

'The Space Between Us' Falls Into a Black Hole & Dies

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 2, 2017 - 10:16pm

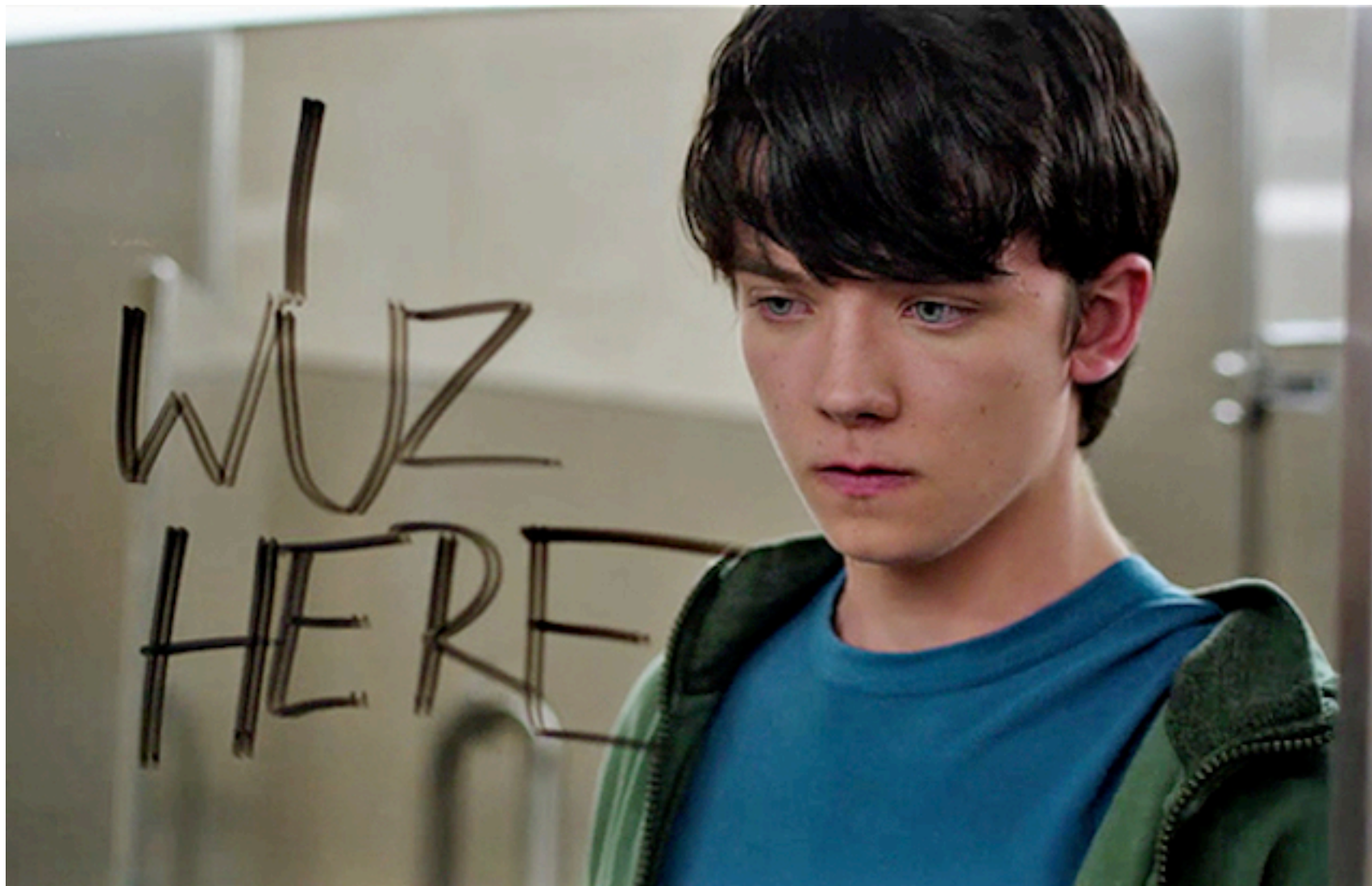
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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – You know you're in trouble when the opening scene of a film inspires forehead slapping levels of incredulity. And that's just the beginning of what I felt while watching "The Space Between Us," another entry in the long line of would-be weepies about young lovers torn apart, usually by class or disease. The film desperately wants to be a millennial love story for a generation, and has plenty of faults but precious few stars in its tale of literal star-crossed lovers.

This time instead of my new boyfriend is a cancer patient, or my new boyfriend is from the wrong side of the tracks, "The Space Between Us" central conceit is that the new boyfriend Gardner (Asa Butterfield) is a "Martian." The son of an astronaut who got pregnant before her mission to Mars, and then died in childbirth on the red planet, Gardner is raised on NASA's martian colony called "East Texas"... and is raised by fellow astronaut Kendra (Carla Gugino), who serves as a mother figure. The mission's billionaire founder (Gary Oldman) keeps the boy's existence a secret to avoid bad P.R., which would derail the mission and the company.



