

# 'Pitch Black' simple sci-fi film

By Samuel McKewon  
Senior editor

There is a simple appreciation I have for the motivations of "Pitch Black," a marginal yet enjoyable piece of science fiction.

Its director, David Twohy, who previously directed the "The Arrival," reaches no further than his grasp in this movie. A spaceship crashes on a desolate planet, there are a few survivors and they have to battle some winged beasts, along with each other. And eventually, they'll have to escape because there is no way in hell they're killing all the winged beasts. And that's the movie.

Sure, "Pitch Black" throws in one neat twist: Its lead character, Riddick (Vin Diesel), is an escaped con who can see in the dark and has little love for anyone on the ship.

## REVIEW Pitch Black

**STARRING:** Vin Diesel, Cole Hauser  
**DIRECTOR:** David Twohy  
**RATED:** R (blood, guts and aliens)  
**GRADE:** B  
**FIVE WORDS:** Meaningless, "Pitch Black" still fun

It is Riddick whom the surviving passengers fear the most, especially after his bounty hunter, Johns (Cole Hauser), yammers on about him for a while.

Along with Johns, the surviving pilot (Radha Mitchell) and a few other stragglers, played by unknowns, wander around the desert looking for a way off the planet, searching for

Riddick and staring at some mighty strange-looking rock formations.

Over time, they all find out what those rock formations mean. And they find a possible way off the planet. But not before the monsters show up for some fun.

All these scripts play out the same, and "Pitch Black" is a retread of "Alien," along with many other beast-related movies like it. Diesel has a few good moments as the rebel without a soul, and I liked Rhiana Griffith as the teenager along for the trip. This movie is not about the acting.

It is about the look, and Twohy gives the planet a good once-over—bathing it in high-intensity yellow and blue, reminiscent of "Three Kings." And when the suns finally go out because of a solar eclipse, Twohy handles darkness with visual flair, too.

We never quite see the aliens completely, but they're highly unkind

creatures who enjoy human blood. And since it's pretty well established that there's no way to kill them all, "Pitch Black" becomes a question of who will live, rather than who will die.

It answers its questions and ends. It's fine diversionary discourse because it aims no higher. And that's just fine with me.



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