

Film Review: Entertaining 'The Martian' is a Hollywood Space Opera

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 5, 2015 - 1:52pm

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CHICAGO – It's all based on science, they told us! "The Martian" is an old fashion feel-good movie about the hard working astronauts and scientists of the good old American space program, trying to rescue a stranded spaceman from Mars, aided by a brave cast of astro-colleagues.

This film is a reminder of other space rescue suspense operas that have come before it, most recognizably "Marooned" (1969) and "Apollo 13" (1995). The All-Star cast is also a reminder of those types of "name" ensemble cast films as well – "hey, is that Kristen Wiig?" All that aside, "The Martian" is a tour de force, pitting Matt Damon's astronaut character in a sly castaway-in-space mashup, and the special effects and production design are flawless. This is what the current technology in movies are about, the ability to place human beings in other worlds, yet express a recognizable atmosphere in a familiar emotional realm. The film is a bit too twee about the American rah-rah spirit, but that can be forgiven because the production, which is directed by sci-fi veteran Ridley Scott, delivers the entertainment goods.

In the near future, a mission to Mars is interrupted by a atmospheric sandstorm on the planet, so violent that the exploration has to be scrubbed, and the crew has to blast off quickly from the surface. As they are getting back to the mother ship, astronaut Mark Watney (Damon) is clipped by debris and thought to be dead. He actually is alive, but the rocket leaves Mars without him.

Alone as one human being on a vast globe, Watney has to figure out how to survive, until the next mission comes to the planet in two years. He manages to communicate to earth that he still exists, and now NASA director Sanders (Jeff Daniels) has to figure out how to rescue a man given up for dead. Meanwhile, the Mars mission crew (Jessica Chastain, Michael Peña, Askel Hennie, Kate Mara and Sebastian Stan) have guilt for leaving their comrade behind. There are many decisions yet to be made to get the American astronaut back home.

"The Martian" opens everywhere in 3D and IMAX 3D on October 2nd. See local listings for 3D/IMAX show times. Featuring Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Kristen Wiig, Jeff Daniels, Michael Peña, Kate Mara, Sebastian Stan, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Donald Glove. Screenplay adapted by drew Goddard, based on a novel by Andy Weir. Directed by Ridley Scott. Rated "PG-13"



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An Astronaut Stranded: Watney (Matt Damon) is 'The Martian'

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