

300: Rise of an Empire Movie Review

Bloody yet Beautiful

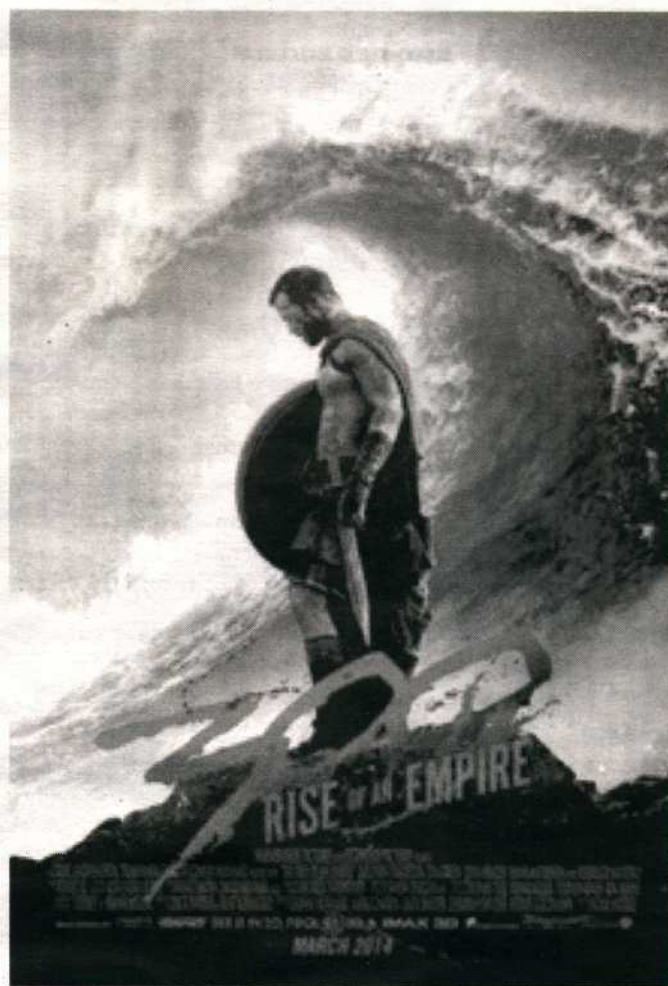
By Lauren Erath



In this slaughter-filled sequel to *300*, Themistocles (Sullivan Stapleton) strives to unite Greece against the Persians and form a Greek democracy. Outnumbered against Xerxes' naval fleet, headed by the Greek-detesting Artemisia (Eva Green), Themistocles relies on ingenious battle tactics to diminish Artemisia's ships and warriors. However, he can succeed only if Sparta joins him. As Sparta mourns the loss of their 300 soldiers, Themistocles and his men are forced to stain the ocean red and are running out of "dye". This may have something to do with the unbelievable cascades of blood that burst from every wound.

300: Rise of an Empire earns (if not exceeds—but that is not possible) a full Sword for cinematic quality. The color contrasts were fantastic—quite literally. Bright reds against white, overcast skies and crisp visuals clearer than possible united to create a world with entrancing glamor and gore. This contrast between sparkling wealth and the filthy battlegrounds kept the eyes engaged throughout the film. Every scene was picturesque, regardless of the terribly dark or gruesome situations it depicted. Plus it utilized plenty of red—who does not like red? And there is an abundance of fire, because everyone is a pyromaniac.

The film also gains a full Sword for engagement. Themes like freedom versus dominion, unity against selfishness, and the conflict between courage and compromised safety immersed viewers in an emotional whirlpool while ships sank in bloody and fire-coated water. The movie did well in switching between action-based and character-based scenes, which kept the audience entertained by the contrasting paces and plot focuses. Granted, it is difficult for people not to watch a movie



with so many ways to kill people, most of them creatively unlikely.

For acting, *300: Rise of an Empire* receives half a Sword. The acting supported the movie's plot and visual wonder, but did not equal it. However the acting did produce interesting and intense characters that increased the audiences' engagement, especially concerning Artemisia. Viewers cannot help but sympathize for her yet cannot wait to watch her die. Eva Green played Artemisia with impressive talent, especially regarding the tension between Artemisia and Themistocles. This climaxed (literally—spoiler ahead) with a powerfully symbolic sex scene representing their desire for each other versus their need for victory.

Concerning plot, the movie reaps half a Sword because it altered the results of historical facts and relied heavily on violence (although it was relevant to the storyline). Let creative-freedom pout in the corner in this case, because historical accuracy has a more substantial effect on the audience regarding war stories.

Finally, for overall performance, this motion picture wins a full Sword. The combination of artistic visuals, creative characters, and clever battle scenes creates an entertaining and thought-provoking experience that proves sequels can be successful. With an added fantastical tone, the impossible becomes fact in the audiences' imagination.

With 4 out of 5 Swords *300: Rise of an Empire* is surprisingly successful, blatantly bloody, and pleasantly picturesque. So see it, unless you have strong movie-morals. Then it may scar your soul.