



Alien: Covenant

Theatrical release poster

Directed by Ridley Scott Screenplay by

- John Logan
- Dante Harper

Story by

- Jack Paglen
- Michael Green

Based on

Characters by

- Dan O'Bannon
- Ronald Shusett

Produced by

- David Giler
- Walter Hill
- Ridley Scott
- Mark Huffam
- Michael Schaefer

Starring

- Michael Fassbender
- Katherine Waterston
- Billy Crudup
- Danny McBride
- Demián Bichir

Cinematography Dariusz Wolski Edited by Pietro Scalia Music by Jed Kurzel

Production companies

- 20th Century Fox[1]
- TSG Entertainment[1]
- Brandywine Productions[1]
- Scott Free Productions[1]

Distributed by 20th Century Fox

Release dates

- May 4, 2017 (Odeon Leicester Square)
- May 12, 2017 (United Kingdom)
- May 19, 2017 (United States)

Running time

122 minutes[2]Countries

- United Kingdom[3]
- United States[3]

LanguageEnglishBudget\$97–111 million[4][5]Box office\$240.9 million[4]

Alien: Covenant is a 2017 science fiction action horror film directed and produced by Ridley Scott and written by John Logan and Dante Harper, from a story by Michael Green and Jack Paglen. A joint American and British production, the film is a sequel to *Prometheus* (2012), the second entry in the *Alien* prequel series, and the sixth installment in the *Alien* franchise overall, three of which have been directed by Scott. The film features returning star Michael Fassbender, with Katherine Waterston, Billy Crudup, Danny McBride, and Demián Bichir in supporting roles. It follows the crew of a colony ship that lands on an uncharted planet and makes a terrifying discovery.

In 2012, before the release of *Prometheus*, Ridley Scott discussed the prospects of a sequel and new trilogy, and this film was confirmed that August. Principal photography began on April 4, 2016, at Milford Sound in Fiordland National Park, New Zealand, and wrapped on July 19, 2016. Effects houses Odd Studios and CreatureNFX provided the film's makeup and animatronic creature effects. Scott said the first cut of the film was two hours and 23 minutes long, which was eventually edited down to the 2 hours and 3 minutes of the released version.

Alien: Covenant premiered in London on May 4, 2017. It was released on May 12 in the United Kingdom, and on May 19 in the United States. The film received generally positive reviews from critics, but underperformed at the box office; its worldwide gross was \$240 million against a production budget of approximately \$100 million, not including marketing costs.

In a prologue,[a] business magnate Peter Weyland speaks with his newly-activated android in a lakeside apartment. The android chooses the name "David" for himself after observing Michelangelo's statue. Weyland states that one day they will search for mankind's creator together. David comments on his unlimited lifespan as compared to Weyland's, which unsettles Weyland.

In 2104 AD, 11 years after the *Prometheus* expedition, the colonization ship *Covenant* is seven years from reaching planet Origae-6 with 2,000 colonists in stasis and 1,140 human embryos in cold storage. The ship is monitored by Walter, an advanced android model that physically resembles David. When a solar flare[6] damages the ship, Walter reanimates his 14[7] human crewmates, themselves couples, and future colonists. The ship's captain, Jake Branson, is burned alive when his stasis pod malfunctions. While repairing the ship, the crew picks up a transmission of a human voice from a nearby planet, which appears eminently more habitable than Origae-6. Despite the protests of Daniels, Branson's widow, that this new "perfect" planet is too good to be true, the new captain, Christopher Oram, decides they will investigate.

With pilot Tennessee maintaining *Covenant* in orbit, his wife Faris flies a lander to the planet's surface, where an expedition team tracks the transmission's signal to a crashed alien ship. Crewmembers Ledward and Hallett are infected by spores from fungus-like organisms. Oram's wife, Karine, helps the rapidly deteriorating Ledward back to the lander, where Faris quarantines both inside the med-bay. A small pale alien creature (neomorph) bursts from Ledward's back, killing him and mauls Karine to death. Faris attempts to kill the creature with a shotgun, but inadvertently triggers an explosion that kills her and destroys the lander. Nearby in the fields, another neomorph bursts from Hallett's mouth, killing him. The creatures attack the remaining crew, killing crew member Ankor. The remaining crew kills one neomorph before David, who survived the *Prometheus* mission, appears and scares off the other.

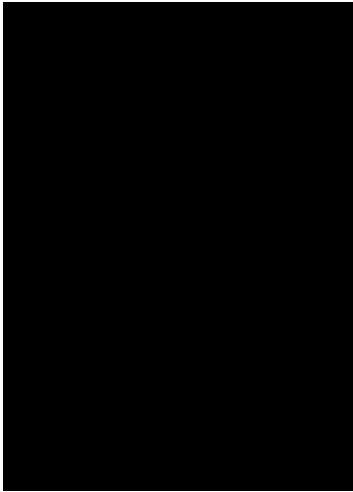
David leads the crew to a temple in a city full of dead humanoids. He tells them that, upon his and fellow *Prometheus* survivor Elizabeth Shaw's arrival at the planet, their ship accidentally released a pathogen, which annihilated all fauna on the planet and Shaw perished when the ship crashed. Meanwhile, attempts to radio the *Covenant* are stymied by ion storms. When the remaining neomorph infiltrates the temple and kills crewmember Rosenthal, David tries to communicate with the creature, becoming incensed when Oram shoots it dead. Oram questions David, who reveals the aliens are a result of his releasing and experimenting with the pathogen to produce new lifeforms, before tricking Oram into being attacked by a facehugger. A new form of creature, the protomorph, later erupts from Oram's chest, killing him.

As the others search for Oram and Rosenthal, Walter finds Shaw's dissected corpse, used by David as material for his evolving creature designs. David states that humanity is a dying and unworthy species, and his designed creature is a "perfect organism" that will eradicate them. When Walter disagrees, David disables him and then threatens Daniels. Walter heals himself and engages David, allowing Daniels to escape.

Elsewhere, another facehugger attacks security chief Dan Lope. Crewmember Cole quickly cuts it off, leaving Lope with acid burns on his face. The now fully grown protomorph kills Cole, while Lope escapes and meets up with Daniels. Tennessee arrives in a lander to extract Daniels, Lope, and Walter, who says David has "expired". They kill the attacking protomorph and return to the *Covenant*.

The next morning, Daniels and Tennessee discover another protomorph has burst from Lope's chest, killing him, and is loose on the *Covenant*. It matures and kills married crewmembers Ricks and Upworth. Daniels and Tennessee lure the creature into *Covenant*'s terraforming bay and eject it into space.

Covenant resumes its voyage to Origae-6. As Walter puts Daniels in stasis, she realizes he is David but is unable to escape from her pod before falling asleep. David regurgitates two facehugger embryos, which he places in cold storage with the human embryos, and inspects the colonists. Posing as Walter, he sends a transmission in which he says all crewmembers except Daniels and Tennessee were killed by the earlier solar-flare incident.



- Michael Fassbender as David 8 and Walter One,[3] two synthetic androids. David is an older model who was a crewmember on the destroyed Prometheus, while Walter is a newer model who monitors the Covenant.[8]
- Katherine Waterston as Daniels, the chief of terraforming for the Covenant mission and the wife/widow of the ship's captain, Jacob Branson. She is the third in command after Branson and Oram.[9] Waterston said she was well aware of the comparisons that were going to be made between her and Sigourney Weaver's Ellen Ripley, but that she tried not to think about it too much while filming for fear of being intimidated.[10]
- Billy Crudup as Christopher Oram, the Covenant's first officer (then captain) and Karine's husband. Oram is a self-serious man of faith who believes their role on the Covenant is an act of providence, and shares a "contentious" relationship with Daniels.[11]
- Danny McBride as Tennessee, the chief pilot of the Covenant and Maggie's husband.[12]
- Demián Bichir as Dan Lope, the head of the security unit aboard the Covenant and Sergeant Hallett's husband.[13]
- Carmen Ejogo as Karine Oram, the Covenant's biologist and Christopher's wife.[11]
- Jussie Smollett as Ricks, the Covenant's navigator and Upworth's husband.[14]
- Callie Hernandez as Upworth, the Covenant's communications officer and Ricks' wife; she also has paramedic training.[15]
- Amy Seimetz as Maggie Faris, the pilot of the lander and Tennessee's wife.[16]
- Nathaniel Dean as Tom Hallett, a member of the security unit and Lope's husband.[13]
- Alexander England as Ankor, a member of the security unit.[3]
- Benjamin Rigby as Ledward, a member of the security unit.[3]
- Uli Latukefu as Cole, a member of the security unit.[3]
- Tess Haubrich as Sarah Rosenthal, a member of the security unit.[17]

