

Rusting Metal: Terminator Salvation Review

✖ John Connor has finally found a way to stop the relentless Terminator—get him elected to office so he'll be too busy to participate in subsequent escapades. Unfortunately, with the killing machine played by Arnold Schwarzenegger sidelined, John has to carry *Terminator Salvation*, the newest film in the series, all by himself. And that's a tricky task in itself, even for Christian Bale.

John and his wife (Bryce Dallas Howard) are part of the human resistance in a world that more closely resembles *Mad Max* or *I Am Legend* than the glimpses we've seen in previous *Terminator* entries.

Meanwhile, Marcus Wright (Sam Worthington) brings a new element to the story, arriving from the past as a lone warrior to aid Kyle Reese (Anton Yelchin), who himself was/will be a "lone warrior" aiding John's mother. Earlier screen drafts reportedly had Wright's character as the central focus, and viewers may find the final film a little disjointed deciding between the focus on Marcus or John.

The premise is to reveal exactly what happens after the nuclear "judgment day" finally happens with man and machine fully engaged in battle. *Terminator Salvation*, however, proves that it's a lot more fun trying to prevent judgment day than it is living beyond it.

Even with all the dire consequences presented in the previous films, they included some lighthearted moments, especially regarding the Terminator's interaction with humans—"Hasta La Vista, Baby," "I need a vacation" and "I'll be back," to name a few. When the bomb went off, however, it seems to have killed everyone's sense of humor. What viewers are left with

is a straight-ahead apocalyptic action flick.

There are some great action sequences that pay homage to the previous films and other sci-fi classics like *Aliens* and *The Matrix*, but unfortunately nothing that particularly rises above anything we've seen before. Those sequences are also outweighed by parts of the film that scream "budget!"—like resistance fighters dressed in camo huddled in various locations around radios.

The original *Terminator*, for all the reverence movie buffs now give it, was a B-movie that was transformed into a Hollywood blockbuster in its far superior sequels. *Terminator Salvation*, however, has the feel of a B-movie-if nothing else for taking itself too seriously, and for the addition of Michael Ironside as a one-dimensional military chief. (At the military headquarters, I found it comical that there was still a pressing need for a multicultural military committee, in light of the fact that humans had mostly been wiped out).

As with other *Terminator* films, there are spiritual overtones, not the least of which is John Connor, the sole hope for mankind for whom people willingly give their lives. Marcus' journey, as a former murderer, also brings up the question of redemption and whether or not a person deserves a second chance.

It's really hard to say who this film is for. Longtime fans, who will be interested, will be let down by the execution. New fans, who won't be reminded by this of how good they used to be, won't be especially fond of arriving at mid-point.

Content watch: *Terminator Salvation*, following the lead of *Live Free or Die Hard*, downgraded its rating to PG-13 (the earlier films were R-rated), hoping for a broader audience. Rated PG-13 for sci-fi action, violence and language, but no sexual content to speak of.

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