

## ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ a Gleeeful Space Romp

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 3, 2014 - 6:57am

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Guardians Of The Galaxy” is a gleeeful Star Wars knockoff dressed up in Marvel Comics clothing. It occupies the same universe as Marvel’s other properties, but its tone is decidedly sillier. It has a spirit more akin to the later joke heavy installments of the Star Trek franchise or low budget exploitation mogul Roger Corman’s “Battle Beyond The Stars” than the ponderous pontificating of “Thor.”

It’s also a movie that seems created specifically for only the most obsessive of fanboys. It is so in love with its own in-jokes it risks turning off those who aren’t familiar with the characters in the first place. And with a comic this obscure, that’s nearly everyone.



The Team of Warriors in ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’

*Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios*

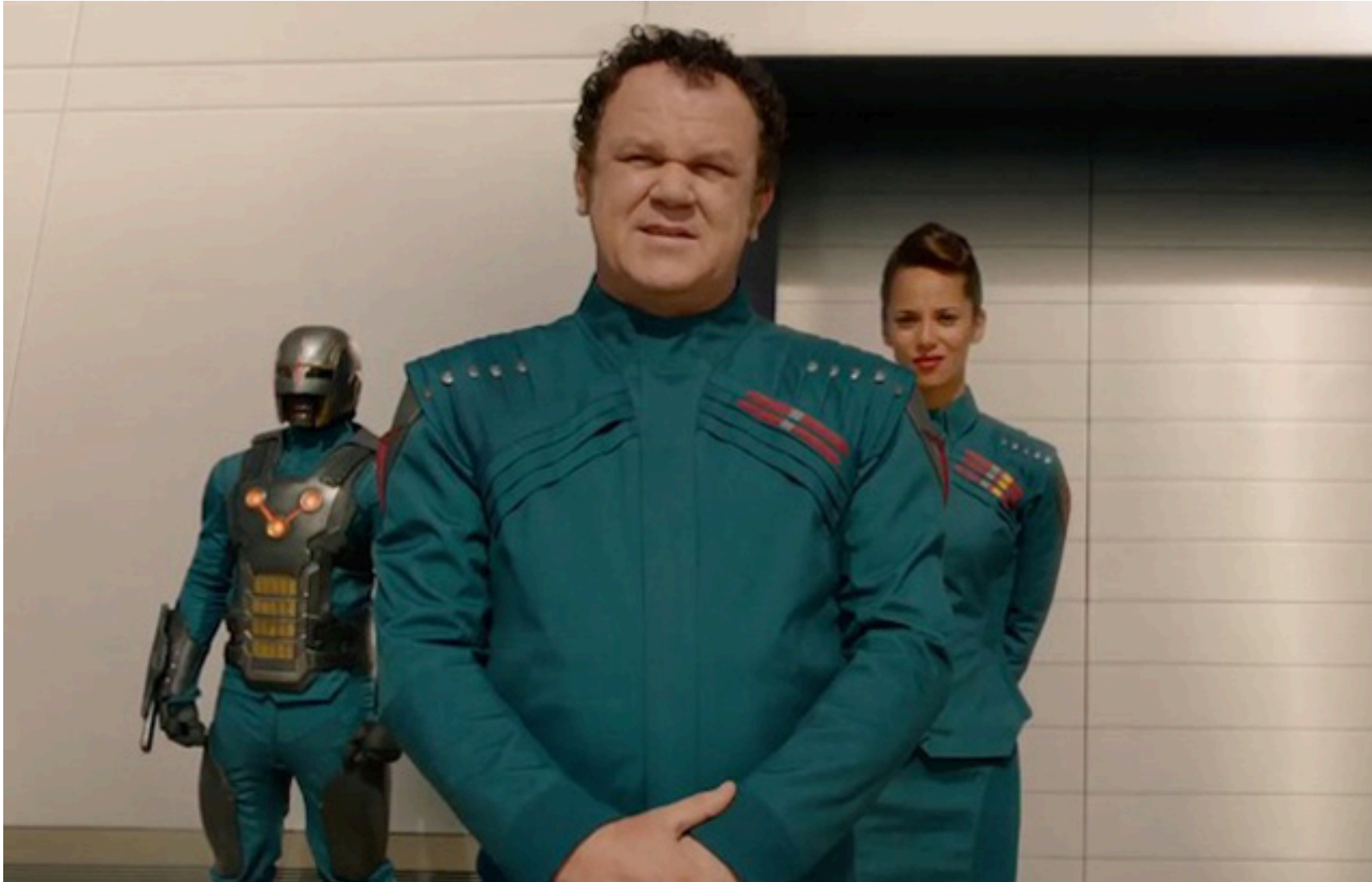
Chris Pratt stars as Peter Quill aka “Star Lord” – an earthling who was kidnapped by aliens as a pre-teen and now gets by as an interplanetary junk collector. We first meet him sporting a banana yellow early 80’s era WalkMan rocking out to a cassette called “Awesome



Mix Vol. 1" while he explores a far away planet for a mysterious orb. Zoe Saldana is the green skinned adopted daughter of intergalactic baddie Thanos with her own plans for the mysterious orb. Add in Bradley Cooper as the voice of a wisecracking talking raccoon bounty hunter, wrestler-turned-actor David Bautista as a muscle bound escaped convict with a thirst for revenge and Vin Diesel as a lumbering giant tree named Groot, and you have one of the odder rag-tag combinations to go jaunting across the galaxy.

Writer/Director James Gunn keeps the action moving along quickly with a mischievous spirit. Gunn cut his teeth in the notorious Troma Film factory and apparently hasn't lost his appreciation for a good bit of ribald humor in the middle of this space adventure. He also doesn't let the film get too bogged down in its world building mythology involving a peaceful planet, and the villainous Ronan (Lee Pace) who wants to collect the orb to launch an attack, while Chicago's own John C. Reilly and Glenn Close add some Oscar nominated pedigree to the proceedings.

Chris Pratt is just fine playing up his usual goofy man-child persona, while also acting as a credible space hero, but surprisingly Cooper gets most of the best lines. Rocket Raccoon is a man-made killing machine with a serious fetish for heavy artillery. He wears people clothes and is made to look like a raccoon but claims to not even know what a raccoon looks like. Cooper heightens the super cool space machismo and plays Rocket like a furry Han Solo. That puts Vin Diesel in the Wookiee role, this time voicing the role of a giant talking tree named Groot. His entire dialogue consists of one line repeated over and over again, and I have to say it's the most lifelike performance Diesel has ever given.



John C. Reilly in 'Guardians of the Galaxy'

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

I enjoyed the film, and I think Marvel was very shrewd by introducing these characters to us now after Iron Man, Captain America, and The Avengers have already laid the groundwork. Gunn and the cast seem to be having fun by highlighting the ridiculousness of a talking raccoon bounty hunter and his monosyllabic tree sidekick.

At times the movie feels a little too inside – like it is playing exclusively so it can be debated at future editions of Comic Con for years to come – and it never feels like there's that much at stake, really. It's all an elaborate goof on Marvel's own brand of space operettas. But it is a movie that is proudly odd, in a corporate-strategy-approved kind of way. At the end the credits promise "The Guardians Of The Galaxy" will return, but I'm not sure where they go from here.

*"Guardians Of The Galaxy" opened everywhere August 1st in 3D, IMAX 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Michael Rooker, John C. Reilly, Lee Pace, Glenn Close, Bradley Cooper and Vin Diesel. Written by James Gunn and Nicole Perlman. Directed by James Gunn. Rated "PG-13"*



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