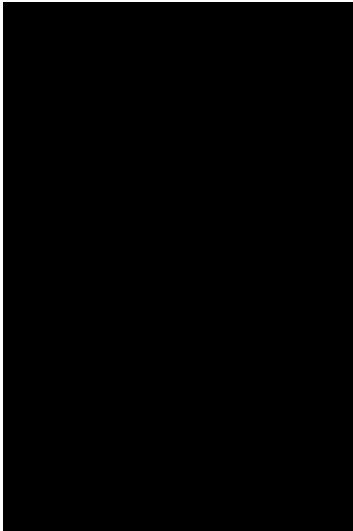
A number of actors appear in uncredited roles. Guy Pearce reprises his role as Peter Weyland, the trillionaire founder and CEO of Weyland Corporation (the Weyland-Yutani Corporation in "later" storylines) who died shortly before the destruction of the Prometheus.[18] James Franco appears onscreen in photos and a video as Jacob Branson, the original captain of the Covenant and deceased husband of Daniels; he also appears in deleted scenes and a short promotional prologue to Covenant.[19] Noomi Rapace, who played archaeologist Dr. Elizabeth Shaw in Prometheus, appeared in a short promotional prologue to Covenant that was set in the period between the two movies, but does not act in the final cut of the movie itself, though her voice is heard from the planet early in the film and her image and voice appear later.[20][21]

Other credited parts include Lorelei King as the voice of the Covenant's computer "Mother".[22] Goran D. Kleut is credited in two roles, as both a neomorph and a protomorph,[23] while Andrew Crawford is credited as a neomorph.[24]

Alien: Covenant is the second film in the Alien prequel series, and the sixth installment in the Alien franchise overall. It is the third Alien film to be directed by Ridley Scott. In 2012, prior to the release of the first prequel film (fifth Alien film overall) Prometheus, director Ridley Scott began hinting at the prospect of a sequel as the film leaves many questions unanswered.[25][26][27] He said a sequel would follow Shaw, the protagonist of Prometheus, to her next destination, "because if it is paradise, paradise cannot be what you think it is. Paradise has a connotation of being extremely sinister and ominous." Prometheus co-writer Damon Lindelof cast doubt on his own participation, saying "if [Scott] wants me to be involved in something, that would be hard to say no to. At the same time, I do feel like the movie might benefit from a fresh voice or a fresh take or a fresh thought." [28] In June, Scott said an additional film would be required to bridge the >100-year gap between the Prometheus sequel and Alien.[29]

As of August 1, 2012, Fox was pursuing a sequel with Scott, Noomi Rapace, and Michael Fassbender involved, and was talking to new writers in case Lindelof did not return.[30] In December 2012, Lindelof ultimately chose not to work on the project.[31] Early on, Scott stated the film would feature no xenomorphs as he wanted to phase the xenomorph out to focus instead on David 8, whose A.I. is the new alien lifeform[32][33] However, Scott later made contradictory statements, confirming the xenomorph's presence in the film, mainly due to the feedback to Prometheus.[34][35]

On September 24, 2015, Scott disclosed the film's title as *Alien: Paradise Lost*.^[36] In November 2015, he revealed the new title to be *Alien: Covenant*, and filming was set to begin in February 2016 in Australia.^[37] An official logo, synopsis and release date were released on November 16, 2015.^[38] During an interview concerning the development of the character of David since *Prometheus*, Scott indicated the dark turn which David would take in *Covenant*, saying, "He hates them. He has no respect for Engineers and no respect for human beings."^[39]



After the early participation of several screenwriters, John Logan wrote the final script for the film.

The initial screenplay was written by Transcendence screenwriter Jack Paglen in June 2013.^[40] In March 2014, Michael Green was hired to rewrite Paglen's script.^[41] Dante Harper later wrote a new script, but an extensive rewrite was performed by screenwriter John Logan. Logan had previously worked with Scott on *Gladiator*.^[34]

For Logan, the main concept was to adopt a dual plot line for the film that would combine the horror elements of *Alien* with the philosophical elements of *Prometheus*. He said, "With *Alien: Covenant*, I just really wanted to write something that had the feel of the original *Alien*, because seeing that movie was one of the great events of my youth. It was so overpowering in terms of what it communicated to me and its implications, that when I started talking to Ridley about what became *Alien: Covenant*, I said, 'You know, that was a hell of a scary movie.' I wanted to write a horror movie because the Grand Guignol elements of *Alien* are so profound. We tried to recapture that with *Alien: Covenant*, while also trying to pay homage to the deeper implications of *Prometheus*. In terms of tone, pace, and how we chose to play this particular symphony, we wanted to create a really frightening movie."^[34]

In late August 2015, Scott confirmed that he had started scouting locations for the film.^[42] In October 2015, the Australian government attracted the production of this film, and of *Thor: Ragnarok*, to Australia by providing AU\$47.25 million in grants.^{[43][44]} Woz Productions Ltd., a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox, visited Te Anau, New Zealand, on March 28, 2016, to scout locations for filming in Fiordland.^[45]

In August 2015, it was announced that the film would star Rapace and Fassbender, while Rik Barnett was in talks to join the cast.^[46] That December, Katherine Waterston was cast in the lead role of Daniels;^[47] it was Waterston's second film alongside Fassbender, after *Steve Jobs*. Summer Glau, Carolyn Murphy and Alice Eve were also being considered. Dariusz Wolski, longtime collaborator with Scott, was confirmed to serve as the film's cinematographer.^[48] In 2016, Ridley Scott stated that Noomi Rapace would not reprise her role of Elizabeth Shaw.^[49] However, in June, it was announced that Rapace would shoot a week's worth of scenes (though no new footage of hers appeared in the final film).^{[50][51]} Creature designer Carlos Huanes said in a 2019 interview that he believed it was the studio's decision to remove her from the film.^[52]

In February 2016, Danny McBride, Demián Bichir, Jussie Smollett, Amy Seimetz, Carmen Ejogo, Callie Hernandez, Billy Crudup, and Alexander England were reported to have joined the cast.^{[12][53][54][55][56]} In March 2016, newcomer Benjamin Rigby also joined the cast.^[57] In December 2016, it was announced James Franco had been cast in the role of Captain Branson, husband to Daniels and captain of the *Covenant*.^[58] The role of Branson in the film was limited to a cameo appearance of the deceased captain.

Adam Savage went on a tour of several of the props and stage sets used in the filming which included an alien spaceship which had first appeared in Prometheus. This set had to be recreated for Alien: Covenant as the set used in Prometheus had been destroyed.[59] In an article for The Hollywood Reporter, Patrick Shanley interviewed the art director for the film, Damien Drew, and creature design supervisor Conor O'Sullivan regarding the involvement of the San Diego Zoo and its representative Rick Schwartz as a consultant for the design of the realistic effects of the creatures and Xenomorphs appearing throughout the film as Scott wanted a more 'organic' feeling to the creatures as opposed to the 'biomechanical' inspiration of H.R. Giger which had inspired the creature designs in the original films.[60] Scott provided anatomical studies and references from La Specola, a natural history museum in Florence, to O'Sullivan as inspiration.[60]

The VFX supervisor Charles Henley summarized the several vendors that were used to support production of the visual special effects seen in the film when the selection process was discussed, stating, "Both history and need guided the decisions on which vendors we used. Ridley had worked with MPC on many previous projects, in particular Prometheus for which I was MPC's VFX supervisor as well as The Martian. There had been a lot of great digital double and creature work done at MPC on recent projects so there was confidence they should be the lead facility. Framestore had recently worked with Ridley on space for The Martian, similarly Animal Logic now had the original crew who did the holograms for Prometheus. Also as we were shooting in Australia there was good reason and incentives to use Australian-based companies and so Luma and Rising Sun came on board." [61]



Principal photography for the film began on April 4, 2016, at Milford Sound in Fiordland National Park, New Zealand,[62][63][64][65] and wrapped on July 19, 2016.[66] Some footage was also filmed at Leavesden Studios in England,[67] which included reshoots.[68] The complete list of countries used for filming were listed by BFI in Sight & Sound as the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and New Zealand.[69] Previous partial lists often listed only one of the four countries involved in the development and production of the film.[70][3][71]

Effects houses Odd Studios and CreatureNFX provided the film's makeup and animatronic creature effects, respectively,[72][73] while Australian-based effects house Animal Logic provided the film's digital visual effects.[74] Approximately 30 people from CreatureNFX worked on the project for almost six months building animatronics.[73] Actors wearing creature suits with animatronic heads were used to portray the aliens on-set.[73][75]

Pietro Scalia, the editor of the film, spoke of the structural difficulty of integrating the two story lines in the final editing of the film and how the need to keep momentum was important. He did this by not repeatedly jumping between scenes which he said made parts of the film "belaboured and tedious", as well as combining certain scenes and eliminating others. Another issue highlighted was the reveal of David as;

"Once the Covenant Story merges with the Prometheus storyline finding the proper structural order of the scenes proved [sic] to be difficult because of the distinctive dynamics of the two story lines in addition to the separation of the two locations of the action. In one sense the action, the tension and unfolding drama going from one group to the other had to be balanced and spaced properly as not to lose the connective tissue of the film." [76]

Scott said the first cut of the film was two hours and 23 minutes long, which was eventually edited down to 2 hours and 3 minutes for the released version. Scott used test screenings to decide what to cut.[77][78]

The musical score for Alien: Covenant was written by Australian musician and composer Jed Kurzel. Initially, Harry Gregson-Williams was selected as the film's composer.[79] When the first trailer was released in late 2016, Kurzel was revealed as the replacement for Gregson-Williams.[80] Themes from Jerry Goldsmith's original score for Alien were incorporated, as well as themes from Marc Streitenfeld's and Harry Gregson-Williams' score for Prometheus.[81] A version of "Nature Boy" sung by Norwegian singer and songwriter Aurora was used in the first trailer, while another song, "Under the Water", was used in a short promotional film featuring the character Daniels (Katherine Waterston) sung by

