

= Tank Girl (film) =

Tank Girl is a 1995 American science fiction action @-@ comedy film directed by Rachel Talalay . Based on the British post @-@ apocalyptic comic series of the same name by Alan Martin and Jamie Hewlett that was originally published in Deadline magazine , the film stars Lori Petty , Naomi Watts , Ice @-@ T and Malcolm McDowell . Tank Girl is set in a drought @-@ ravaged Australia , years after a catastrophic impact event . It follows the antihero Tank Girl (Petty) as she , Jet Girl (Watts) , and genetically modified supersoldiers called the Rippers fight " Water & Power " , an oppressive corporation led by Kesslee (McDowell) .

After reading an issue of the Tank Girl comic she had received as a gift , Talalay obtained permission from Deadline 's publisher Tom Astor to direct a film adaptation . She selected Catherine Hardwicke to be the production designer , and worked closely with Martin and Hewlett during the making of the film . Tank Girl was filmed primarily in White Sands , New Mexico , and Tucson , Arizona . The film 's critically praised soundtrack was assembled by Courtney Love , and the Rippers ' makeup and prosthetics team was headed by Stan Winston . Winston 's studio wanted to work on the project so much that they cut their usual prices in half in order to meet the film 's budget .

Financially unsuccessful , Tank Girl recouped only about \$ 6 million of its \$ 25 million budget at the box office and received mixed to negative reviews from critics . Martin and Hewlett have since spoken negatively of their experiences creating the film . Talalay blamed some of the film 's negative reception on studio edits over which she had no control . Despite the negative critical reception and box office failure of the film , it has been cited as an example of a comic book film with a cult following , and it is noted for its feminist themes .

= = Plot = =

In 2022 , a comet strikes Earth causing an 11 @-@ year drought . By 2033 , most of the little remaining water is held in reserve by Kesslee (Malcolm McDowell) and his Water & Power (W & P) corporation , which uses the water to control the population . Rebecca Buck ? " Tank Girl " (Lori Petty) ? is a member of a commune in the Australian outback that operates the last water well not controlled by the corporation . In an attack on the commune , W & P troops kill Tank Girl 's boyfriend , Richard (Brian Wimmer) , and capture Tank Girl and her young friend Sam (Stacy Linn Ramsower) . Rather than killing her , Kesslee tortures and enslaves the defiant Tank Girl . Jet Girl (Naomi Watts) , a talented but introverted jet mechanic who has given up trying to escape W & P , urges Tank Girl to make less trouble for their captors , though Tank Girl refuses . Among other forms of torture , W & P personnel push her down into a long pipe and fill it with water .

The mysterious Rippers slaughter guards at the W & P compound , then escape undetected . Kesslee uses Tank Girl to lure the Rippers into the open , but they gravely wound Kesslee and let Tank Girl and Jet Girl escape . Jet Girl steals a fighter jet from W & P and Tank Girl steals a tank , which she modifies heavily . The girls learn from the eccentric Sub Girl (Ann Cusack) that Sam is working at a sex club called Liquid Silver . They infiltrate the club , rescue Sam from a pedophile , Rat Face (Iggy Pop) , and then humiliate the club 's owner , " The Madame " (Ann Magnuson) , by making her sing Cole Porter 's " Let 's Do It " at gunpoint . W & P troops break up the performance and re @-@ capture Sam . Tank Girl and Jet Girl wander the desert and find the Rippers ' hideout . They learn that the Rippers are supersoldiers created from human and kangaroo DNA by a man called Johnny Prophet . Tank Girl befriends a Ripper named Booga (Jeff Kober) , while a Ripper named Donner (Scott Coffey) shows romantic interest in Jet Girl . Despite the objections of the Ripper T @-@ Saint (Ice @-@ T) , who is suspicious of the girls , the Rippers ' leader Deetee (Reg E. Cathey) sends the pair out to capture a shipment of weapons . The girls bring the weapon crates back , though most of them are empty . After finding Johnny Prophet dead in one of the containers , the girls and the Rippers realize that W & P has tricked them .

