

## Review: 'The Martian'

The big screens have seen an influx of space movies in the past few years, from "Gravity" to "Interstellar," both of which are critically acclaimed for their cast and special effects. One plot still left to explore in a blockbuster film is the vast unknown that is Mars, and "The Martian" delivers a movie that is both action packed and hilarious.

"The Martian," based on the novel by Andy Weir, stars Matt Damon as Mark Watney, a botanist and astronaut who is a member of the Ares III manned mission to Mars. When an unexpected storm hits the surface, the mission is forced to evacuate—and when Mark is hit by flying debris and presumed dead, his crew is forced to leave without him. He wakes up to find himself completely alone on Mars with the next manned mission scheduled for three years in the future and no way to get in contact with NASA. Mark, refusing to die 50 million miles away from home, begins his quest for survival, growing potatoes in the human waste of his crew and creating water from leftover hydrozine in the base.

The best part of this movie is that it doesn't take itself too seriously. There's plenty of one-liners about being "the best botanist on the planet," and while you can still feel the life or death situation hanging in the air, it's definitely not as heavy as most modern films set in space. Mark Watney is a character that treats Mars as a problem that he can solve, and his attitude and sense of humor will have you rooting for him throughout the movie.

"The Martian" has a supporting cast with a lot of familiar faces, including Kristen Wiig as NASA's snarky public relations official and Jessica Chastain as the leader of the Ares III team. The acting, especially by Matt Damon, is both witty and composed, and the special effects are breathtaking. The horizon of Mars is actually incredibly terrifying when you're looking at it from the perspective of the only living thing for millions of miles.

At its core, I appreciated how realistic the movie was and how interesting such a seemingly hopeless situation could be. It shows you the advancements of science and technology and how far we've come, as well as how much is still left unexplored. I give "The Martian" an A, partly because of the few characters like Donald Glover's Rich Purnell—quirky astrophysicist who solves the time constraint of getting a probe to Mars with supplies—who were overlooked in the overall plot. If you like science fiction, space or even just Matt Damon, this film will keep you engaged and leave you feeling very small compared to the rest of the universe