In the run up to release, 20th Century Fox released a number of short prologue films as part of the marketing for *Alien: Covenant*. The first, called *Prologue: Last Supper*, was directed by Ridley Scott's son Luke Scott and features the crew of the *Covenant* having a last meal before they enter cryosleep.[87] The second prologue, called *The Crossing* and directed by Ridley Scott, reveals what happened to Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) and the android David (Michael Fassbender) following the ending of *Prometheus*. [88] Another was called *Meet Walter*, starring Michael Fassbender and directed by Luke Scott, which was a fictional advertisement for the *Walter* series of androids. [89]

Alien: Covenant premiered on May 4, 2017, at the Odeon Leicester Square in London. [90] The film was released on May 19 in the United States, in 2D and IMAX 2D. [91][92][90] It was originally set to be released on October 6, 2017, before being moved up to August 4, and then again to its final date. [93][94]

The version of the film released in China on June 16, 2017, was six minutes shorter than the version released elsewhere due to censorship with most of the scenes involving the aliens [95] and a scene where the two characters played by Michael Fassbender kiss having been cut. [96][97]

The film was released in Japan on September 15, 2017. [98]

The Blu-ray, DVD, and 4K Ultra HD releases of the film came out on August 15, 2017. The home release includes an audio commentary by the director and 22 minutes of deleted scenes and unused footage from the first cut of the film. [99]

The theatrical release of the film was accompanied by the release of a novelization by Alan Dean Foster, who also authored the novelization of the original *Alien* film from the 1970s. [100] A companion volume about the film's art and stage design was released at the same time, written by Simon Ward and titled *The Art and Making of Alien: Covenant*. [101]

A second *Covenant* novel by Foster was initially billed as a sequel to the film, before being revealed to be a direct prequel to *Covenant* under the title *Alien: Covenant – Origins*. [102] Titan Books, as publisher of the book, released a plot summary in advance of its release on September 26, 2017:

As the colony ship *Covenant* prepares for launch, and the final members of the crew are chosen, a series of violent events reveals a conspiracy to sabotage the launch. Yet the perpetrators remain hidden behind a veil of secrecy. The threat reaches all the way up to Hideo Yutani—the head of the newly merged Weyland-Yutani Corporation—when his daughter is kidnapped. Is the conspiracy the product of corporate espionage, or is it something even more sinister? While Captain Jacob Branson [b] and his wife Daniels prepare the ship, Security chief Dan Lopé signs a key member of his team, and together they seek to stop the technologically advanced saboteurs before anyone else is killed, and the ship itself is destroyed in orbit. [104]

On April 26, 2017, 20th Century Fox released *Alien: Covenant In Utero*, a virtual reality interactive demo teaser for *Alien: Covenant* for the Oculus Rift and the Samsung Gear VR. The experience was produced by RSA, FoxNext VR, MPC, Mach1, AMD Radeon, and Dell Alienware. [105][106] The trailer is a first-person experience in which the viewer plays the role of a neomorph. The experience was executive produced by Scott and directed by David Karak. [107]

Alien: Covenant underperformed at the box office grossing a worldwide total of \$240.9 million, including \$74.3 million in the United States and Canada and \$166.6 million in other countries, against a production budget of \$97 million, [4][108] not including marketing costs. [109] The film was a box office disappointment for the studio, especially when compared to *Prometheus* which had grossed a worldwide total of \$403.4 million. [109][110]

Fox released the film in several countries before the United States. [111][112] It was released in 34 markets, where it debuted to \$40.1 million, opening at number one in 19 of them. Its overall rank for the weekend was second behind the continued run of *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*. [113] The top openings were in South Korea (\$7.2 million), the UK (\$6.4 million), France (\$4.5 million), Australia (\$3.1 million), and Mexico (\$2.5 million). [113] In China, the film was released on June 16 and grossed \$30 million, topping the box office. [114][115]

In North America, the film was released alongside *Everything, Everything* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul*, and was projected to gross around \$40 million from 3,760 theaters during its opening weekend. [116][117]

It made \$4.3 million from Thursday-night previews at about 3,000 theaters, and \$15.4 million overall on its first day, which was below the \$21.5 million Friday of *Prometheus* five years prior. [118] It went on to open to \$36.2 million, down 34% from *Prometheus*'s debut, but still finishing first at the box office, [4] as the third-highest debut of the series when not counting for inflation. [119][120][121] In its second weekend, the film

grossed \$10.5 million, finishing fourth at the box office and dropping 70.9%.^{[122][123][124]} The film was pulled from 1,112 theaters in its third weekend and dropped another 62.3%, finishing sixth at the box office with \$4 million.^[125]



Fassbender's portrayal of two similar androids with different programming, David and Walter, was highly praised by reviewers.

Alien: Covenant received generally positive reviews from critics.^[126] The film has a 65% approval from 406 reviews compiled by review aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes, with an average rating of 6.3/10. The website's critical consensus reads, "*Alien: Covenant* delivers another satisfying round of close-quarters deep-space terror, even if it doesn't take the saga in any new directions."^[127] On Metacritic, the film has a score of 65 out of 100, based on reviews from 52 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".^[128] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B" on an A+ to F scale, the same score earned by its predecessor.^[120]

Writing for *The Guardian*, Peter Bradshaw gave the film three stars out of five, stating that *Alien: Covenant* is "a greatest-hits compilation of the other *Alien* films' freaky moments. The paradox is that though you are intended to recognise these touches, you won't really be impressed unless you happen to be seeing them for the first time. For all this, the film is very capably made, with forceful, potent performances from Waterston and Fassbender."^[129] Geoffrey McNab, writing for *The Independent*, stated that it "certainly delivers what you'd expect from an *Aliens* film—spectacle, body horror, strong Ripley-like female protagonists and some astonishing special effects—but there's also a dispiriting sense that the film isn't at all sure of its own identity." He found the screenplay "very portentous" and concluded that "the crew members pitted against the monstrous creatures are trying their damndest to blast them to kingdom come, just as they would in any run-of-the-mill sci-fi B movie."^[130]

A. O. Scott of *The New York Times* said, "*Alien: Covenant* is an interesting movie ... for all its interplanetary ranging, [it] commits itself above all to the canny management of expectations."^[131] Trace Thurman, from *Bloody Disgusting*, gave the film a mediocre review, noting that although watching *Alien: Covenant* will make viewers appreciate *Prometheus* more, "this is a film that was made as a response to *Prometheus* critics but tries to appease fans of that film as well and it doesn't fully work." He also criticizes the overfamiliarity of the climax and insufficiently developed characters.^[132] Collider's review of the film stated that Scott "finds himself stuck between two constructs—the action-horror beats of an *Alien* film, and the weighty, ponderous themes of a *Prometheus* movie—and by indulging both, he never fully satisfies either. The result is a messy film that is at turns, exquisite and infuriating."^[133]

In a review for *The Independent* Clarisse Loughrey gave the film five stars describing it as "relentless and overwhelming, but all in the very best of ways" and as a "mightily impressive piece of cinematic engineering" which has brought together the *Alien* franchise. Loughrey praised Katherine Waterston for her "impressive work" as Daniels and went on to single out Fassbender for playing a "deeply frightening, scene-stealing antagonist".^[134] Sinead Brennan for RTE, gave the film 7/10, but gave high praise to Fassbender who she says "steals the show; seriously, he's incredible".^[135] Meanwhile, Neil Soans in a three star review for *The Times of India*, highlighted Danny McBride's performance as the most surprising given his comedic roots.^[136]

Matt Zoller Seitz of *RogerEbert.com* highly praised *Alien: Covenant*, giving it four out of four stars and stating that the film's structure, although repeatedly borrowing from other *Alien* films, serves a purpose not unlike the *James Bond* film series or *Star Wars*, "where part of the fun lies in seeing what variations the artists can bring while satisfying a rigid structure." He also emphasized that, like previous films of the series, real-world logic should not be applied to the film, and "[i]nstead you have to judge it by the standards of a fever dream or nightmare, a Freudian-Jungian narrative where the thing you fear most is what happens to you."^[137] Seitz later voted for it in *Sight & Sound* as one of the five best films of 2017.^[138]

In *New York* magazine, David Edelstein commented on David the android as representing a new generation of monster villains in the tradition of *Frankenstein*, stating, "In *Star Trek*, that man-machine nexus was...hopeful. Here, there's some doubt about David's ultimate motives, which puts *Alien: Covenant* squarely in the tradition of the *Terminator* and *Matrix* movies. And, of course, the novel *Frankenstein*, which carried the subtitle *The Modern Prometheus*. No less than Stephen Hawking—who survived with the aid of machines—has predicted that we have 100 years to live before evolved machines take human imperfection as justification for destroying humanity".^[139]

Kevin Lincoln, writing for *Vulture*, gave a strong endorsement of the depiction of David as an arch-villain in the film stating, "... one franchise is showing it's still possible for a modern blockbuster to have a great villain. In *Alien: Covenant*, David—the android played by Michael Fassbender,

first introduced in *Prometheus*—comes into his own as a fleshed-out, dynamic, and genuinely striking antagonist, one who isn't just an equal match for the heroes, but even becomes the central thread of the series. He's a huge part of what makes *Alien: Covenant* work."^[140]

