

The Raid: Redemption - constructively destructive

Written by Sharad Vatss
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This originally Indonesian movie would surprise you with its action.

Tired of watching the Jannats and the Dangerous Ishqs I decided to go for a change. This time it was an out and out action movie The Raid: Redemption.

I must say I was pleasantly surprised. The Raid is a gore-ridden chaos fest backed with good choreography. It features some of the best fight sequences you would ever come across.

The action has an element of surprise, something which has become a rarity these days.

The lead actor Iko Uwais takes complete charge in this originally Indonesian film as his character Rama, using a martial arts style called Pencak Silat, beating his opponents to pulp.

Story: The only part of the movie not worth celebrating is its story. Barring one twist most of the screenplay is predictable.

The Raid is set in the slums of Jakarta, Indonesia. It begins as an elite 20-man SWAT team raid on a 30 stories apartment building. Inside, on the 15th floor, is the man they are going after - a ruthless kingpin and drug lord Tama (Ray Sahetapy) who controls the tenants, who themselves are some of the most dangerous criminals in the city. The mission starts off smoothly but suddenly goes haywire. Now it's up to a young cop, Rama, to save as many of his fellow officers as he can.

The film is dubbed in English but there are hardly any lines for the characters.

Right from the beginning, you start feeling you are about to witness an edge of the seat action. A character in the movie sums up the action, "I don't like Guns, they are cold. Why go for fast food when you can have a five course! RAW fight is what I prefer". Heads are banged on walls and floor, knives pierced in eyes and necks, the screen goes red quite frequently.

You can only compare it to one of Tony Jaa's movies (Ong Bak 1, 2 & 3).

Performance: Watching Uwais during a fight scene is awe inspiring but just about every other actor is equally talented. Uwais is also the action choreographer of the film, and surprisingly this

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is only his second film (first being *Merantau* 2009). Ray as Tama looks ruthless. Others are good in their respective roles. But, this is an action film and so each one of them apparently kill more than 150 people. The stuntmen are quite good in their action presentations.

Behind the scenes: The editing is too good. I was fully aware of things as they happened. It was fun to watch. I wish the producers of the new Bourne movie had watched this before they started principle photography.

What ultimately sells is Gareth Evans' direction during combat scenes. Rather than making it so tight that you are left confused, or so quick that you can't put movements and events in sequence, Evans actually shows you the amazing detail of each blow. As a result of the steady camerawork, the audience feel like they are a part of the action.

At times you do question a man stand even after getting hit so badly over and over again. Oblivious to the laws of physics and biology, Evans' film is a thrilling ride.

Don't miss it, especially, if you ever had a soft spot for martial arts films. Don't go, if you prefer a complete package of action, drama and long dialogues.

(Rating: 4 stars out of 5 for me.)

---Sharad Vatss is a movie buff who works for Pepsi.