The girls and the Rippers sneak into W & P , where they are ambushed . Kesslee , whose body had been reconstructed by the cybernetic surgeon Che 'tsai (James Hong) , reveals that Tank Girl has

unknowingly been bugged . Deetee is killed . While the Rippers turn the tide of the battle , Jet Girl kills Sergeant Small (Don Harvey) , who had earlier sexually harassed her . Kesslee reveals that Sam is in the pipe , and her life is endangered by the rising water . Tank Girl uses her tank to kill Kesslee , then pulls Sam out of the pipe . The film ends with an animated sequence showing water starting to flow freely . Tank Girl drives down rapids , pulling Booga behind on water @-@ skis , then takes them over a waterfall , shouting for joy .

= = Themes = =

Writing in the 1997 book *Trash Aesthetics : Popular Culture and Its Audience* , Deborah Cartmell states that while the comic showed Tank Girl to be " unheroic or even [an] accidental anti @-@ hero " , the film sets her up with " classic western generic " emotional and moral justifications for her liberation and revenge on W & P , as she witnesses the slaughter of her boyfriend and her " trusty steed " . She also sees one of the commune 's children being abducted , and is herself captured and enslaved . Cartmell also says Tank Girl holds parallels with other " contemporary ' post @-@ feminist ' icons " , as she displays dominant female sexuality and a " familiarity and knowing coolness of ' outlawed ' modes of sexuality " , such as masturbation , sadomasochism and lesbianism .

In her 2006 book *The Modern Amazons : Warrior Women On @-@ Screen* , Dominique Mainon writes that the film has anti @-@ establishment themes and , unlike many comic @-@ book adaptation films which feature " gratuitous sexual objectification " of women , Tank Girl stands out as being " stridently feminist " , with the exception of the " cliché victim / avenger complex " . According to Mainon , the film makes fun of female stereotypes , as shown by Tank Girl 's repeated emasculation of Kesslee with witty comebacks while she is being tortured , and by her response to the computer training device telling her how to present herself to men at the Liquid Silver club . The device provides seductive clothing and tells Tank Girl to remove her body hair and to wear make @-@ up and a wig . Tank Girl completely ignores the advice and modifies the clothes to create her own style .

In the 2011 book *Cult Cinema* , Ernest Mathijs and Jamie Sexton discuss the issue of whether cult films purported to be feminist were truly feminist or " partly the effect of the performance of feminist attitudes in its reception " . The authors consider Tank Girl to be a " ' real ' feminist cult film " , as opposed to the feminist cult films of Kathryn Bigelow and Catherine Hardwicke , which they consider to be too masculine and too eager to cater to " hetero @-@ normativity " respectively .

= = Production = =

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

In 1988 , about a year after the launch of the Tank Girl comic in the British magazine *Deadline* , its publisher , Tom Astor , began looking for a studio interested in making a film adaptation . While several studios , including New Line Cinema , expressed interest , progress was slow . Rachel Talalay 's stepdaughter gave her a Tank Girl comic to read while she was shooting her directorial debut film , *Freddy 's Dead : The Final Nightmare* (released in 1991) . Talalay read the comic between takes and became interested in directing a Tank Girl film . She contacted Astor and , after hearing nothing for almost a year , was about to give up trying to secure the rights when he gave her permission to make the film . Talalay pitched the film to Amblin Entertainment and Columbia Pictures , who both turned it down . Talalay turned down an offer from Disney as she did not believe the studio would allow the levels of violence and the sexual references the plot required . An offer from MGM was accepted . Talalay worked closely with the Tank Girl comic 's co @-@ creators Alan Martin and Jamie Hewlett during the film 's production , and selected Catherine Hardwicke to be the production designer . The studio was unhappy with Hardwicke , who was relatively unknown at the time , being chosen over more experienced designers and Talalay had to meet with the producers to

persuade them to allow Hardwicke to work on the project . Tedi Sarafian wrote the screenplay , which marked his debut production credit , and Gale Tattersall was chosen as cinematographer . Believing that MGM would not allow the depiction of a bestial relationship in the film , the romance between Tank Girl and Booga was only written into the second or third version of the script , after the character was already established in the minds of people involved in the production . By this stage , Booga : " was a character and not just a kangaroo [so] it wasn 't an issue anymore . "