Asa Butterfield Asserts His Earthiness in 'The Space Between Us'

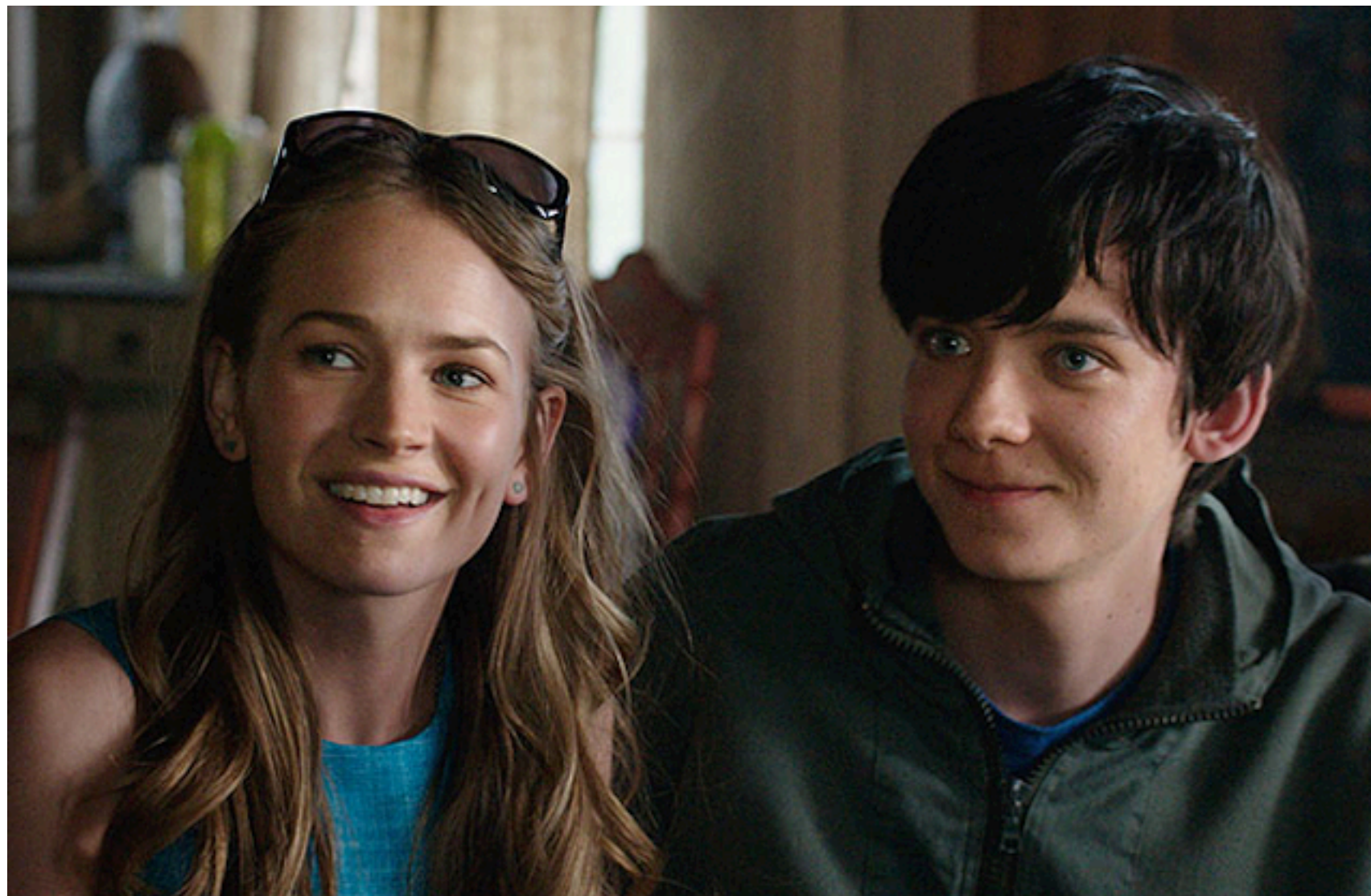
Photo credit: STX Entertainment

While on the red planet, Gardner strikes up an interplanetary pen pal relationship with a strong willed foster kid on earth named Tulsa (Britt

Robertson), and he longs to visit the planet of his origin to see her, and also to try to find his father – but since he's lived all his life on Mars he may not survive the trip back. He petitions to come back and it's accepted. Once he arrives on this planet, he escapes quarantine and his NASA handlers, and hops a bus to meet up with Tulsa.

After a quick meet-and-greet, the duo embark on a cross country trip of car theft and credit card fraud – which is just one step short of Bonnie and Clyde, only without the murders – while Gary Oldman is hot on their trail, so he can get Gardner back to Mars before it's too late. This crime spree reaches its nadir where the two petty criminals take a detour into a Sam's Club, and that's where Robertson inexplicably starts singing one of those slow poignant songs that so often pop up in movies like this... yet the effect here is gobsmackingly awful instead of heartwarming.

Asa Butterfield as Gardner is slightly easier to take in this relationship, where he at least manages to make his alien gestures and wide eyed amusement at everyday phenomena seem tolerable. But Britt Robertson doesn't add much to work with, as she doubles down on "spunk," which just comes off as an annoying affectation of her other spunky heroine in "Tomorrowland." Allan Loeb's screenplay doesn't do anyone any favors – Oldman's opening monologue about space travel sounds like a parody of corny inspirational speeches cut and pasted from a list of the biggest cliches. This is after all a movie that tries to make the phrase "see you in the funny papers" a thing.



Britt Robertson and Asa Butterfield in 'The Space Between Us'

Photo credit: STX Entertainment

Then there's the film's inevitable twist... once Gardner figures out he's not long for our world, he embarks on an urgent quest to find his father. There's a "surprise" here that you can see coming a couple of galaxies away, which turns the entire two hour film into what Roger Ebert famously dubbed "The Idiot Plot." – but here the idiots are the audience members who actually paid to see this sorry excuse for a story.

"The Space Between Us" opens everywhere on February 3rd. Featuring Gary Oldman, Britt Robertson, Asa Butterfield, Janet Montgomery, Carla Gugino, B.D. Wong and Colin Egglesfield. Screenplay by Allan Loeb. Directed by Peter Chelsom. Rated "PG-13"



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