

TV Review: Noah Wyle Fights to Survive in ‘Falling Skies’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 18, 2011 - 6:44pm

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CHICAGO – It’s the end of the world as we know it, and the ragtag resistance fighters of “Falling Skies,” starring Noah Wyle from “ER,” are defending themselves against a surprise extraterrestrial colonization of earth. Live free or die hard.



TV Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Falling Skies combines 2009’s “District 9” (space alien lizards), 1984’s “Red Dawn” (kids practicing guerilla warfare) and, of course, 1996’s “Independence Day” fairly effectively, while not going too far into the philosophical and psychological damage that a nuclear war-style destruction could have on a delicate American society. Noah Wyle is excellent as a conflicted ex-Military history professor turned warrior who represents a reasonable voice among the chaos.

The series opens with a series of children’s drawings, with a youthful voice over describing the invasion of a space alien force that knocks out most of the important cities in the United States, and puts the rest of the surviving population in a scrounging mode for food and essentials. The outer space force are multi-legged creatures (nicknamed “skitters”) and also employ robot soldiers. The aliens are also capturing human children to assimilate them, attaching corset-like devices to their spinal columns.



The Leader: Noah Wyle in ‘Falling Skies’
Photo credit: TNT

Tom Mason (Noah Wyle) is coping with the loss of his wife and son Ben in the initial barrage, but because the aliens capture children he

hopes that his son is still alive. He is now second in command of a group of resistance fighters and civilians, which includes his oldest son Hal (Drew Roy) and younger son Matt (Maxim Knight). Mason is under the command of Weaver (Will Patton), an army veteran who is by the book. His best friend is pediatrician turned battle surgeon Anne Glass (Moon Bloodgood). Together, they struggle to forage for food, find their lost children, fight battles and win the war against the aliens.

The post-apocalyptic world is portrayed as mainly civilized, as delineations of duty are split between the ranks of fighters (which includes children as young as 13 years old) and civilians. *Falling Skies* is not afraid of bringing up such necessary questions of "why we fight" and the value of religion in such a situation, but couches it in such a way as not to offend the sensitivities of those subjects ("...I don't ask God for anything, I ask what I can do for God"). It does make an argument for American exceptionalism, but that's pretty easy when fighting slimy, multi-legged lizard aliens.

Noah Wyle leads an excellent cast, who for the most part projects the philosophy of optimism in the face of the end of the world. Even a rogue operative named John Pope (Colin Cunningham) is brought around to the resistance, even as he offers a theory that the aliens are like the European colonists that wiped out the Native Americans. There are many conversations like this sprinkled into the pilot, which sets it apart from a simpler us-against-them format.



The Cast of 'Falling Skies': (L-R) Will Patton, Drew Roy, Conor Jessup, Noah Wyle, Maxim Knight and Moon Bloodgood

Photo credit: TNT

Where the show is less successful involves the seamier and more realistic elements of such a situation. Everybody has firearms (and a mysterious endless supply of ammo), who would be the first to crack if food becomes scarce? The anarchy of this type of world is bleached as the common enemy becomes the focus, but in modern America that may or may not be the case. We're so used to demanding our comforts and technology, would we become "fighters" if that's what was necessary? Maybe around World War II the answer would have been "yes," but *Falling Skies* maybe presumes too much about present day America.

When earth's destruction comes, I've always pictured the survivors around the campfire talking about all the savory meals they once enjoyed. Noah Wyle has a great scene where he describes the pleasure of a fork split English Muffin. That is where the heart of *Falling Skies* needs to be.

"Falling Skies" premieres on Sunday, June 19th at 9pm EST/8pm CST on TNT. Check local listings for channel location. Featuring Noah Wyle, Moon Bloodgood, Dale Dye, Drew Roy, Matt Mason, Conor Jessup, Colin Cunningham and Will Patton.



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