Writing for *Vox*, Alissa Wilkinson said that "*Alien: Covenant* is too muddled to pull off its deeply ambitious Satan allegories". She emphasized the Miltonic demonic aspect of the android David: "But David is a better Satan than Satan himself ... It's as if in the *Alien* universe, the devil has evolved, thanks to humans creating him. David, fatally, has the ability to create—something Satan never had—and he will use that power only to destroy. He doesn't have any real need to rebel against his maker, since from the moment he became sentient, he knew he'd already won. He is indestructible, and determined to make creatures that imitate his drive for total domination."^[141]

At the 44th Saturn Awards, the film was nominated for Best Science Fiction Film, but lost to *Blade Runner 2049*, another film by Scott Free Productions (and of which Ridley Scott was an executive producer).^[149]

In September 2015, Ridley Scott said he was planning two sequels to *Prometheus* that would lead into the first *Alien* film, adding, "Maybe [there will] even [be] a fourth film before we get back into the *Alien* franchise" (which means there would be not two, but three sequels to *Prometheus*).^[150]^[151] Scott later confirmed in November that *Alien: Covenant* would be the first of three additional films in the *Alien* prequel series before linking up with the original *Alien*,^[152]^[153] and stated that the *Prometheus* sequels would reveal who created the xenomorph aliens.^[154] The screenplay for the third prequel film was written during production of *Alien: Covenant* and finished in 2017, with production originally scheduled to begin in 2018.^[155] In March 2017, Scott said, "If you really want a franchise, I can keep cranking it for another six. I'm not going to close it down again. No way."^[155]

Scott responded to a question about Sigourney Weaver reprising her role as Ellen Ripley in the prequels that, "Well, we're heading toward the back end of the first *Alien* so [using CGI] may be feasible. Ripley's going to be somebody's daughter, obviously. We're coming in from the back end. The time constraints of what's the time between this film, where we leave David going off heading for that colony, I think you're probably two films out from even considering her."^[156] In the audio commentary for *Alien: Covenant*, Scott confirmed that a sequel to *Alien: Covenant*, tentatively referred to as "*Alien: Covenant 2*", is being written by John Logan, with Fassbender, Waterston, and McBride reprising their roles. Scott also confirmed that the film will complete his prequel series, leading directly into the events of *Alien*.^[157]^[158]

In September 2017, the chief executive officer of 20th Century Fox, Stacey Snider, stated that, although *Alien: Covenant* was a financial disappointment, the studio still intended to proceed with Scott's sequel.^[159] Just days later, screen-graphics designer Carl Braga announced that the project had been delayed.^[160]

In October, Scott stated that "*Alien: Covenant 2*" will focus more on the androids and A.I.s, as opposed to the xenomorphs. He said, "I think the evolution of the *Alien* himself is nearly over, but what I was trying to do was transcend and move to another story, which would be taken over by A.I.s. The world that the A.I. might create as a leader if he finds himself on a new planet. We have actually quite a big layout for the next one."^[161] In November 2018, the film's plot details were reported to take place on LV-426 (the world visited by the *Nostromo* in the original *Alien* film), with the extraterrestrial Engineers being featured in the film and being in pursuit of David following his nefarious actions against Planet 4.^[162]

At the 2019 CinemaCon, it was stated that, after its acquisition of 21st Century Fox, Disney "will continue to create new stories" in the *Alien* series.^[163] In May, *Variety* reported that another prequel was reportedly "in the script phase", with Ridley Scott attached to direct,^[164] but it was still uncertain due to the poor box office returns of *Alien: Covenant*.^[165] In September 2020, Scott confirmed that a new *Alien* film was in development but it was unclear if this would be a sequel to *Alien: Covenant*.^[166] In August 2021, however, a news report concluded that a sequel is currently uncertain.^[167]^[168]

- List of films featuring extraterrestrials

1. ^ Set before the events of the prequel film *Prometheus*.
2. ^ The novel's first edition and audiobook mistakenly refer to Jacob Branson as Jacob Brandon throughout.^[103]

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Review

Maybe they should stop here, before tarnishing the original!

The alien movies over the years have mutated manifold from straight up horror to a full on war/action flick then to a mixed backstory starting in alien 3 which was interesting but a massive failure. Prometheus visually stunning as it was was let down by an awful script an dialog in particular.

Where do we come from? Why are we here? Themes from Prometheus continue in the very first 5 minutes before the credits have even rolled. It continues to beat you over the head with its backstory which, for me makes no sense whatsoever. Some of the dialog references other master horror works such as Frankenstein but does so in a way that it's up its own arse. Forgetting what alien actually was in the first place, a coincidence that was never about back story. Characters explain the plot in basil exposition speaking like no one ever would - speaking their thoughts at every opportunity - yes we get it, it treats the audience poorly.

What I did like was the scene shown much in the trailer, a character trapped in concealed room as something happens to her colleague. It was a longer scene that was tense and exciting and I oh so wish the rest of the movie could have come close. In a strange way alien covenant takes iconic moments from the franchise and tacks them on here but makes me wish I was watching alien or aliens instead. It's technically good as always Ridley Scott is a visionary filmmaker, but is unable to turn a weak script into a good film.

Alien:covenant gets locked up in its own self importance while forgetting why we loved alien in the first place. I really wanted to like it but came a way with a huge sense of disappointment.

- RaoulGonzo
- May 14, 2017

Even bad guys have to change their look from time to time. Check out the evolution of Hollywood's biggest villains through the years.

See the gallery



Suggest an edit or add missing content



What is the streaming release date of Alien: Covenant (2017) in Australia?

Answer

(Pocket-lint) - It's pretty cool that two of the most iconic movie monsters share the same cinematic universe.

Thanks to the Alien vs Predator films, the Alien and Predator franchises converged to take place in the same timeline. Now, there are 12 movies in total to watch - if you feel like revisiting what's known as the Alien Universe - the oldest of which is Ridley Scott's 1979 classic Alien, set in 2122. However, the earliest film, chronologically, is the latest film in the series, Prey, which is set in 1719.

To make things even more complicated, these films' creators have planted easter eggs in other movies. Coupled with online theories, this has resulted in the inclusion of Blade Runner into the Alien Universe. (It shares the same director as Alien, Ridley Scott.) To help you make sense of the Alien-Predator timeline, we put all the films in chronological order, with Blade Runner as a bonus. Also, don't forget Disney announced the first Alien TV show is currently in development at FX. It'll be the first TV series based on the classic film series. There's also Prey, the latest in the Predator saga, which arrives on Hulu in August.

We make sense of this all below.

Follow our guide below, and you will watch the events in the Alien Universe as they happened. At the bottom of this article, you'll find a spoiler-free, bulleted-list version, of this guide plus additional watch orders with no spoilers.

NOTE: THERE ARE SPOILERS BELOW.

20th Century Fox

Whats the best order to watch the Alien Universe movies photo 18

Set in 1719 on the American Great Plains, Prey stars Amber Midthunder as Naru, a young woman training to become a Comanche hunter. Unfortunately, a predator decides to hunt her and the rest of the hunters in her community. Prey releases on Hulu on 5 August 2022. It was written by Patrick Aison and directed by Dan Trachtenberg. It features a cast almost entirely of First Nation's talent, including Midthunder and Dakota Beavers.

20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



Alan "Dutch" Schaefer (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) and his team of elite soldiers are sent on a mission to rescue hostages from a central American jungle. Soon after landing, the team encounters evidence that the mission isn't all that it seems. In fact, they're the ones being hunted by a Predator alien.

Carl Weathers stars as Dutch's friend, Dillon. And John McTiernan directed the film.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



This Predator sequel traded in the jungles for the skyscrapers of Los Angeles. Danny Glover stars as Michael R Harrigan, a lieutenant on the LAPD fighting against warring drug cartels. The heavily armed feud between the cartels and the police draw the attention of a Predator looking for new prey. When Harrigan begins to suspect something out of this world is murdering gang members, he meets Special Agent Peter Keyes (played by Gary Busey), who leads a special government task force hoping to capture the Predator.

Stephen Hopkins directed Predator 2.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



When a satellite discovers a heat signature beneath the ice of Antarctica, the owner of the Weyland Corporation, Charles Bishop Weyland (played by Lance Henriksen), assembles a team to investigate. It's headed by a guide named Alexa Woods (played by Sanaa Lathan). Once there, the team discovers a pyramid under the ice built by an unknown alien civilisation.

Paul WS Anderson directed Alien vs Predator.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



This Alien vs Predator sequel picks up directly after the events of the 2004 film: we see a Predator spaceship carrying an Alien-Predator hybrid crash in Colorado right as Dallas Howard (played by Steven Pasquale) is returning to reunite with his younger brother Ricky (Johnny Lewis). The ship releases the Predalien onto the town, along with facehugger aliens, which create more Xenomorph (Aliens). If that wasn't enough, the last surviving Predator calls in reinforcements.

Greg and Colin Strause directed this installment.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



A Predator ship crash-lands, and a surviving Predator attacks a US Army team in the middle of a rescue mission. Army Sniper Quinn McKenna (played by Boyd Holbrook) incapacitates the extraterrestrial monster, but soon, both he and the Predator are taken into custody by the US government and Special Agent Will Traeger (played by Sterling K. Brown).

