

'Ant-Man' Supersizes Humor, Action With a Giant Heart of a Storyline

Big things come in small packages.

That's certainly the case for *Ant-Man*, the 12th film in the ever-expanding Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), which appears to have another hit with the \$130 million production.

The film deftly mixes humor with action, including a jaw-dropping and goofy toy train set piece featuring Thomas the Tank Engine. On the negative side, the comic book adaptation is tainted by unnecessary profanity.

Based on the character created by Stan Lee, Larry Lieber, Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers for the 27th issue of *Tales to Astonish* in 1962, Ant-Man is a superhero who has the unorthodox ability to shrink in scale, but increase in strength.

The movie iteration of *Ant-Man* tells the story of Scott Lang (Paul Rudd), a burglar, ex-convict and divorced father who is trying to turn over a new leaf and, well, look like a hero in the eyes of his young daughter Cassie (Abby Ryder Fortson).

After Scott gets amusingly fired from Baskin-Robbins when his prison record becomes known and is kicked out of his young daughter's birthday party by his ex-wife Maggie (Judy Greer) and her boy-friend/detective Paxton (Bobby Cannavale), he reluctantly returns to a life of crime and stumbles upon an odd-looking, tight-fitting suit.

Scott receives his chance for redemption when he is recruited by Dr. Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) to aid him protect his innovative technology, which has the power to shrink humans in size, increase their strength and equip them telepathic power

to control an army of tiny ants.

"Second chances don't come around all that often," Dr. Pym tells the down-on-his-luck thief. "I suggest you take a really close look at it. This is your chance to earn that look in your daughter's eyes, to become the hero that she already thinks you are."

Dr. Pym's offer of redemption for Scott includes him becoming Ant-Man in order to pull off a heist on the scientist's ex-protégé Darren Cross (Corey Stoll), who has nefarious plans for a new world order and whose alter ego is the scary Yellowjacket.

"My days of breaking into places and stealing stuff are over! What do you need me to do?" Scott asks Dr. Pym, who wryly responds: "I want you to break in a place and steal some stuff."

Its witty dialogue such as that which is at heart of *Ant-Man*—a heist film at its core. Speaking of which, Scott's former prison buddy Luis (Michael Pena) steals every scene that he is in, with his detailed-oriented personality. Especially funny are montages in which Luis' humorous, motor-mouthed storytelling is made to sync with pertinent characters' lip movements.

For the most part, critics have liked *Ant-Man*, praising its witty tone and comparing it to last summer's surprise hit *Guardians of the Galaxy*, which also blended humor with action. That's positive, considering *Ant-Man*'s original director Edgar Wright left the film's production due to "creative differences" and was replaced by Peyton Reed.

As one critic pointed out: "*Ant-Man* is the most family-friendly of them all (MCU movies). It's charming, clever and loaded with humor, and that makes it hard to resist. And for a film that features the smallest superhero of the stable, it has a big heart, since Ant-Man's motivating factor is to

become a better father.”

There’s also a second father-daughter plot line featuring Dr. Pym and her adult child, Hope Van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly), who happens to be Cross’ right-hand woman.

The tagline for *Ant-Man* is perfect: “Heroes don’t come any bigger.” Indeed, how can you not root for a crook who rediscovers his moral compass after utilizing technology to transform himself into the size of an insect?

Content Watch: *Ant-Man* is rated PG-13 for sci-fi action violence. There are several mild profanities, although they are not as over the top as the ones used in *Guardians of the Galaxy*. There are some in-tense, scary scenes with the Yellowjacket, which can terrify younger kids. There is some medium-fantasy violence, including a character that is vaporized. There are a few scenes of fistfights and guns being fired. Men are punched by a man the size of an ant and fly through glass and break furniture. Blood is drawn in some of the fights. Characters drink in a bar before a heist. Dr. Pym smokes a cigar in one scene. Luis jokes about getting high in one scene, but Scott rolls his eyes.

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