“The Revenant” had a long and troubled past, just like its real-life counterpart it was based on. The movie started production in 2001 and has swapped everything from director to lead actor several times since then. Unlike most movies, however, this doesn’t hurt it. It may have actually helped it.

What is basically a generic revenge plot (even though it did really happen, kinda) is catapulted to heights it could not have reached had it been done with its original crew. Alejandro González Iñárritu (Birdman, Bituful) has a very unique directing style, mostly consisting of pseudo-long takes and a very perfectionist attention to detail that completely envelops the viewer.

Mentioning the detail, well, it’s just astonishing. All the shots are framed perfectly, and it is paced near perfectly, which is quite the task with its running time being two and a half hours. About the only thing that isn’t perfect is its story, or to go into detail, the third act.

The third act compromises reality and even common sense to make a more dramatic setup, which will most likely be looked over the first time a person sees the movie. This is about the only flaw I can really name with the movie. It is brutal, intense, and emotional; it just feels “epic,” and no, not in the Internet 13 year old “Call of Duty” way, but in the literal sense. The director turns what is a basic story and spins it into something way larger than its parts with the power of detail and immersion.

Well, now that I’ve bitched about the flaw(s) let’s cover the praises. The acting, the set detail, the pacing, the cinematography, the music- it just works. Not to say it’s anything truly groundbreaking or anything, but it certainly is one of the best of 2015. All the hype is about Leo and the “Muh Oscar” meme, but a lot of people have overlooked Hardy’s performance, who I think did a better job than Leo (but he does have more to work with so...). The set detail will completely blow you away; all of the set pieces feel one-hundred percent real. It feels harsh and threatening.

“The Revenant” is a satisfying exercise in watching a director bring a challenging vision to life. While not perfect, the movie overcomes its limited story to deliver a more than thrilling picture to the big screen.

Highlights: The acting, the cinematography, pacing

Lowlights: Generic story, third act falls apart when you think about it