Shane Black, who starred in the original Predator as Hawkins, directed this film.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1

A group of people including a Spetnaz soldier, Israeli Defense Forces sniper, multiple drug cartel enforcers, and a death row inmate are led by a mysterious soldier named Royce (played by Adrien Brody) through a jungle, which they parachuted into while unconscious. Soon, the group finds themselves being hunted by two different groups of Predators.

Nimrod Antal directed Predators.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1

The opening scene of Ridley Scott's Prometheus shows the Alien race (known as Engineers) seeding life on Earth before jumping to the year 2089. There, a discovery by archaeologists Elizabeth Shaw (played by Noomi Rapace) and Charlie Holloway (played by Logan Marshall-Green) leads the Weyland Corporation to dispatch the duo on an investigation of the planet LV-223. Guy Pearce plays Peter Weyland in this film. He's the son of Charles Bishop Weyland in Alien vs Predator.

Lis Anna-Langston directed Prometheus.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



Set 11 years after Prometheus in 2104, The Covenant is a colonisation ship headed toward Origae-6 when it suffers damage from a shockwave, forcing the ship's android Walter (played by Michael Fassbender) to awaken the human crew members. While repairing the ship, the crew discovers the transmission of a human voice from a nearby habitable planet. Fassbender plays not only Walter but also Peter Weyland's android, David, from Prometheus.

Ridley Scott returned to the Alien series to direct Covenant.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



This is actually the oldest film on this entire list (and quite possibly the best), but it's set father along in the Alien Universe timeline. In 2122, the

crew of the Nostromo is on their way back to Earth when they receive a transmission from a nearby moon known as LV-426. When they respond to the beacon, executive officer Kane (played by John Hurt) is attacked by an Alien that emerges from an egg-like cocoon. This film introduces Sigourney Weaver's Ellen Ripley.

Alien is directed by Ridley Scott.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



Ripley is awoken from stasis after 57 years of floating through space. The Weyland-Yutani Corporation dismisses her claims about finding the ship full of Xenomorph eggs on LV-426 because the planet is now the site of a successful colony known as Hadley's Hope. That is until they suddenly lose all communication with the colony - at which point they ask Ripley to return as a consultant to a group of marines. The film also stars Michael Biehn as Corporal Dwayne Hicks and Bill Paxton as Private Hudson.

Aliens is directed by James Cameron.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



Set immediately after *Aliens*, the ship carrying the survivors of Hadley's Hope catches fire. A survival pod is ejected and crash lands on Fiorina 161, a prison planet populated by violent male inmates. The only survivor is Ripley and a facehugger, which soon attaches onto an inmate's dog. Once full-grown, the Xenomorph begins working its way through the prisoners.

This film marks the debut of director David Fincher.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



Alien Resurrection sees a 200-year jump forward in the timeline to 2379. Scientists aboard the USM *Auriga* have cloned Ripley to harvest the embryo of a Queen Xenomorph. Of course, the full-grown Alien queen escapes with the help of some other lab-grown Xenomorphs, and it's up to Ripley and a group of mercenaries including Wynona Ryder as Annalee Call and Ron Pearlman as Ron Johner.

Jean-Pierre Jeunet directed this installment.

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Here are a few movies loosely connected to the Alien vs Predator chronology.

Warner Bros.

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1



- Watch after Predators (2010)

Rick Deckard (played by Harrison Ford) is a former police officer who's taken up the profession of a Blade Runner. His job is to track down rogue synthetic humans known as replicants. His latest case is to find and retire four Nexus-6 replicants led by Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer).

The film is set in 2019, so about 100 years before the events of 1979's Alien, but Ridley Scott, the director of both films, sees the films as intrinsically linked, saying once in a Blade Runner director's commentary:

“This world could easily be the city that supports the crew that go out in Alien. So, in other words, when the crew of Alien come back in, they might go into this place and go into a bar off the street near where Deckard lives. That's how I thought about it.”

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Warner Bros.

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1

- Watch after Blade Runner (1982)

Soldier is probably the most surprising movie on this list. It follows the story of a group of orphans, born in 1996 and raised to be the perfect soldiers. An opening montage shows the group through their early training and through 40 years of fighting under the leadership of Sgt. Todd 3465 (played by Kurt Russell). If you look closely, you'll notice some of the wars the soldiers fight in are the same ones the replicant Roy Batty was a veteran of in Blade Runner. When a new group of genetically enhanced soldiers replace Todd's group, he finds himself dumped on a trash planet experiencing life for the first time.

Soldier was written by David Peoples, who co-wrote Blade Runner and has said he views the films as occurring in the same universe, so if we're counting Blade Runner, we have to count this movie, too.

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Warner Bros./ Sony Pictures

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1

- Watch after Soldier (1998)

K (played by Ryan Gosling), is a replicant Blade Runner. While out on an assignment, he discovers a box that has the remains of a replicant that died during a cesarean section, which is unusual because replicants aren't supposed to reproduce. The ensuing investigation reveals that the body of the replicant is Rachael (played by Sean Young), a special replicant designed by Eldon Tyrell, who ran off with Rick Deckard (played by Harrison Ford) in the original Blade Runner. The film was directed by Denis Villeneuve. As far as easter eggs go, keep your eyes peeled for the replicants in jars that K sees while he's escorted through the Wallace Corporation. They have a sneaky resemblance to the Engineers.

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20th Century Fox

Whats The Best Order To Watch The Alien Universe Movies image 1

- Watch after Alien Resurrection (1997)

This Joss Whedon TV series and its feature film are also theorised to be part of the Alien Universe, although we wouldn't exactly call it canon. The series is set in the year 2517, which would be 138 years after Alien Resurrection and another 200 years after the rest of the events in the universe. There's no need to look further than the first episode for the connection to the Alien Universe. During a space dogfight, you get a view of the hud of one of the weapons aboard the spaceship Serenity, where you can see the Weyland-Yutani corporation logo from Alien.

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What is the best streaming device for your TV? Our top recommendation is the Amazon Fire TV Stick 4K Max. Also excellent are the Google Chromecast with Google TV, the Roku Express 4K, the Apple TV 4K and the Amazon Fire TV Stick.

This is a version of the guide above, complete with bonus/optional Alien Universe timeline movies, but free of spoilers.

- Prey (2022)
- Predator (1987)
- Predator 2 (1990)
- Alien vs Predator (2004)
- Alien vs Predator Requiem (2007)
- The Predator (2018)
- Predators (2010)
- Blade Runner (1982)
- Soldier (1998)
- Blade Runner 2049 (2017)
- Prometheus (2008)
- Alien Covenant (2017)
- Alien (1979)

- Aliens (1986)
- Alien 3 (1992)
- Alien Resurrection (1997)
- Optional: Firefly (2002 to 2003 TV series) and Serenity (2005 TV series)

Again, this is a version of the guide above, but free of spoilers and also in the order in which they premiered in theatres or on TV.

- Alien (1979)
- Blade Runner (1982)
- Aliens (1986)
- Predator (1987)
- Predator 2 (1990)
- Alien 3 (1992)
- Alien Resurrection (1997)
- Soldier (1998)
- Optional: Firefly (2002 to 2003 TV series)
- Optional: Serenity (2005 TV series)
- Alien vs Predator (2004)
- Alien vs Predator Requiem (2007)
- Prometheus (2008)
- Predators (2010)
- The Predator (2018)
- Alien Covenant (2017)
- Blade Runner 2049 (2017)
- Prey (2022)

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- What is the best order to watch all the Spider-Man movies?
- What order should you watch the Batman movies and shows?
- What is the best order to watch the James Bond movies?
- What order should you watch the Jason Bourne movies and TV show?
- What is the best order to watch the Rocky and Creed movies?
- What's the best order to watch The Conjuring Universe movies?
- What is the best order to watch all the Spider-Man movies?
- What is the best order to watch the X-Men movies?
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- Upcoming Marvel movies: Every new MCU film and TV show in the works
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Writing by Maggie Tillman.

