

## “Mission: Impossible- Rogue Nation” well-balanced but nothing special

by Brynne Herzfeld, Voice Editor



Image courtesy of Paramount Pictures

The latest “Mission: Impossible” movie hit theaters on July 31 with a star-studded cast. “Mission: Impossible- Rogue Nation” follows hero-turned-fugitive Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) as he enlists his former colleagues and a British double-agent, Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson), in his quest to find and bring down the criminal organization, Syndicate, while running from the CIA. While the movie successfully balances action scenes with quieter conversation scenes, the plot is flimsy and the characters have flat personalities, with the exception of Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg).

The story begins with the Impossible Mission Force preventing nerve gas from reaching terrorists, providing a quick introduction to the characters: Ethan, Benji, Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames) and William Brandt (Jeremy Renner). After the successful mission, Ethan sets off to hunt the Syndicate while CIA director Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin) persuades the Senate to disband the IMF, claiming their successes are fueled by luck, not skill. For reasons unknown, this makes Ethan a fugitive, with his former teammates tasked with locating and capturing him.

Viewers never learn what Ethan did to anger the CIA, nor how he manages to evade the government for six months as the movie jumps forward in time. Viewers are dragged into a rabbit hole of confusing and poorly-planned espionage punctuated with fistfights and gunshots. The action keeps viewers excited, but for those who have never seen a previous “Mission: Impossible” movie, there is no clear reason

to root for Ethan and company.

The movie’s other major flaw lies in its characters. Ethan’s role as the action hero leaves little room for a personality, as if his only purpose is to save the day. Ilsa takes the role of the generic, mysterious femme fatale seen countless times on screen. Thankfully, the directors chose to not complicate the plot by fostering a romance between Ethan and Ilsa throughout the movie, preferring to save romantic feelings for the end, a refreshing change in the world of action movies. Vince and William serve as minor characters who barely help further the plot. Benji is the only character with a distinct personality: a goofy, wise-cracking sidekick.

The saving grace of “Mission: Impossible- Rogue Nation” is the well-balanced action scenes. Instead of falling into the trap of too many action scenes or too many quiet conversation scenes, exciting moments are sprinkled throughout the movie in just the right proportions. The hero is matched with a fighter of equal skill, keeping viewers on the edge of their seats during the action.

While “Mission: Impossible- Rogue Nation” provides exciting action and impressive stunts from Cruise, the story is poorly-written and the characters are standard action heroes with nothing noteworthy about their personalities. If viewers want to lose themselves in explosions and car chases, this movie is the perfect choice, but if they come to the theater expecting a high-quality film similar to James Bond, they would be sadly disappointed.