



The original Lara Croft: Tomb Raider starring Angelina Jolie still remains the highest domestic grossing video game film adaptation of all time despite the plethora of films that have come out since its 2001 release. It's been nearly 15 years since the last time Lara graced the big screen, and Tomb Raider is taking her story back to the beginning when she was just a reckless young adult who's eager to follow along in her father's footsteps. Like most video game adaptations, Tomb Raider struggles with an inconsistent story and tepid action scenes for an overall lackluster film.

It's been seven years since her father Richard Croft (Dominic West) disappeared on an expedition, and Lara (Alicia Vikander) still hasn't given up on the fact that he might be still alive. After stumbling upon clues he left behind, Lara learns that he was going after the tomb of Queen Himiko of the lost Japanese civilization of Yamatai, who is said to possess the power over life and death with a touch of her hand. Following in her father's footsteps, she enlists the help of ship captain Lu Ren (Daniel Wu) to take her into the Devil's Sea in the hopes of finding out what happened to her father. Ferocious storms cause their ship to wreck, and the two find themselves stranded on the island along with Mathias Vogel (Walton Goggins), who has been searching for Himiko as well and knew Lara's father. Lara's going to have to quickly live up to her Croft name if she's going to survive the island and Mathias' enemy forces.

The main problem with Tomb Raider is that it wants to be both an origin story for the character and a showcase of how kick-ass Lara Croft can be. The opening scene shows her butt getting handed to her in an MMA fight, but 30 minutes later once she gets to the island she has no difficulty in killing enemy soldier wielding machine guns with nothing but a bow and arrow and her fists. In on scene she hesitates to jump on a tiny moving boat, while in the next she's making these huge leaps across a crashed plane dangling over a waterfall. It's ridiculous how quickly Lara goes from an innocent bike messenger to a adventuring female Indiana Jones without so much as any progression in between. I believe that Alicia Vikander can pull off the Lara Croft character as she's great in the action scenes when taken on their own. In the context of the film, however, they're not at all enticing.

Furthermore, the story is just complete nonsense. Mathias Vogel is a terrible villain, and more of just an angry henchman for the corporation he works for, Trinity. I'm still not quite sure what Trinity is because the film does a terrible job at explaining things. They're just this shady organization that wants to control the world using Himiko's powers. Vogel is stuck on the island until he can deliver her to them. There's also this huge reveal at the end of the third act that feels pointless because it doesn't go anywhere, and is only meant to tease you with something to anticipate from a potential sequel.

What made the 2013 game the film is based on so great was its focus on survival and how everyone's end goal was just to get off the island. Lara and Mathias' differing methods of obtaining said goal is what drove the conflict. None of that is present in Tomb Raider, unfortunately.

Tomb Raider is a yawn-inducing action film that has little style and substance. Everything is so by the book it becomes exhausting. There are a couple of decent action sequences, but everything else surrounding them makes them feel inconsequential. Lara's basically playing the game for the first time with everything already unlocked, and that makes for a dull experience in the end.

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