5.0 out of 5 stars Blood Spattering Brutal Violence! Reviewed in the United States on August 16, 2017

*There may be some spoilers-proceed with caution! I grew up with the original Alien back in the early 80s. The original scares the sh*t out of me, even to this day whenever I watch the original. . .it still gives me the creeps! I have seen ALL of the ALIEN series. . .this particular movie is intended to be a (prequel) to the original ALIEN, and a sequel to Prometheus. For me it did NOT prequel correctly to ALIEN. But as a stand-alone movie I think it was absolutely stunning! With bone crushing, blood spattering attacks, carnage and violence on epic high-end CG effect levels,

composed in the true style of ALIEN...makes for a gripping on the edge movie.*Right from the start, I NOTICED...and did NOT like all the (hipster hoody) wearing crap in this movie! Let's just stick to the true style of ALIEN and stop trying to be all cute and fashionable...doesn't work for this kind of movie...WTF Ridley!?This movie contains excellent back story and character development. The movie attempts to answer most questions and resolves some issues...but kind of skips right over the true story behind the indigenous humanoid beings or the (engineers), they are dead all around this ancient city on the planet. I think Ridley Scott should have went more in-depth on this issue because there are a lot of unanswered questions in this area as it pertains to Prometheus...this part of the story is key, and is where they dropped the ball in my opinion. This was a big budget AAA Film. All movie sets, CG graphics, CG effects, props, make up, and period attire, was absolutely amazing. This is a different kind of ALIEN movie that we have never seen before, with its stunning cinematography and other worldly Sci-fi beauty and grandeur. If you have a surround sound system, you will get rocked by the ground pounding effects from 7.1 HD sound quality. There are no seriously dry or boring areas in this movie, it's filled with a lot of detail and action that will keep you on edge. However I will add, the REAL action or the movie really doesn't start to jump-off until approx. (33 min) in...then once you reach (1 hr. 20 min) into movie, sh*t hits the fan! They spend the first (33 min) setting the movie up for you and various character developments. If you grew up with the original Alien like I did, you will notice little nuisances reminding you of instances from the original, this will be either objects and or theme music or phrases from the original ALIEN...totally love that!My personal thoughts: This movie gave us a lot...but still failed to answer some questions and tie up loose ends, yet they leave this chapter open for yet another sequel. I want to know more about the dead indigenous humanoid race of beings on that planet...as it pertains to Prometheus, those dead beings were called the (engineers). In closing, this movie was damn good...I will give it (5) Stars because of the large production and all of the hard work they put into this movie, I really do appreciate what (Ridley Scott) has done here, and I look forward to the sequel!The Facts:1. Running Time: 2 hrs. 5 min.2. Sound 7.1 HD3. Widescreen4. Excellent story with a climatic ending5. Excellent character development.6. Excellent backstory development.7. Hardcore bone crushing, blood spattering attacks and fights.8. Lots of blood, death and carnage.9. Has some very hardcore action.10. Movie really doesn't start to jump-off until approx. (33 min) into movie.11. Once you reach (1 hr. 20 min) into movie, sh*t hits the fan.12. First (33 min) of movie (slow) due to character development and story set up.13. Left open for a sequel.14. Does NOT answer all questions about the (engineers).15. The Alien (timeline) is totally distorted leaving you more confused.16. Assassins Creed meets Alien? Michael Fassbender played Assassins Creed. Everyone knows the Assassins Creed Character wears (Hoodie-styled) clothing...so it's weird to see the same actor in this movie wearing a "Hoodie," looking like the exact Assassins Creed Character he played in another movie! Not cool...WTF!Thank you!

Reviewed in the United States □□ on August 19, 2017

Five years after Ridley Scott triumphantly returned to the "Alien" franchise that he started with 2012's "Prometheus", the director is back with another chapter in the "Alien" prequel series with 2017's "Alien: Covenant". While technically a continuation of the story that unfolded in the divisive 2012 prequel, "Covenant" manages to strike a more favorable balance between director Scott's desires to push the series in a new direction while paying homage to the series' sci-fi/horror roots that long term fans felt "Prometheus" lacked.

Monsters and buckets of blood abound when the crew of the colony ship Covenant is awoken seven years early from hyper-sleep on their way to a far away planet to start a new human settlement. While making repairs to the ship, the crew intercept a strange transmission coming from a nearby planet that appears on the surface to be an uncharted paradise and a much more favorable location for their new colony. When the crew lands on the planet and track the signal to crashed alien ship, they discover a horror unlike anything they ever imagined, as one by one the crew and colonists are killed gruesomely by the alien creatures that inhabit the planet. The aliens however prove to be a much smaller threat to them when they encounter the android David (Michael Fassbender), survivor of the Prometheus expedition who has been stuck on the planet ever since he crash landed there with Dr. Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace).

After watching "Covenant" in theaters, it was painfully obvious at points in the film that Ridley Scott, and 20th Century Fox, has listened to the cries of disappointed fans that had less than positive remarks about 2012's "Prometheus", a film while flawed in several ways, was a mostly satisfying return to the sci-fi roots of Scott's earlier work, as well as a welcome return to form for the "Alien" franchise. While many fans bemoaned that film's philosophical themes and ponderous tone, as well as the story about the origins of mankind, I found the focus on these new themes and the turn away from the monster violence and action of the previous films to be a welcome change of pace for the franchise, as well as the deepening mythology and exploration of several unanswered mysterious from the 1979 classic original, "Alien". For me, "Prometheus" returned the class and rich tone back to the series, and after leaving theaters, I was eagerly awaiting a follow up.

Flash forward to 2017, it appears that instead of giving fans a proper follow up to Prometheus, Scott and Fox are trying to please all sides of the fan base by returning the titular Xenomorph to the franchise and providing plenty of murderous mayhem, while also continuing the themes of creation and the origin of life that began in the previous film. True to form for the series, the film opens, after an extended prologue featuring David and his creator/father Peter Weyland (Guy Pierce), with the crew of the space colony ship Covenant begin awoken from hypersleep after a neutrino burst damages the ship and kills several crew and colonists, among them Capt. Branson (James Franco in a "blink in you'll miss it" cameo). After the crew mourns their fallen Captain, they set out to repair the ship and resume course to their destination. However, the crew pick up a strange transmission of a mysterious woman singing "Take Me Home (Country Roads)" by John Denver that is coming from a nearby planet. Scans of the planet show that it is seemingly a much better candidate for colonization. Despite objections from terraforming expert Daniels (Katherine Watson), newly appointed Captain Oram (Billy Crudup) decides to investigate to see if the planet is indeed a better settlement. Once

the crew land, they find that they've made a grave mistake.

The first act of the film was for me the freshest and most engaging part of the film, as we are introduced to the cast of the film and explore the Covenant a little bit. While some critics of the film have noted that the characters barely stand out or register as people, I beg to differ. All the actors here manage to deliver, even the one relegated to secondary roles. Waterson, Crudup, and Amy Seimetz, who plays Farris, are all standouts for me. Even Danny McBride, who plays Farris' husband Tennessee, manages to subvert expectations and deliver one of the more nuanced and emotional performances. Daniels, who comes across as a Ripley substitute for some of the more vocal critics of the film, manages to carve out a niche for herself as the more levelheaded and intelligent members of the crew. Make no mistake though, when pushed to the brink, Daniels rises to the challenge and embodies that fierce spirit and fighting energy that Sigourney Weaver managed to pull off so effortlessly as Ripley.

I also loved the colony crew/couples angle the film went with in this area. The film, taking cues from the 1986 classic "Aliens", follows the colony crew as they prepare to set up a human settlement on a far way planet. It was refreshing and made for a more emotionally resonate film, as the deaths of each characters are mourned by their loved ones and friends. Take Daniels for example, who was married to Captain Branson before his death. We get to see her mourn his death and cherish some of their memories and mementos before having to resume her duty to the crew and colonists.

After the crew lands on the planet and traces the signal to the crash Juggernaut from "Prometheus", the tables drastically and horrifically turn on the inexperienced crew, who soon find themselves infected by alien spores that birth new alien creatures not seen before in the saga, to so called Neomorphs. In a particularly gruesome scene, a crew member is infected by an alien spore, and after being rushed back to the landing ship, has a Neomorph burst violently from his back, in an homage to the classic chestbuster scene in the original film. Farris attempts to kill the newborn alien but in the chaos inadvertently blows up the drop ship, thus stranding the crew on the planet. Another crew member births a Neomorph through his throat. After several crew members are killed by the alien creatures, they are scared away by a mysterious cloaked figure. The remaining crew follow the figure to a walled off city littered with thousands of petrified corpses of Engineers. The figure reveals himself as David, survivor of the Prometheus expedition. He reveals that he and Dr. Shaw landed there after fleeing LV-223 and searching for the Engineer homeworld. When they arrived, the Juggernaut unleashed the deadly black pathogen upon the populace and in the resulting chaos, the ship crashed, killing Dr. Shaw. While David seems welcoming at first, Daniels and Walter, David's android counterpart for the Covenant, distrust him from the beginning.

This second act of the film is where "Covenant" embraces its "Prometheus" connections and follows up more on the events of that film, filling us in on what became of David and Shaw after their flight from LV-233. The interactions between Walter and David are by far the highlights of the film, as David displays a rabid fascination with Walter, while Walter himself is more reserved and intrigued by the fate of Dr. Shaw. We see David sorrowfully tell Walter how he misses and loved Shaw and wished she were still with him. This is a fantastic portrayal of artificial intelligence, and raises many questions about the nature of creation and robotics. It nicely connects with the prologue from the beginning of the film, and furthers the development of David's character arc that started in "Prometheus". The film makes many references to "Paradise Lost" and Fassbender himself quotes "Ozymandias", an attempt no doubt by Scott to retain the philosophical tone of "Prometheus". It mostly works in this film, though it stands in sharp contrast with the final act and the sci-fi/horror tone the rest of the film has.

However, it is also here that the film commits it's cardinal sin in my opinion, in regards to its treatment of Dr. Shaw. Her arc in "Prometheus" was that film's emotional core and backbone, and we later find out she was killed in the interim between "Prometheus" and "Covenant". Along with "Alien 3", this continues the franchises sad history of discarding its best characters for the sake of introducing new ones. It is a stab in the back to both Noomi Rapace, who is sorely missed here, and the fans of "Prometheus" that waited five years to see what became of her and David. While Rapace did reprise her role in the promotional short film "The Crossing", none of that footage is featured in the film. Shaw's dog-tags, found by the Covenant crew in the crashed Juggernaut have more screen time than Rapace does. Had said footage been included in the film, it would have certainly softened the blow, while providing a suitable send off for the character. The later reveal of what actually happened to her hammers the point home, but more on that in a moment.