= = = Casting = = =

MGM held open casting sessions in London , Los Angeles , and New York for the role of Tank Girl . According to Talalay , some were skeptical of the open casting , thinking that it was a publicity stunt . This was true to an extent , as she had been asking the studio to cast a well @-@ known English actress , Emily Lloyd , who was replaced after she refused to cut her hair for the role . Talalay cast Lori Petty , an American , because " she is crazy in her own life and [the film] needed somebody like that . " MGM faxed Deadline asking them for an " ideal cast " list ; they selected Malcolm McDowell for Kesslee , but never believed MGM would actually contact him . McDowell has spoken favorably of his experience working on the film , saying it had the " same flavour " as A Clockwork Orange , and praised Talalay and Petty . Talalay was approached by several people who wanted cameos in the film , but she did not want the film to be overshadowed by such appearances . Two cameos were settled on ? Iggy Pop was given the role of Rat Face , and Björk was offered Sub Girl . She later dropped out , her character 's scenes were re @-@ written , and the role was then given to Ann Cusack .

= = = Filming = = =

Tank Girl was filmed over sixteen weeks , in three locations : desert scenes were filmed in White Sands , New Mexico , the Liquid Silver club set was built at an abandoned shopping mall in Phoenix , Arizona , and all remaining scenes were filmed within forty miles of Tucson , Arizona . Many scenes were filmed in an abandoned open @-@ pit mine , where filming had to be halted one day due to a chemical leak . Permission was received to film the water pipe scenes at the Titan Missile Museum , near the mine , but the day before shooting permission was withdrawn . These scenes were filmed instead in a tunnel at the abandoned mine . New sets were often found by simply searching the mine . Principal photography was completed on September 27 , 1994 , two days over schedule though still within the original budget .

= = = Effects = = =

In the comics , the Rippers are considerably more kangaroo @-@ like . However , Talalay wanted real actors rather than stuntmen in suits playing the roles . She asked Hewlett to redesign the Rippers to make them more human , allowing them to have the actual actors ' facial expressions . Requests were sent out to " all the major make @-@ up and effects people " , including Stan Winston , whose prior work included the Terminator films , Aliens , and Jurassic Park . Talalay said that while she considered Winston to be the best , she did not expect to hear back from him . When she did , she still did not think that she would be able to afford his studio on her budget . A meeting was arranged and Winston insisted on being given the project , saying the Rippers would be : " the best characters we 've had the opportunity to do . " Winston 's studio cut their usual prices in half to meet the film 's budget . Eight Rippers featured in the film : half were given principal roles , the others were mainly in the background . Each Ripper had articulated ears and tails which were activated by remote control , and the background Rippers also had mechanical snouts which could be activated either by remote control or by the movement of the actors ' mouths . Each Ripper 's make @-@ up took about four hours to apply . Three technicians from Winston 's studio were required to work on each Ripper 's articulations during filming ; no puppets or digital effects were used for the Rippers .

The tank used in the film is a modified M5A1 Stuart . It was purchased from the government of Peru about twelve years prior to filming and had already been used in several films . Among numerous modifications made for Tank Girl , the tank 's 37 mm anti @-@ tank gun was covered with a modified flag pole to give the appearance of a 105 mm gun . An entire 1969 Cadillac Eldorado was added onto the tank , with the rear section welded at the back and the fender welded to the front .

= = = Post @-@ production = = =

A " naked Ripper suit " incorporating a prosthetic penis was created for Booga and used in a filmed post @-@ coital scene which was removed from the final version of the film at the studio 's insistence . Deborah Cartmell described the " post @-@ coital scene " in the final version , which featured Booga fully clothed , as " carefully edited " . Against Talalay 's wishes , the studio made several other edits to the film . The scene in which Kesslee tortures Tank Girl was cut heavily on the grounds that she appeared " too ugly " while being tortured . Also cut was a scene showing Tank Girl 's bedroom , which was shown to be decorated with dozens of dildos , and a scene in which she places a condom on a banana before throwing it at a soldier . The studio cut the original ending scene , a live @-@ action scene in which it begins to rain ; the film was to have ended with Tank Girl burping .

