

Second Dino-Sequel Nearly Stomps Its Predecessors: "Jurassic Park III" and "Legally Blonde"

Written by Mike Schulz
Tuesday, 24 July 2001 18:00

- [Download MAMP Pro 3 MAC](#)
- [219.95\\$ Adobe Creative Suite 5 Master Collection Student and Teacher Edition cheap oem](#)
- [Download Corel WordPerfect Office X6 Professional Edition](#)
- [Buy OEM Excel 2007 Dashboards and Reports For Dummies](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Premiere Pro CS6 Essential Training](#)
- [Download Aiseesoft Video Converter 3 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Autodesk AutoCAD 2011](#)
- [Buy Lynda.com - Word 2013 Essential Training \(en\)](#)
- [Download Corel Draw Graphics Suite X5](#)
- [39.95\\$ Microsoft Office Outlook 2007 cheap oem](#)
- [Download Microsoft AutoRoute 2011 Europe](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Creating an Interactive Photo Gallery with jQuery and Dreamweaver](#)
- [Discount - PhoneView 2 MAC](#)
- [Buy Cheap Figure Drawing For Dummies](#)



JURASSIC PARK III

Jurassic Park III could have been good. Strike that – it could have been very, very good. There are ideas, gags, and individual set-pieces in director Joe Johnston's sequel that match anything Steven Spielberg came up with in the first two installments of the *Jurassic Park* series, and it features one running joke involving a cell phone that is sheer perfection. The effects are impressive, the cast is fine, and the movie clocks in at 90 minutes, and who on earth wouldn't be thrilled by that?

Yet my feeling is that very few people will walk out of *Jurassic Park III* feeling satisfied; it's likely to disappoint audiences as roundly as Spielberg's

A.I.

did. Truth be told, I didn't have high hopes for this second sequel, especially since Johnston was taking over the director's chair. (I wasn't a fan of his

Honey, I Shrank the Kids

,
The Rocketeer

Second Dino-Sequel Nearly Stomps Its Predecessors: "Jurassic Park III" and "Legally Blonde"

Written by Mike Schulz
Tuesday, 24 July 2001 18:00

, or

Jumanji

.) But what I certainly didn't expect was that the film would come

so close

to being terrific without getting there; somehow, that's more bothersome than if the movie had merely failed.

In this installment, the dino-island we visited in *The Lost World* is still flourishing, and as the film opens, a teenage boy, Eric (Trevor Morgan), begins a free-fall into it during a misfortunate parasailing trip. Desperate to find him, Eric's estranged parents (William H. Macy and Tea Leoni) recruit

Jurassic Park's Dr.

Alan Grant (Sam Neill) and a team of bounty hunters to invade the island and rescue the kid; as Grant knows, and as we in the audience do, that's easier said than done. So what we have here is a prehistoric take on

Aliens

with Eric in the Newt role, and as action-flick setups go, that's a more-than-passable excuse for some human-chomping dinosaur fun.

For the first half-hour or so, you might find yourself jazzed about *Jurassic Park III's* possibilities, because the film displays a marvelous sense of humor that plays off our memories of the first two films. Wrapping up a lecture at a university, Dr. Grant asks if there are any questions, and everyone's hand shoots up in the air. "Does anyone have a question that's

not

about Jurassic Park?" he asks, and the hands slowly drop. Later, on the island, the rescue crew runs into our old friend the T-Rex, and Grant whispers to the others, "Don't. Move." At which point the others high-tail it the hell out of there, causing a disgruntled Grant to join in the retreat. These throwaway gags are exceptionally welcome; they pop holes in much of the solemnity that accompanied Grant's character, and Johnston makes liberal, satirical use of what I'll call the Grant Shot, for which the camera takes a low-angle zoom in on him while he makes a deadly serious pronouncement. (It's the "You bred

raptors

?" moment.)

