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MOVIES & SHOWTIMES

## 'MORTAL KOMBAT' LACKS PUNCH

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE  
The Bulletin

**Y**ou should never expect much from movies based on video games, but I think I still expected more than what we got. In the latest attempt to put the popular, gore-filled video game franchise "Mortal Kombat" on film, the movie throws just about every single reference they could at the screen while filling in the rest with bloody fisticuffs, wooden acting and exposition to the hilt.



LEFT: Tadanobu Asano stars in a scene from "Mortal Kombat" (2021).

New Line Cinema/Warner Bros.

### More Information

"Mortal Kombat"

110 minutes

Rated R for strong bloody violence and language throughout, and some crude references



The most compelling moment of the film comes in the first 10 or so minutes in the film's prologue when we're introduced to Hanzo Hasashi (Hiroyuki Sanada), a Japanese warrior and champion of Earthrealm as indicated by his dragon mark. He, along with everyone in his community except for his infant daughter, is then killed by the Outworld assassin Bi-Han (Joe Taslim).

We are then thrust into the modern era and told of a prophecy thanks to a title card saying that "Earthrealm is on the verge of catastrophe," and if it loses one more fight against Outworld, then humanity is doomed.

We then meet a past-his-prime MMA fighter Cole Young (Lewis Tan) who carries the mark of the dragon and meets a man named Jax (Mehcad Brooks) who then saves him and his family from Bi-Han, who's now called Sub-Zero, as he tries to take out the remaining champions of Earthrealm.

Jax also carries the dragon mark and tells Cole to meet up with his friend Sonya Blade (Jessica McNamee) who will help him fight the likes of Bi-Han.

Through Sonya, we learn about the legend of Mortal Kombat and the prophecy. She is also keeping a mercenary and all-around bad dude for hire named Kano (Josh Lawson) in chains as he also bears the mark, she however does not.

The three then set out to find the legendary cave to prepare for the upcoming battle, meeting two more champions, reuniting

with Jax and meeting Lord Raiden (Tadanobu Asano), a protector of Earthrealm, who tells them they need to discover their arcana to unleash their full magical abilities to use against Outworld

It's a pretty basic storyline that doesn't have a whole lot of twists or turns, in fact, any twist you can see coming from a ways off.

Let's be honest, though, the story probably isn't the reason you wanted to watch it.

Yes, there are a lot of fights, and they're all pretty cool and super graphic with people and creatures getting their hearts ripped out, cut in half lengthwise, decapitated and much more. The blood effects are a bit on the cheesy side, which works fine for this kind of movie.

But the movie is trying to be campy and serious at the same time, and it just doesn't work. It feels like they had one script that they then went in and peppered in direct quotes from the video game that don't really work and f-bombs that feel more like your younger sibling just discovered how to swear and isn't good at it yet.

There is also pretty much zero character depth, and any development there is paper-thin.

It's not really a great film, but it never feels like it's trying to be. Instead, it is a blood-soaked, machismo-laden nostalgia trip for anyone who was a fan of video games as a kid. Beyond that, it's just a pretty poor action flick.

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