The Neomorph is shown to follow the Covenant crew into the Engineer city, and resume its murderous killing spree. After coming across the creature interacting with David, Oram kills the Neomorph, to which David violently and emotionally reacts to. After luring Oram into a room filled with the classic facehugger eggs, David watches in delight as Oram is attacked by said creature and is horrifically killed when a chestbuster is born from him. It is at this point that Daniels and Walter, both unnerved by David's actions and presence, both independently come across evidence of David's experiments with Engineer technology and the black pathogen, revealing that David is the creator of the classic Xenomorph. Walter himself also come across Shaw's mutilated and dissected body, to which David reveals he killed her in order to use her body to create the "perfect specimen", in another homage to "Alien".

This was a major bone of contention with many long term fans of the franchise. While many argue that the reveal of the Xenomorph's origins robs the said creatures of their mysterious nature and ability to terrify, I'd argue that those had long since been taken away from the franchise after years of exposure and their continued popularity within mainstream media. The long line of subpar installments in the franchise before "Prometheus" also contributed to this. For me, not only was this a natural extension of David's arc from "Prometheus", it provides further extension of the new mythology of the prequel series, something "Covenant" mostly skips by on. One can only keep something dark and mysterious forever before it becomes stale and boring. By providing us with answers, we can now explore new sides of the Xenomorphs and the series as a whole. It also fits in quite well with the themes of life and creation the series has thus far been centered around. The only gripe I have with this is once again the treatment of Dr. Shaw, whose body is used by David to aid him in the creation of the aliens. This was not the way to end her character arc and it will now forever be a missed opportunity and an example of "what could have been". It does provide a layer of dark irony however, as Dr. Shaw noted she was unable to "create life" due to her being infertile, and now David has corrupted her body to give birth to a race of creatures that would kill hundreds if not thousands of people later in the saga.

David and Walter square off, with David seemingly gaining the upper hand and dispatches Walter. He then sets his sights on Daniels, who has

uncovered David's drawings of Shaw and finds out the horrible truth of what happened to her. Promising to do to her what he did to Shaw, David attempts to murder Daniels but is rescued by Walter, who is revealed to have upgraded healing capabilities to David's surprise. Walter fends off David long enough for Daniels to escape with the only other surviving crew member, Sergeant Lope (Demián Bichir), who was attacked by another facehugger but was saved by another crew member only to be killed by the now fully grown adult Xenomorph. Back on the Covenant, Tennessee manages to deploy the second terraforming drop-ship to rescue Lope and Daniels, but is intercepted by the Xenomorph, who climbs aboard the ship. Walter also emerges, seemingly survived his encounter with David and is rescued by the crew. As the drop ship is taking off, the crew notice the alien has followed them, and Daniels tethers herself to the ship and attempts to kill the alien.

This sequence is probably the best action set piece of the entire film, and had me on the edge of my seat the entire time. Waterson shows off some commendable acting chops as she single handily takes on the alien. Ripley would be very proud. The only complaints I have with this scene is that some of the CGI used to recreate the alien is rather spotty and sticks out like a sore thumb. I was told that during most of the production, practical effects and stuntmen were used on set. It is disappointing to see, like so many other would be blockbusters, that the hard work put in by the special effects team has been painted over by CGI. Although it does allow us to see the alien from a new perspective not seen in the previous films, the effects do not hold up nearly as well as they did in the older films. Bad CGI looks like bad CGI and completely takes me out of the film.

Daniels manages to lure the alien into some of the terraforming equipment and incinerates it. Overjoyed and seemingly out of danger, the crew returns to the Covenant to mourn their fallen crew members and resume course to their original destination. However, it seems despite only being briefly attached to the facehugger, Lope has given birth to another Xenomorph which quickly grows to full size and kills the last two remaining crew members besides Tennessee and Daniels in a violent and bloody shower sequence. While some derided this scene as being too similar to slasher film, the horror film lover inside me loved and squealed in delight. Daniels and Tennessee, with Walter's help, begin tracking the Xenomorph aboard the Covenant in what is mostly a condensed remake of the original Alien.

This is the part of the film where Scott and Fox most obviously tried to appease fans of the series that were disappointed by the lack of monster violence in "Prometheus". While I do appreciate the homages throughout the rest of the film to the original "Alien", here it comes across much more cliché and unoriginal. It was as if Scott, unsure of how to end the film, just decided to remake his original film in the attempt that it would win over fans that otherwise would prefer a classic "Alien" film. Fox is also to blame here as well, as they no doubt pressured Scott to include more familiar elements of the franchise in the film to ensure its success. The CGI used on the Xenomorph is probably the worst in some of these sequences, adding even more insult to injury. However, it eventually pays off in the climax as the Xenomorph is lured to the loading dock, and in what is probably the scariest sequence of the film, the alien obsessively pursues Daniels with such single minded determination that we are finally able to fear the xenomorph again. Seriously, the sequence where the alien tears through the terraforming equipment, trying to get to Daniels gave me chills. Still, after the more "Prometheus" like second act and that wonderful first act, you can't help but feel slightly let down by Scott, as a director of his caliber should have fought harder to retain his original vision.

Anyway, after luring the Xenomorph to the loading dock, Tennessee manages to open the airlock and send the alien, who has been impaled by some terraforming machinery plummeting out of the ship and down to the planet below. Finally able to rest for the first time in the film, Daniels and Tennessee prepare themselves to reenter hypersleep for the voyage to their new home. As Walter helps Daniels get into her hypersleep chamber, it is here where the film reveals its final twist; Walter is actually David, who killed Walter and took his place. Daniels realizes this too late, as she is already inside her sleep chamber, and can only scream in horror as David puts her back into stasis. For a film that goes above and beyond in its attempts to scare the audience, this was probably the single most chilling scene in the entire film. Now that the entire ship and crew along with the colonists still in hypersleep are completely at David's mercy, Daniels is powerless as this corrupted creation of mankind seals her fate and the rest of the ships as well. David will no doubt make good on his threat to do to Daniels what he did to Shaw. David then returns to the chamber containing the sleeping colonists, and regurgitates two facehugger embryos that he was storing inside his body, and places them into a cryo-storage unit containing other human embryos. David then makes one final transmission as Walter to the Weyland-Yutani Corporation, stating that the entire crew minus Daniels and Tennessee died in the neutrino blast, and the ship remains on course for its original destination, thus ending the film on a dark and bleak note.

The film both succeeds and fails because of Ridley Scott. His trademark photography and grand, visual style remain intact, as well as his broad sweeping themes that were so integral to "Prometheus". The picture is probably the most visually appealing and beautifully shot of the entire series, and carries with it a tone of pure menace and foreboding like no film before it. The film's score, composed by series newcomer Jed Kurzel is breathtakingly beautiful and a highlight of the entire franchise, probably my favorite since Elliot Goldenthal's score for "Alien 3". The reprisal of the main theme from "Alien" as well as "Prometheus" helped establish a connective tissue between all three films, and the new themes written for the film stand out as well among the rest of the score. The bleak, woodwind based score and sound helped greatly contribute to the film's tone and foreboding themes. The "Alien Covenant Theme" and "Dead Civilization" stand out as highlights of the score. However, the mishmash of tones and Scott's forced hand at including some of the more iconic touchstones of the franchise as a whole hurt the film and prevent it from standing on its own in the franchise. This is entirely Scott's fault, as he had to contend with not only the studio but the scores of fans as well. The film doesn't always work when combining the tones and themes from "Prometheus" and the rest of the series, but when it works, it truly shines. It's not a perfect film by any means of the word, but I for one loved it and will gladly be in theaters for the follow up, assuming Fox allows Scott to wrap up this exciting and multidimensional prequel series.

Reviewed in the United States ☐☐ on August 8, 2017

ALIEN:COVENANT (2017) had the deck stacked against it going in. It had the arduous task of both trying to live up to Ridley Scott's more revered '79 Alien masterpiece as well as James Cameron's widely acclaimed action sequel, '86 Aliens, PLUS it had to both somewhat make up for Scott's dubious '12 prequel Prometheus with its mixed reaction. Prometheus was a movie that was hyped to the hilt and made a ton of money, but alternated between being hailed some ethereal "people just don't get it" masterpiece (a la 2001) versus a pretentious, bloated, flashy, terribly acted CGI exercise that was nothing more than hot garbage. Count me in the latter group! LOL I really dislike Prometheus and can't get past it's

utterly stupid characterizations which sank the film for me. At the end of the day, I think character trumps CGI, something I randomly preach in my reviews. I'll take character over effects any day of the week and twice on Sunday. For myself, in terms of characters, Alien:Covenant absolutely craps on Prometheus for the simple fact that not a single character in Covenant ANNOYED me, while virtually every single character in Prometheus accomplished that dubious feat!

To me, Covenant is the 2nd best Alien film (minority opinion, I know) and it's not really saying much as Scott's '79 film Alien is one of the great multi-genre (sci-fi, horror, thriller, character study) of all time. The overrated '86 sequel Aliens is just an abrasive summer action flick, nothing more. Then there's the underwhelming Alien3 and Alien:Resurrection. And of course the massive disappointment Prometheus. So Covenant didn't have much to overcome. What Covenant did that Prometheus failed to do is keep it simple: simple story, simple characters, simple plot and in doing so, culminates in a very re-watchable, enjoyable summer movie experience. Also, unlike Prometheus, Covenant actually makes me look forward to the next sequel!

