



"No, Buddy. This is something bigger than a squirrel..."

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED

**10 CLOVERFIELD LANE** 2016  
Trachtenberg and Mary Elizabeth Winstead nail a stripped-back survivalist sequel.

**THE REVENANT** 2015  
*Prey* gives the bear set-piece a run for its money with a terrifying waterside tussle.

**MAD MAX: FURY ROAD** 2015  
Trachtenberg drew on Miller's extravagant example to reveal character through action.

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# PREY TBC

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★★★★★ **OUT NOW** STAR ON DISNEY+

If director Dan Trachtenberg offered a canny twist on what follow-ups can be with 2016's *10 Cloverfield Lane*, he does it again with his *Predator*-series entry. Rejecting any temptation to go bigger and brawnier, or to simply indulge nostalgia, *Prey* is a more lateral beast than most IP variants; a (green) blood relative, not an expansion pack. Relocating the saga, it strips the core *Predator* concept down and rebuilds it in fierce, full-bodied survivalist shapes. And then – crucially – has shit-tons of fun finding ways to notch up a skull count.

Amber Midthunder anchors its appeal as young Comanche woman Naru. The year: 1719. The place: the Northern Great Plains. While Naru

wants to hunt as part of a rite of passage, warrior Taabe (Dakota Beavers) says she's not ready. But despite her young age and inexperience, she is a good tracker. She knows her territory. When she finds a skinned snake and a huge footprint, she knows no bear did that. And when the air shimmers as she tussles with a lion, Naru knows a new danger beckons.

Building environment and character carefully, *Prey* gives us a believable lead in a setting you can feel. While *10 Cloverfield Lane* made one-set cinema compelling, Trachtenberg here takes full advantage of a broader landscape, navigating between sprawling overhead shots and rugged close-ups to evoke its deadly beauty. And it is deadly, as swamp sequences and close encounters of the ursine kind prove.

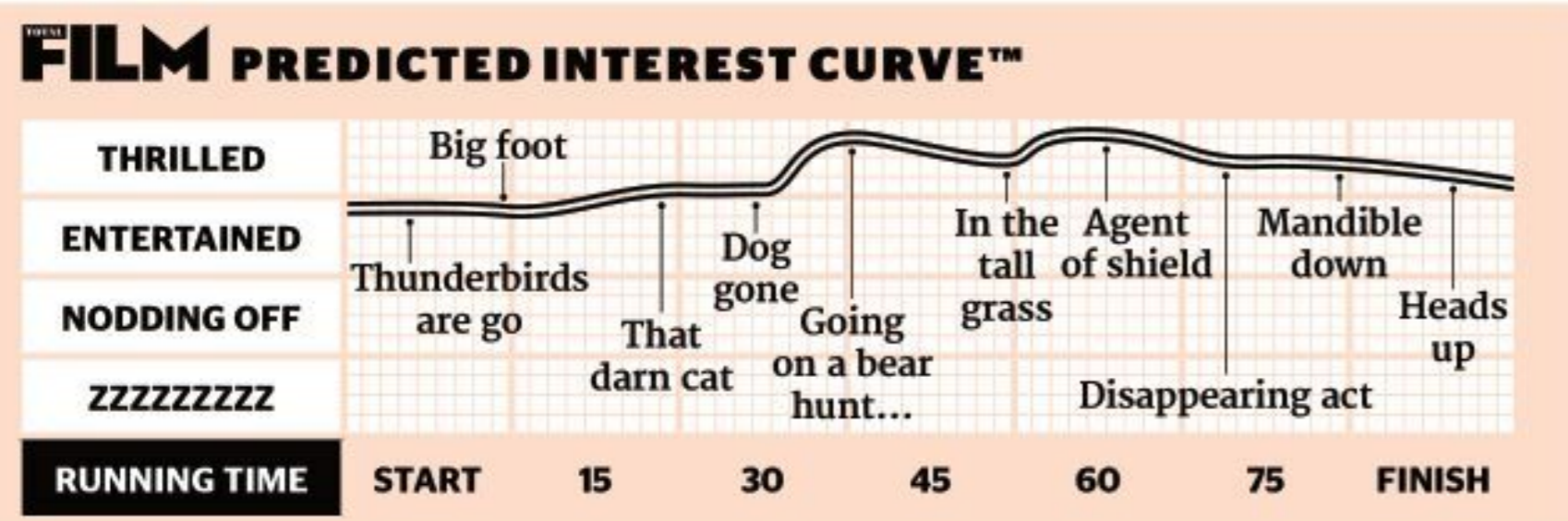
In this context, the Yautja (Dane DiDiegro) swiftly asserts its alpha status. Teasing audiences with stylish glimpses of the mandibled monster resembling some high-plains demon, Trachtenberg ratchets up the gore

**DIRECTOR** Dan Trachtenberg **STARRING** Amber Midthunder, Dakota Beavers, Stormee Kipp, Dane DiDiegro **SCREENPLAY** Patrick Aison **DISTRIBUTOR** Disney/20th Century Studios **RUNNING TIME** 99 mins

and suspense meticulously before unleashing the creature's full skill-set. A mid-film massacre not only links *Prey* to *Predator 2* (and to the comic *1718*); it also revels in the indecently thrilling spectacle of the Yautja at work to wickedly inventive effect.

And Midthunder (TV's *Legion*) proves a more than worthy adversary. Scared but determined, capable yet stretched, she emerges as the *Predator* saga's most likeable lead yet. By the time the end tussle arrives, with Sarah Schachner's terrific score roaring, you wholly root for Naru as her resourcefulness resolves clues subtly seeded throughout the film. For his part, Trachtenberg has resolved how to give the Yautja its due. Best post-Arnie *Predator* variant? Undoubtedly. Best *Predator* movie per se? Tough call, but trust this: *Prey* gets the job done. **KEVIN HARLEY**

**THE VERDICT** Old mandible chops finally banks the feral, stylish showcase it deserves – and Midthunder kills as its quick-witted foe.



DISNEY, 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS, SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT, CURZON