

Mission Impossible – The Final Reckoning movie review: Tom Cruise's last rodeo as Ethan Hunt makes a feeble appeal for a united world

Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning movie review: The film is an ode to Tom Cruise. In its numerous flashbacks to the previous M:I films, it underlines the times Ethan Hunt saved the world, and honours the people he loved and lost.

Did someone switch a few vowels, maybe? In a film where so many are talking so much, that won't be entirely, well, impossible. For, this eighth and last (or so they say) film in the M:I franchise could as easily have been called Mission: Impassable, given its tortuous course.

The Final Reckoning, of course, is the second half of what began as Part I in 2023. Five hours and 31 minutes later (making the two Final Reckonings the longest films in the franchise), you are still trying to care enough about the villain to hate it.

And given that you have arguably the biggest movie star in the world on the other side, that should not be so hard. Tom Cruise is still out there giving it his all – and yes, doing his own stunts – kicking butt, dodging bullets, diving off submarines, dangling now not from one but two planes, almost dying not once but twice.

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Writer-director Christopher McQuarrie spares no expense, taking the story from London underground to the Arctic Circle, Virginia's Emergency Command Centre to South Africa's Doomsday Vault, and some other stops in the middle. But, it must be asked, why exactly. The chase remains – like in Part I – of an Artificial Intelligence software gone rogue and dubbed the Entity, which is apparently trying to destroy the world (Ethan Hunt, that is Cruise, must take the President's word for it, which is surely not a good starting point in a world where tech lies in bed with power).

Surely, a simpler investment would be someone to write a counter code. But that would not leave Ethan much to do, would it? Particularly as the brains in that department are his two loyal sidekicks returning for the job, Luther (Rhames) and Benji (Pegg). Also returning is Grace (Atwell), whose pickpocketing skills that we saw in Part I are the best resource in a world running out of time.

So this time, Ethan's mission is retrieving some sort of a device from a Russian submarine that crashed somewhere in the ocean bed sometime in 2012. When a poison pill developed by Luther is plugged into it, Entity would be poof!

If only someone would say poof! If it's not complicated enough that Entity has brought the world to the brink of a nuclear disaster (a lot of nuclear talk here), lots of men and – hats off – women hold whispered, urgent conversations throughout The Final Reckoning about "counter-acoustic devices", "primordial digital ooze", "hyperbaric decompression chambers", underwater pressure and what it does to a human body... etc etc. And this is even before Cruise gets to the Russian submarine.

The action inside that submarine, precariously balanced and one tip away from crashing, with water filling up and missiles floating about, dead bodies jumping up, and Ethan figuring out its many panels and chambers, is one of the most breathtaking sequences of The Final Reckoning. At the very least, it is something original in a franchise that seems to have run out of original ideas on what

to put Ethan through – though Cruise still makes running that fiercely and hanging mid-air that fearlessly look easy. The M:I score barely makes an appearance, and those famous masks get barely a peeling.

Above all, The Final Reckoning is an ode to that Cruise, in its numerous flashbacks to the previous M:I films, underlining the times he saved the world, and just how jaw-droppingly, the sacrifices he made, the people he loved and lost.

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And if McQuarrie, who with five films got the most out of this franchise after his lead actor, is not showing Cruise in action, he has people gushing about it. “The world would be a very different place without you, or not there at all,” is one such praise, followed by many different versions of the same. People can’t help praising Ethan even seconds away from the explosion of megatons of detonators.

Ethan is supposed to be doubting his contribution, in terms of gains versus loss, and The Final Reckoning makes a feeble appeal for a united world, not divided by nationalities, more than once. That is, till the world is brought to the brink again – and saved.

But hey, Cruise remains one of the best people to do that still. He just needs a better world than The Final Reckoning’s to save.

Long time back, in M:I II, Anthony Hopkins’s character tells Ethan: “Now, it’s not Mission Difficult is it... Difficult would be a walk in the park for you.”

So, we’ll wait for a new mission – should Cruise choose to accept it.

Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning Director – Christopher McQuarrie Cast – Tom Cruise, Hayley Atwell, Simon Pegg, Ving Rhames, Esai Morales, Pom Klementieff, Angela Bassett Rating – 3/5