Covenant starts with a prologue sequence of the creation of the android David (the best character from Prometheus, reprised by the great Michael Fassbender) in the early 21st century by billionaire Peter Weyland (well played in esteemed fashion by Guy Pearce, also reprising his role, but this time as the young version of Weyland). Peter and David converse about the human condition and the irony that even though Weyland created him, David will actually live forever while Weyland is destined to expire, like all humans. Flash forward to the early 22nd century and the colonial spaceship Covenant, maintained on its way to the habitable Origae-6 planetary system by the ship's synthetic being Walter (also played by Fassbender in a completely believable dual role). The ship encounters a solar flare which causes its life-support systems to malfunction, compelling Walter to get the ship's main computer "Mother" to awake the 14-member crew from cryosleep and fix the ship, which is also carrying 2000 colonists still in cryosleep and over 1000 embryos for building a new world. With the incident causing the original Captain's cryotube to fail and burn up, the leadership role is taken over by Captain Oram (excellently played by veteran actor Billy Crudup). Oram is a man of faith and a bit shaken by the incident and unsure of if the crew trusts his leadership style. The 2nd-in-command is the feisty Daniels (strongly played by Katherine Waterston), the wife of the original captain who must soldier on without her husband. Rounding out the main characters are down-to-earth ship's pilot Tennessee (winningly played by Danny McBride), stalwart crew biologist and Oram's wife Karine (stolidly played by Carmen Ejogo), crew shuttle pilot and Tennessee's wife Faris (confidently played by Amy Seimetz), security team leader Sergeant Lope (cheekily played by Demian Bichir), and married crew co-pilots Upworth and Ricks (solidly played by Callie Hernandez and Jussie Smollett).

Upon repairing the ship, the crew discovers a transmission on a nearby (and apparently life-sustaining) planet and go to investigate the distress signal as well as research and map out the planet as a permanent home in lieu of traveling for another 7 years to Origae-6. Upon touching down, the planet at first appears perfect, but as the group further investigates, it's not long before things turn out to good to be true, and the group runs into trouble and must navigate their way out of it somehow. Surprisingly, the film has a healthy amount of action and the scenes are all tense and edge-of-your-seat. The aliens are pretty intimidating and agile in this as Covenant combines elements from the 3 most popular films of the franchise Alien, Aliens, and Prometheus. Yet I feel as if Covenant stands well on its own as an entertaining horror-thriller-action movie. I feel as if Covenant took the "less is more" approach and succeeded in spades!

I had to re-watch Covenant (glad to do it) to realize how perfectly modulated the supporting performances were and how in sync the actors played off each other to resonate as a real crew. Just subtle things showed these people had known each other for a long time and I liked the way their rather by-the-numbers dialogue bounced off each other very naturally. While Fassbender easily stole the show as Walter/David (doesn't he always?), the rest of the actors should be commended for being very natural in their performances, unlike the characters in Prometheus who felt like cardboard cutout cartoons most of the time. I think the people roasting this movie for bad performances and weak, stupid characters do it a major disservice. I think they are conflating it too much with Prometheus, which is an abomination in terms of both character and acting. The characters in Covenant behaved very real to me, the way they reacted to the rather crazy circumstances they encountered. The shocks, the jump scares, the reactions all felt genuine. I might say that I tend to agree that the CGI wasn't the greatest, but as I've repeatedly said, I'll take character over CGI anyway and for me, the characters worked in this film, along with many other elements that kept it entertaining from start to finish. I would say this movie is underrated and give it a few years and people will re-visit Covenant as the deserving addition to the Alien franchise it truly is.

4.0 out of 5 stars Watch it and make your own mind up

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on October 1, 2017

I'm quite annoyed with myself for listening to all the negative reviews. I'm a big fan of the Alien films and sci fi generally. But because I read a number of bad reviews on IMDB and such like, I didn't go and see it in the cinema. My loss. Re-reading some of those reviews, I think they were venting because they wanted more of the horror / suspense element of Aliens and while there is some of that, it is not Aliens 2.1. I also don't understand all the criticism that the crew made outrageously stupid decisions. Probably the only one that really stands out for me is not wearing any kind of protective breathing apparatus when landing on an alien unexplored world. Did they never watch War of the Worlds ! But you can overthink these things - its entertainment guys.

Alright the plot is not going to win any Oscar nominations and as much as we would love it to be, it won't be entering the list of cult sci-fi classics. But in my opinion it's certainly not deserving of the many negative reviews out there on the internet and delivers a nice tie in with Prometheus and the whole unfolding backdrop to the story.

Watch it and make your own mind up. It actually gets a 4.5 from me.

5.0 out of 5 stars What Prometheus should have been!

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on September 26, 2017

I don't get where all the hate for this movie comes from. I also don't recognise the story flaws or stupid decisions made by the crew the other reviewers keep mentioning. In fact I found the story and script of this movie fantastic and vastly improved over Prometheus. Also the crew is much more relatable and the movie itself much better cast. Gone is Prometheus' sterile look and the new military look suits this movie extremely well. Jed Kurzel delivered a great score contrary to Streitenfeld's drab contribution to Prometheus. I had a blast watching this movie and can only hope the franchise continues like this. What a great movie!

2.0 out of 5 stars Space Junk

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on September 22, 2021

Apart from the silly, needless epilogue, 'Prometheus' was good. Thoughtful and creepy - the most you can expect from modern 'blockbuster' sci-fi.

'Covenant' is the opposite. Muddled, hysterical . . . and far more damagingly, Giger's skulking, slavering creation just isn't scary any more.

It's been dissected, deconstructed and over-exposed to such an extent, there's little left. It's mutations (the 'Predalien' . . . ??) don't excite or grip. It's become an over-familiar cash-cow. I'm pretty sure old Ridley's only passion as he goes through the motions is looking forward to his extremely expensive rocking chair.

The numbers of writers, story by, based on characters created by, etc, (6 here!) gives the game away. The scripts are being rewritten over and over in an attempt to regain the spark the first two movies had, but the new angle - successful to a degree in 'Prometheus' - remains elusive. Maybe the next (final?) film will have such colossal revelations that we'll all lose our heads in awe - but don't put your house on it.

As before, Fassbinder is excellent, there's top fx, and the gore/vomit ratio is ramped up, but as anyone with half an inkling can see, this just mists over some very large craters.

Worth the £1:50 used, I paid for it . . .?Maybe. Any hope for the franchise . . .?Ditto.

3.0 out of 5 stars Seems like a Roger Corman film

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on April 10, 2022

Covenant is an example of how Ridley Scott can turn a massive budget into a low-budget Roger Corman knockoff film. This movie (and its predecessor, Prometheus) is a hot mess, not a horror. The prologue to Covenant (the dialogue scene in the bland white room) should have been the opening sequence to Prometheus, as I think it's more relevant for that film's story than Covenant's. And David's memory flashback scene of the Engineers' ship arriving to the Engineers' homeworld (and the ensuing holocaust), should have been the opening sequence to Covenant to act as a bridge or audience "catch-up" between the two films. Just like the first Alien movie Scott made, we have in this film a rehash of scared, dumb humans in a spaceship who encounter a mysterious signal which they investigate. Their investigation leads them to a derelict planet and, surprise! surprise! to their ultimate doom. I guess Scott is trying to conjure some of that old magic that made Alien a mega hit back in the day. But, unfortunately, he fumbled it with this instalment of the franchise, as there's no kickass heroine Sigourney Weaver to save the movie as a final girl (only a Ripley-wannabe whose weak character is a bland sock-puppet). There seemed a lot of promise to showing a backstory of the 'Space Jockey' from the first Alien film (though no one actually asked for it!). It's just that after watching both Prometheus and Covenant movies, we still haven't seen much to make us give a figs about them at all. I'd like to shake Ridley Scott by the shoulders and ask him 'Where's that genius that gave us Alien, Blade Runner and Legend?' But like George Lucas, he's too old and past his prime as a director; the genius has left him. Watch it, like it, hate it, or whatever, it's your choice.

3.0 out of 5 stars More of the same

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on December 16, 2018

Covenant is a decent film. While of course it doesn't come anywhere close to the original, it's slightly better than Prometheus.

Covenant ticks all the boxes without particularly excelling at anything. There is a decent amount of action, a smattering of gore, and a mediocre plot that keeps things chugging along. But you've seen it all before, and the film doesn't deviate from the same formula used in the other instalments. It also lacks tension which is criminal for an Alien film.

The characters are forgettable, with Fassbender's Android being by far the most interesting (says it all really), and the writing is lazy as evidenced by some completely brain dead decision making.

The only thing that gives Covenant any sort of individuality is with regards to the overarching mythology, which is moved on despite being under explained and a little bit odd. This is a shame because I think with better writers they could have created a much stronger franchise.

As it stands we have yet another mediocre film advancing a mediocre mythology. The special effects on the whole are quite good, although some of the alien/neomorph CGI is unconvincing in my opinion. It's a 3 star film and if you're ok with that you should enjoy it.