= = Soundtrack = =

The film 's soundtrack was assembled by Courtney Love ; Graeme Revell composed the original music . Love 's band Hole contributed the song " Drown Soda " . Greg Graffin from Bad Religion was originally supposed to sing the duet of " Let 's Do It , Let 's Fall in Love " with Joan Jett , but due to contractual restrictions he was replaced by Paul Westerberg from The Replacements . Devo recorded a new version of their song " Girl U Want " specifically for the film , as they were big fans of the comic . The soundtrack featured Björk 's song " Army of Me " before it was released as a single . Because of the box office failure of the film , both Björk and her label decided not to use footage from the film in the song 's accompanying music video .

The song " Mockingbird Girl " by The Magnificent Bastards (a side project of Scott Weiland) was recorded specifically for the album after Love approached Weiland asking if he would like to contribute a song . The single 's cover showed the torso and thighs of an animated character resembling Tank Girl and featured the tracks " Ripper Sole " and " Girl U Want " from the album . In the United States it peaked at No. 27 on the Mainstream Rock chart and No. 12 on the Modern Rock Tracks chart . The song " 2 ¢ " by Beowulf also appears in the film ; Talalay lobbied Restless Records to have the song included on the soundtrack but was unsuccessful . Instead , she directed the music video for the song , which featured both animated and live @-@ action footage from the film .

The soundtrack album was released on March 28 , 1995 on Warner Bros. / Elektra Records . It peaked at No. 72 on the Billboard 200 . The next week , New York magazine wrote that the soundtrack was getting more attention than the film itself . However , Ron Hancock of Tower Records stated that sales of the album were disappointing and attributed this to the financial failure of the film . Owen Gleiberman spoke favorably of the soundtrack , as did Laura Barcella writing in the book The End , describing it as a " who 's who of ' 90s female rock . " Stephen Thomas Erlewine of Allmusic said the album was " much better than the film " , awarding it three out of five stars .

Other songs in the film

" B @-@ A @-@ B @-@ Y " by Rachel Sweet

" Big Time Sensuality " by Björk

" Blank Generation " by Richard Hell and the Voidoids

" Disconnected " by Face to Face

" Shipwrecked " by Sky Cries Mary

" Theme from Shaft " by Isaac Hayes

" 2 ¢ " by Beowulf

" Wild , Wild , Thing " by Iggy Pop

= = Release = =

= = = Initial screening and box office = = =

Tank Girl premiered at the Mann Chinese Theatre on March 30 , 1995 . Approximately 1 @, @ 500 people attended the screening , including Talalay , Petty , Ice @-@ T , McDowell , Watts , and several other actors from the film , as well as Rebecca De Mornay , Lauren Tom , Brendan Fraser and Jason Simmons . Men in W & P costumes handed out bottles of mineral water , and girls dressed in Liquid Silver outfits gave out Astro Pops , candy cigarettes , and Tank Girl candy necklaces . About 400 people attended the official after @-@ party at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel . The film opened in cinemas across the United States the following day .

Tank Girl opened in 1 @, @ 341 theatres in the United States bringing in \$ 2 @, @ 018 @, @ 183 in its first weekend and \$ 2 @, @ 684 @, @ 430 at the end of its first week of release . By the end of its second week , Tank Girl had made only \$ 3 @, @ 668 @, @ 762 . Its final gross in the United States was \$ 4 @, @ 064 @, @ 495 . Internationally , the film added approximately \$ 2 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 to that total , against a production budget of \$ 25 million .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The website Rotten Tomatoes , which categorizes reviews as positive or negative , surveyed 37 critics and determined that 38 % of the reviews were positive with a rating average of 4 @. @ 9 out of 10 . The website gives the consensus summary : " While unconventional , Tank Girl isn 't particularly clever or engaging , and none of the script 's copious one @-@ liners have any real zing . " Lamar Hafildason of the BBC gave the film one out of five stars , saying : " Sadly , the BBC does not pay out for one @-@ word reviews . If it did , then this review would read simply : ' tiresome ' . " In 2001 , Matt Brunson from Creative Loafing gave the film one and a half stars out of four concluding : " a rockin ' soundtrack ... and a peek at Watts early in her career are the only ingredients saving this from a bomb rating . " Roger Ebert gave the film two out of four stars . While praising the film 's ambition and energy , he said he could not " care about it for much more than a moment at a time , and after a while its manic energy wore [him] down . "