Johnston and his screenwriters (who include Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor, the razor-sharp wits behind *Citizen Ruth* and *Election*) also set up the characters of Eric's parents beautifully; they're presented as such tiresome, whiny, absolutely annoying creatures that you

pray

a beastie will stumble on to them. I thought I saw what Johnston and company were aiming for:

a

surprising

Second Dino-Sequel Nearly Stomps Its Predecessors: "Jurassic Park III" and "Legally Blonde"

Written by Mike Schulz
Tuesday, 24 July 2001 18:00

sequel, one in which just because the parents are on a morally uplifting crusade to save their son – a very Spielbergian plot device (and one more than deserving of parody) – doesn't mean they won't be served as dinner.

And what happens? Absolutely nothing surprising. The bounty hunters are there to be killed so no harm will come to our "heroes," the kid is saved, the parents reunite; *Jurassic Park III* winds up embracing every witless cliché it was initially satirizing. The final hour still features random bits that are hysterical – I loved it when an emergency phone call is nearly thwarted by the appearance of the dinosaur-antichrist Barney – but by now the novelty value of marauding dinosaurs has evaporated, and the movie's finale is a real letdown; it's bound to leave audiences muttering, "That's

it
?!"

Jurassic Park III

earns points for being better than it should've been; it loses them for failing to notice how good it

could've
been.



LEGALLY BLONDE

While only in her mid-twenties, Reese Witherspoon is already such a clever, wonderfully controlled actress that she's worth watching in just about anything, even in the middling, paint-by-numbers comedy *Legally Blonde*. Witherspoon gives this movie, which aims to be little more than *Private Benjamin Jr.*, brazen gusto and comedic flair; it's an audience-pleasing trifle like last winter's *Miss Congeniality*, but it's not offensive, and at this point in their careers, Ms. Witherspoon seems to be having a lot more fun onscreen than Sandra Bullock is. (She also has better taste in scripts.)

Second Dino-Sequel Nearly Stomps Its Predecessors: "Jurassic Park III" and "Legally Blonde"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 24 July 2001 18:00

Witherspoon plays Elle Woods, a rich, pretty-in-pink, Californian college student whose boyfriend, Warner (Matthew Davis), has been accepted at Harvard Law School. She doesn't exactly fit the specifications for Wife of Successful Lawyer, so he dumps her, heads to Harvard, and finds a more serious, humorless girlfriend (Selma Blair). Determined to reunite with Warner, and with the aid of a few screenwriting miracles, Elle gets herself accepted at Harvard Law, and the film follows her attempts to win her guy back while proving to everyone that she's not as stupid as they think.

Fair enough, but was it necessary for the screenwriters (Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith) to make everyone *else* stupid? I applaud the movie for showing that, despite her wardrobe and sun-drenched flightiness, Elle is actually a pretty smart cookie, but the Harvard profs (including the wonderful Victor Garber) and students that surround her are all presented as oafs and prudes; it would've been a lot more fun if Elle *awed* the Harvard crowd with her unconventionality, rather than making them aghast.

Legally Blonde

's deck is too neatly stacked – watch Elle Triumph Over Adversity. The plotting is routine, retrograde stuff, but you can get a fair degree of enjoyment from it nonetheless; the direction, by Robert Luketic, has a spritely, cheeky energy, and Witherspoon is so fully committed to her character that, no matter how implausible her escapades get, she remains blithely, beautifully unfazed. Her Elle has some of the grit and determination of her fearless Tracy Flick in

Election

, but with far softer edges, and while she doesn't have the sensational dialogue she had in that marvelous 1999 release, she still earns her laughs whenever given a not-bad line. She gives a true star performance in a film that desperately needs one. Though the film itself isn't worth much,

Legally Blonde

's box-office success is rather heartening; it shows that in a summer when the biggest hits are all but devoid of character (

Shrek

,

The Mummy Returns

,

The Fast & the Furious

), audiences are still interested in seeing the occasional human being.