

The Last Viking [15]

2025 Denmark/Sweden 116 mins

UK released **26 June 2026**

Director **Anders Thomas Jensen**

Screenplay **Anders Thomas Jensen**

Cinematography **Sebastian Blenkov**

Music **Jeppé Kaas**

Cast **Nikolaj Lie Kaas** (Anker); **Mads Mikkelsen** (Manfred / John); **Sofie Gråbøl** (Margrethe); **Søren Malling** (Werner); **Bodil Jørgensen** (Freja); **Lars Brygmann** (Lothar / Kjeld); **Kardo Razzazi** (Hamdan / Paul-George)

With *The Last Viking*, Danish star, screenwriter and occasional director Anders Thomas Jensen (*Adam's Apples*, *Riders of Justice*) brings another one of his blackly comic, absurdly violent tales to the screen with enviable ease. Working like a well-oiled machine, despite the occasional *longueur*, this is the kind of film that mostly goes in the direction you're expecting but it's all so well done.

Regular co-stars Nikolaj Lie Kaas and Mads Mikkelsen play siblings who don't really see eye to eye because of a shared traumatic past that mostly feels emotionally credible, even if the film is first and foremost a very dark — and not very politically correct — comedy.

The narrative's main timeline kicks off when Anker (Kaas) is released from jail for good behaviour 15 years after a major robbery. As per instructions from Anker, the loot was buried by his brother Manfred (Mikkelsen), the former problem child of the family who has dissociative identity disorder (formerly known as multiple personality disorder). Anker hopes to finally get his hands on the money but his sibling now wants to be called 'John' — because he thinks he's John Lennon — and John has no intention of telling Anker where exactly the money can be found, because how would the Liverpudlian musician know where that would be?

After a more painterly and stately-paced animated opening, the early going is fast, furious and frequently funny — even if it is clear from the outset that Manfred/John's disorder is played for laughs, which may not sit well with all

viewers. Most of the story is set in and around the siblings' creaky childhood home, which is now owed by a bickering couple (Sofie Gråbøl, Søren Malling) who rent out some of the rooms. The owners are typical Jensen-like creations: she's a vain former hand model who's now into boxing while he's a former designer who is trying to write a children's book while living off the money from an explosive airbag accident that ruined his face.

The various characters converge around the mansion. Anker hopes to find the money buried somewhere nearby; John and some newfound friends have started a band that will practice there; and Friendly Flemming (Nicolas Bro), a former criminal colleague of Anker's, has decided he also wants to have the money – and he's got a few bloody techniques for getting it up his sleeve. Add to that the presence of poor Freja (Bodil Jørgensen), the boys' third sibling, and you have a recipe for a lot of people getting the short end of some very hard-hitting sticks.

Mikkelsen, bespectacled and with the worst perm in recent cinematic history, underplays his character's condition, making audiences root for this grown-up version of a very hurt child. Jensen uses flashbacks to Anker and Manfred's difficult childhood with their father (Lars Ranthe) to further flesh out their shared traumatic past which, as the title suggests, also involves Vikings.

Cinematographer Sebastian Blenkov's widescreen canvas is lush, even if a lot of what occurs happens in the dark, while Eddie Simonsen's sound design is also superb, making sure the audience feels the impact of every literal and metaphorical blow.

Boyd van Hoeij, *Screen Daily*, 30 August 2025 (abridged)

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