



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 4, 2013

Gravity: a Chilling, Tensely Gripping Film

The chilling new film *Gravity* grips the audience with a nightmarish scenario high above the Earth, where astronauts Matt Kowalski (George Clooney) and Ryan Stone (Sandra Bullock) are stranded. The powerful and tense plot and unique visual features rivet the audience as they empathize with the two astronauts in what appears to be an almost hopeless situation.



It's about maintaining one's composure and finding one's faith when very little hope appears to exist.

As the film opens, Kowalski, Stone, and several other astronauts have embarked on an incredible journey 200 to 400 miles above the Earth.

The trip seems routine for Kowalski, who as a career astronaut is familiar with the loneliness and chill that characterize space. On the other hand, Ryan —new to the scene — is literally sickened by the weightlessness, and disquieted by the vast emptiness surrounding her.

Ryan's state of mind is already unsteadied, as she is still grieving the recent loss of her daughter in a freak accident. She also harbors a fear of the unknown, which being in space does little to quell. In fact, it's not long before Ryan finds that her fear is well-founded.

While working outside their craft, Ryan, Matt, and another astronaut learn that a meteorite has crashed into a satellite and that the debris from the crash is not far away. They attempt to rush their procedures, but it is too late. Their space shuttle is destroyed by the orbiting debris, killing the rest of their crew, including the third astronaut who had been working with them outside the ship.

So now Ryan and Matt are stranded outside their ship in their spacesuits. With Ryan's air running out, they have just one option: to reach the International Space Station approximately 100 miles away, where there is an emergency spacecraft, and possibly a radio.

It would mark the first time that anyone has attempted such a dangerous and frightening trip through space. The risks are heightened by the fact that the debris from the meteorite continues to float around in orbit.

Ryan's terrifying drama is like a physical manifestation of her emotional and mental turmoil. The abandonment she feels in space mirrors the sense of abandonment she feels in the loss of her daughter. The darkness inside herself seems even more intense than that of space.

In fact, Ryan is fully prepared to embrace death when it seems imminent. But as it turns out, there may be more in store for her and Kowalski.

Ryan's harrowing drama is made a bit easier by Matt, who manages to remain relatively calm and collected. He hides his own fear and keeps her talking and distracted from their plight, pointing to the awe-inspiring view of space and asking about her life back home.

His confidence and positive attitude begin to help Ryan overcome her fears, as well as her devastation



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at the death of her daughter.

The powerful interaction between Ryan and Matt offers a glimpse into humanity, and the audience is shown what people are capable of doing for one another when the situation calls for sacrifice and bravery.

Ryan's fears force her to confront her own lack of faith, and she begins to regret the fact that no one ever taught her how to pray. However, she indicates that she hopes to see her deceased daughter soon, revealing some belief in an afterlife.

But just as Ryan seems to be prepared to give up, she experiences something that can only be classified as a miracle, particularly since it is the final driving force behind her decision to fight for her life.

There is also a moment in the film when a picture of the infant Jesus can be seen, making it difficult to pretend that there is no spirituality in the film.

The spirituality is not overt, but there is a sense for moviegoers that they are meant to consider their own faith in life's most trying moments. In the end, there is something that compels us to keep going, something that gives us the strength to forge ahead, and most of us are able to recognize it as God's grace.

Ryan later experiences a rebirth, and seems to have learned to embrace faith. She learns that it is in life's most difficult moments that people often discover their true strength, and the love of others.

Bullock and Clooney both deliver award-worthy performances. One cannot help but empathize with Ryan's pain, artfully displayed in Bullock's performance. And Clooney's easy likeability naturally draws in the audience.

The movie's special effects are ingenious and remarkable buttresses to the enthralling storyline.

Gravity's appeal is that it is completely unique in comparison to other films in its genre. The very notion of being trapped in open space, spinning uncontrollably amidst careening debris, is arguably one of the most frightening scenarios one can comprehend.

But as commanding as this film is, it is not for younger audiences. The stranded-in-space scenario and certain gory moments would likely frighten them. Additionally, there are some incidents of profanity.

For adults, however, *Gravity* is a gripping film that highlights the fragility of life and the wonder of creation. It teaches an important lesson about the beauty of life and the tragedy of letting it slip away.



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