

Review: Skyfall

By [Adrian Tschismarov](#)

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Starring - Daniel Craig

Rating - ****

The latest entry in the James Bond franchise had a great deal of expectations weighing on it. If *Casino Royale* (2006) showed that you could make a tight and engaging action-thriller by stripping away the ridiculous gadgets and goofy humour that the later Brosnan films got bogged down with, *Quantum of Solace* (2008) showcased everything that could possibly go wrong with the approach. Devoid of everything fun and sexy about the Bond franchise, it was a dreary and indecipherable mess featuring the world's most boring villain: a businessman who wanted control of Bolivia's water supply (fallen asleep yet?). So it fell to director Sam Mendes to pick up the series' momentum.

Fortunately for cinemagoers, *Skyfall* remains hugely entertaining in every scene of its long running time. The film delivers on the promise of its hype campaign almost immediately, with a stunning opening action sequence that escalates all the way to a construction digger deflecting bullets on top of a moving train. We see our favourite agent hunting a stolen hard drive with the names of undercover NATO agents across the world. Despite his best efforts however, 007 is shot and presumed dead, allowing ruthless cyber terrorist Raoul Silva (Javier Bardem) access to the files.

Silva is a classic Bond villain: based in an abandoned city on an exotic island, he balances his campy mannerisms (clicking his tongue at the efforts of James Bond like a disappointed fashion guru) with an air of genuine, understated menace. Bardem makes the character intensely entertaining, dominating every scene he is in. The film in general benefits from returning to many classic elements of the Bond Saga. It has Bond fighting in a pit full of Komodo dragons, a romance with a mysterious beautiful woman, and even the classic Bond car, the Aston Martin DB5, makes a well-timed return. Even Adele's theme song emulates many a classic Bond theme, though one can't escape the feeling that a Google search of "words that rhyme with fall" was heavily involved in the writing process.

The film's script wastes no time, the dialog is consistently on point and all the humorous lines hit home. "I

can do more damage on my laptop in my pyjamas than you can do in a year in the field, but every now and then a trigger has to be pulled”, the new Q (Ben Whishaw) taunts in his first meeting with 007. “Or not pulled. It’s hard to know which in your pyjamas” is Bond’s curt reply. This theme of old vs. new runs through the entire film. The stolen hard drive fiasco leads to a government enquiry as to whether human intelligence and M’s (Judi Dench) MI6 agency is still relevant, and Silva effortlessly undermines Bond’s heroics with his hacking expertise. The presence of this theme doesn’t turn *Skyfall* into a tedious, meditative exercise. It merely adds purpose to the film, preventing it from being just empty spectacle.

The film is not completely without flaws, of course. Its balancing act between serious thriller and comedic elements doesn’t always work. This leads to some awkward moments, like when Bond spouts indifferent one-liners in sombre moments of the film. The villain’s plan is also hilariously far-fetched, and relies on long chains of coincidences. However, a James Bond film is very likely the wrong place to complain about far-fetched plotting, and these issues are merely something to be noted, rather than having any real negative effects on the film. Viewers are far more likely to notice Roger Deakin’s beautiful cinematography, the memorable action scenes and the smart dialog.



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