

'Alien: Covenant' is a Pale Copy of Previous Best Films

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 18, 2017 - 5:30pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – It's worth noting that the Alien series extends back nearly 40 years, and yet the chest-bursting Xenomorphs have produced a grand total of exactly two good movies. The original "Alien" and "Aliens" are great films that stand the test of the time, while every other entry in this series would require a significant stretch of the imagination to be called barely watchable.

"Alien: Covenant" is a sequel to the Alien prequel "Prometheus", but it's essentially the movie fans thought they would get when they signed on for that earlier, overlong essay of sci-fi mumbo jumbo. While the first two films tried to break new ground, "Alien: Covenant" is content to merely rehash the hits. It's less of a new film and more of a Frankenstein's Monster mashup of elements that worked before but have not necessarily gotten any better with repetition.



Michael Fassbender Leads the Crew of 'Alien: Covenant'

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

Things don't start out promisingly as we're greeted once again by megalomaniacal android named David (Michael Fassbender) at the

moment he meets his maker, Mr. Weyland (cameo by Guy Pearce). It's a sterile scene full of dry exposition in the empty blank space of the tech mogul's mountain retreat, while reminding audiences of what happened in Prometheus. Coming into this film I realized I had forgotten 98 percent of that movie. I remembered Fassbender was an evil android, and there was an Alien at the end, but everything else in that movie was erased from my memory, and what I saw in that scene didn't exactly make me want to revisit it.

From there the action moves onboard the spaceship Covenant, a vessel carrying a crew and colonists to a new world far out in the galaxy. Fassbender actually plays a dual role here as both David and fellow android Walter. Walter is essentially the updated model, a "good" android who has had some programming fixes to eliminate the beta model's more murderous tendencies. It's Walter that we see singlehandedly manning the ship with the onboard computer "mother" while the rest of the crew is in deep space hypersleep. After a mishap involving a nearby solar flare damages the ship and turns some crew members – including the captain – into extra crispy toast, second in charge Oram (Billy Crudup) is forced to reluctantly take command. In over his head and eager for a quick fix, the crew stumble upon a nearby planet that seems to hit the sweet spot to sustain life... so on the basis of little more than a hunch they abandon their original destination plan and go there instead.

As you can expect, it's all downhill from there. Once on the ground they are quickly surrounded by Xenomorphs until the shipwrecked David comes to their aid, and leads them to his fortress. It's worth noting the crew is made up almost up almost exclusively of couples, and yet nobody outside of Fassbender and possibly Danny McBride – as a sort of Tennessee space redneck – make any sort of impression. Nearly all members of the crew act like early slasher movie fodder. Even the requisite strong female hero Katherine Waterston makes some remarkably dumb decisions.



Xenomorph on the Attack in 'Alien: Covenant'

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

Director Ridley Scott, with screenwriters John Logan and Dante Harper, have no interest in giving the audience anything new or advancing this offshoot of the franchise he created. They simply tick off a checklist of elements we've seen before. Good android? Check. Bad android? Check. Alien stalking people on a strange alien planet? Check. Alien stalking people in cavernous space ship? Check.

These Alien movies also all have exactly one ending. And when you're engaged it doesn't quite matter as much, but by the end the been-there-done-that elements had become more than a little tired. To be fair, it delivers more of the goods audiences are expecting than Prometheus, but it's still just a pale copy of those first two films.

"Alien: Covenant" opens everywhere on May 19th. Featuring Michael Fassbender, Katherine Waterston, Billy Crudup, Danny McBride and Demián Bichir. Screenplay by John Logan and Dante Harper. Directed by Ridley Scott. Rated "R"



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