes of those

in charge. George Lucas has already been the result of many fan moans of "he raped my

childhood" with those (admit it) mostly terrible new 'Star Wars' movies, so his involvement

obviously was going to get a few people concerned. Spielberg, on the other hand, has mostly

survived the transition into the 21st Century with reputation unblemished, so the fact he was

back directing gave most of us hope that this new Indiana Jones movie wouldn't be quite

the same memory-tainting embarrassment that the 'Star Wars' prequels were. Alas, no such

luck. Many people have already pointed out that Spielberg cops out with far, far too much use

of that current blight on cinema, ridiculous CGI, not to mention his apparent reticence (in comparison with two decades ago) to allow Indiana to engage in a bit of gunplay. The man

who was happily shooting Nazis left, right and centre (and occasionally left of centre) in 'Raiders' and 'Last Crusade' never even shoots a gun in 'Kingdom'. Some might call this Spielberg and company being "responsible". Others might, equally justifiably, call it just simply gutless.

Even these modern irritations, however, are not what ultimately sinks 'Kingdom'. The movie is reasonably well made (though there's nothing in it to compare to most of the

iconic sequences in previous movies), well-acted (even if Cate Blanchett gets little to do, John Hurt gets even less, and Karen Allen looks, as a friend of mine rather unkindly pointed out, "like she's had a few too many trips to the plastic surgeon over the years") and produced. No, what makes this reviewer at least consider 'Kingdom' a titanic failure is, predictably... the script. It sucks, let's be honest, folks.

Making the McGuffin of the movie space aliens might fit with the 50s setting, but it sits ill at ease with the supernaturally-inclined bent of the original trilogy, and is one step too many. Actually, I'd argue that the filmmakers started pushing the mystical element too far in 'Last Crusade'. While the climax of the original (the opening of the Ark) was and remains still genuinely frightening today, and the voodoo aspects of the (seriously underrated) 'Temple of Doom' are likewise nicely sinister, I personally felt that the 1,000 year old blue smurf knight guarding the Holy Grail at the climax of 'Last Crusade' was already getting rather silly. 'Kingdom' amps this up by several hundred percent, and isn't so much 'rather silly' as completely and totally bloody ridiculous. Disbelief doesn't so much have to be suspended as hung, drawn and quartered at this point. By the end, this reviewer at least was practically squirming with embarrassment at the lameness of it all, including, unfortunately, the rather faux-emotion between Indy, Marion and 'the kid'. It all just came across as rather fake and out-of-place and embarrassing, like watching your parents declare undying love for one another at a wedding anniversary, when they'd been screaming abuse at one another not fifteen minutes before the party. It appears that everybody is just trying too hard, while in other areas they're just not trying hard enough.

One can, at this point, only hope that poor Indiana gets to rest in peace this time, or that if

he were to ride again, his next 'quest' would be rather more imaginative, gutsy and all-round

less moronic than this one.