



The ink-on-the-binoculars prank made her livid.

PREY

It's good to stalk



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

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▶ Director **Dan Trachtenberg**

▶ Cast **Amber Midthunder, Dakota Beavers, Stormee Kipp, Dane DiDiegro**

DISNEY+ “This is as far as you go. No more. This is it!” That, according to young Comanche warrior Taabe (Dakota Beavers), is what should be declared proudly whenever one is confronted by a seemingly unbeatable foe. It is a sentiment hunter Naru (Amber Midthunder) takes to heart when she realises that the Northern Great Plains she and her tribe call home have been invaded by more than one sinister interloper.

Yet it is also one that speaks for *Predator* fans who, after one

sequel, two reboots and a pair of *Alien* crossovers, may have given up hope of any successor living up to John McTiernan’s 1987 original.

Dan Trachtenberg’s *Prey* isn’t a match for that film either. But it’s at least a step in the right direction, one that cleaves close to established franchise lore while simultaneously making a purposeful stride into hitherto uncharted territory. That territory is the past: the America of the 18th

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century to be exact, an unspoiled wilderness both cherished by its Native inhabitants and at risk from colonial plunderers. When an alien arrives and starts slicing its way up the food chain, however, it’ll take more than a tomahawk to stop it.

Or a musket for that matter, with the primitive firearms wielded by the rapacious French trappers who briefly take Naru prisoner offering little defence against the Predator’s extra-terrestrial arsenal. A detachable lance, a constricting net and levitating mines are among its weapons of choice.

Like Arnold’s Dutch before her, though, Naru has guile and smarts on her side, not to mention a knowledge of local flora that proves indispensable. That’s all she and Trachtenberg need to set up a tense climactic face-off that, if not quite on a par with the first film’s, still ensures things conclude on a satisfying high.

Whether gutting a wolf, slaughtering a bear or making

short work of both Indigenous and European assailants, this pic’s Predator (Dane DiDiegro) is one lethal melonfarmer. Die-hard, though, will be discomfited by its appearance, with Trachtenberg seeing fit to adorn it with a skull-like helmet, yawning mandibles and sunken eyes that rob it of personality.

Even the dreadlocks have been given a make-over, resulting in a Predator that seems less like Kevin Peter Hall’s iconic space Rasta than an *Alien: Resurrection* hybrid. Not for the first time with this property, you’re left wondering why they didn’t leave well alone.

However, *Prey* should be applauded for the clarity of its concept and the leanness of its execution. In Midthunder, meanwhile, it has a resourceful and dynamic heroine who deserves a place in the pantheon beside Sonny Landham’s Billy Sole. **Neil Smith**

i *Prey* is also available dubbed in Comanche – a first for a new release (though a Navajo dub of *Star Wars* came out in 2013).