Owen Gleiberman gave the film a C ? rating , praising Petty 's performance which he said was the only good part of an otherwise " amateurish " film . Jonathan Rosenbaum and Janet Maslin gave moderately positive reviews , with Rosenbaum concluding : " unless you 're a preteen boy who hates girls , it 's funnier and a lot more fun than Batman Forever . " Maslin wrote : " Chief among its strong points is Lori Petty , a buzz @-@ cut fashion plate in a Prozac necklace , who brings the necessary gusto to Tank Girl 's flippancy . " Leonard Klady from Variety gave a mixed review , saying : " What 's missing from the mix is an engaging story to bind together its intriguing bits . And Lori Petty as ' Tank Girl ' ... has the spunk but , sadly , not the heart of the post @-@ apocalyptic heroine . "

= = = Home media = = =

Tank Girl was released on DVD by MGM on April 10 , 2001 . Aaron Beierle from DVD Talk gave the DVD three and a half stars out of five for both video and audio quality , though only half a star for special features , noting that only the original trailer was included .

Shout ! Factory acquired the rights to several MGM films , including Tank Girl , and subsequently released a US Blu @-@ ray version on November 19 , 2013 . Special features included the original trailer , a ' Making of ' featurette , a commentary track with Petty and Talalay , and interviews with Talalay , Petty , and Hardwicke . Jeffrey Kauffman from Blu @-@ ray.com gave the version four stars out of five for audio and video quality and three stars for special features . M. Enois Duarte

from highdefdigest.com gave the version three and a half stars out of five for video quality , four stars for audio quality , and two and a half stars for extras . The blu @-@ ray has not been released internationally .

= = Legacy and related media = =

To boost its declining readership , Deadline featured Tank Girl on its cover many times in 1994 and 1995 in anticipation of the film 's release . Subsequently , Tom Astor said the release of the film : " was very helpful , but it did not make up the difference , it lost some of its cult appeal without gaining any mainstream credibility . " The magazine ceased publication in late 1995 . Alan Martin and Jamie Hewlett have since spoken negatively of their experiences creating the film , calling it " a bit of a sore point " for them . " The script was lousy , " Hewlett recalled , " me and Alan kept rewriting it and putting Grange Hill jokes and Benny Hill jokes in , and they obviously weren 't getting it . They forgot to film about ten major scenes so we had to animate them ... it was a horrible experience . " Talalay complained that the studio interfered significantly in the story , screenplay , and feel of the film . She said that she had been " in sync " and on good terms with Martin and Hewlett until the studio made significant cuts to the film , which she had no control over . Peter Milligan wrote an adaptation comic in 1995 , and a novelization of the film by Martin Millar was published in 1996 .

Despite being a critical and commercial failure , Tank Girl is often said to have a cult following . Petty 's version of Tank Girl remains a popular character at cosplay events . The music video for Avril Lavigne 's 2013 song " Rock n Roll " was heavily influenced by Tank Girl . During her interview included on the Blu @-@ ray release of the film in 2013 , Petty was asked why she thinks the film still resonates with fans , and replied : " There 's no formula as to why Tank Girl was so fabulous and why people love it so much ... It was unique , it was new , it was fresh , it was way ahead of its time , and I 'm happy that I got to do it and that I 'll always have her . " Luke Buckmaster from the BBC included the film in his 2015 list of the " ten weirdest superhero films " , asserting that : " at its best , director Rachel Talalay captures an ostentatious steampunk vibe that proves weirdly addictive . "