

Blow your mind with Jupiter Ascending



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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From the mindscape of the creators of The Matrix comes the mind-blowing science fiction action adventure Jupiter Ascending.

A spectacular fantasy from writer-directors Lana and Andy Wachowski, this vibrant and action packed epic takes you on a thrilling rollercoaster ride from the streets of Chicago to far-flung galaxies whirling through space.

Mila Kunis is the Royal Damsel in Distress, who was born under a night sky, with signs predicting that she was destined for great things. Her dull and uninspiring life of being a minion changes drastically when Channing Tatum, as a genetically engineered ex-military hunter, arrives on Earth to track her down and give her a glimpse of the fate that has been waiting for her all along - her genetic signature marks her as next in line for an extraordinary inheritance that could alter the balance of the cosmos.



A complicated and intricate adventure

It's a complicated and intricate adventure, filled with bizarre creatures, dazzling visual splendour and awesome thrills - if you are prone to motion sickness or afraid of heights, beware, as Jupiter Ascending in its 3D incarnation will have you on the edge of your seat as you skyrocket through space, surf through the skies of big cities, and plunge into the abyss of the universe from 100-storey buildings.

Filmmakers Lana and Andy Wachowski once again invite audiences into uncharted territory and fantastic new worlds with

Jupiter Ascending. Their first original science fiction action adventure since The Matrix Trilogy, it reveals a universe in which the Earth is just one small piece of the vast machinery of galactic commerce- a prize, about to be seized and stripped of its most precious resource: humanity.

"I can't even remember a time when alien intelligence or the potential inherent in the vastness of space didn't fascinate us," says Lana Wachowski. "Who didn't love Carl Sagan's Cosmos? And the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey had such a profound impact on us. But as storytellers, what got us excited about that potential was answering the question: 'If someone else is out there, and they know about us, why don't they want us to know about them?'"

Written, directed and produced by the Wachowskis, Jupiter Ascending is conceptually sci-fi but encompasses elements of their other favourite genres. A thriller and an action epic, it is also, at its core, a love story between two people who would never have met if not for one extraordinary event that might only happen once in centuries, if it happens at all: a Recurrence, a human born with a gene pattern that's an exact duplicate of one that has already existed.

Recurrence

Jupiter Jones is a Recurrence. Her genetic profile has been identified as a match for a woman who, before her mysterious death, controlled one of the most dominant ruling families in the universe. This makes Jupiter, despite her humble upbringing, the beneficiary of unfathomable wealth and the pivotal figure in a monumental power struggle, with the Earth set in its crosshairs.

To the family's existing heirs, it just makes her a target.

Beginning in present-day Chicago and traversing the cosmos, Jupiter Ascending offers a breathtaking panorama, at turns majestic and menacing, as one young woman, plucked from the most ordinary life, comes to terms with a regal identity she never knew, and the risks and responsibilities that come with it - not just for herself but for everyone she loves and every human being on her planet. In the process, she may find not only her true strength and purpose, but, possibly, the love of her life.

"It's so smart and amazing and so much fun," says Mila Kunis, who stars as the title character, Jupiter Jones, the unwitting genetic heir to a family that, quite literally, rules the world. "There's a lot of action, and a beautiful love story, and even though it takes places in the most fantastical settings, everything feels so tangible and real. Also, there's a fair amount of sharp humour, which I love."

"Lana and Andy Wachowski create from a molecular level to the expanse of the universe," says Channing Tatum, starring opposite Kunis as Caine Wise, a professional tracker sent to Earth by one of the three Abrasax siblings to capture Jupiter Jones once her gene print and heritage are verified. Caine doesn't know the reason for his mission, which is immediately complicated by a gang of bounty hunters determined to capture Jupiter themselves, at any cost. "He is trying to figure out why all of this is happening, and has to make a decision whether to protect her or give her up," Tatum says.



A splice of wolf DNA

Almost fully human but for a splice of wolf DNA that both enhances his skills and limits his prospects for a normal life, Caine becomes Jupiter's protector as he comes to understand who she really is and what's at stake if the people who want her neutralised are successful.

Whether drawing audiences into an aerial firefight between rival alien bounty hunters across Chicago's night sky, or launching them into the far reaches of space, these are filmmakers who do not hold back. Producer Grant Hill, their producing partner since *The Matrix Reloaded*, knows well: "What excites them is the challenge of it and the immense scale of a film like this, its look and design. The spectacle of it is just magnificent and that was very much the intent: a big, broad spectrum sci-fi movie."

"The Wachowskis are known for their innovation and imagination," Hill further notes, "but it's not spectacle for its own sake. It always serves the story, and, in this case, that means traveling through several wholly individual realms, each of which had to be created with its own life forms and technologies, and each with its own ways to transport people through space and wage these momentous battles."



The filmmakers' purpose in setting so vast a stage is to frame the revelation to a shaken and incredulous Jupiter that humanity did not originate on Earth, and that her planet is part of a much larger enterprise and social order that dates back more than a billion years. It's an asset among many, currently owned by the formidable Balem Abrasax, as played by Eddie Redmayne. Though they sprang from the same DNA eons ago, the Abrasax family represents a culture so evolutionarily advanced that they now view the human population on Earth as no more than livestock, a cash crop they can cultivate for their own purposes. And harvest.

As shocking as this is to Jupiter, so is the knowledge that she somehow holds the key to controlling all of it. But in order to accomplish all that lies ahead, Jupiter must sweep aside the doubts and the limitations she has always accepted. She needs to find the courage and the focus to stride forward and claim her birthright, despite all the odds against her, and be the person she was clearly meant to be.

A family of villains

"Stories are only as good as their villains," says Lana. "In this case, we hit upon the idea of a family of villains that were a distorted reflection of Jupiter's own family. We are all guilty, like the Abrasax and Bolotnikov families, of using or extorting each other. We all have put ourselves before others and have valued status and wealth more than we should. Despite the scale of outer space, it was important that the characters remain human, reflecting the best and worst of us."

"Jupiter doesn't have superpowers," says Kunis. "She doesn't know how to shoot a gun. She's just an average girl who's thrown into this environment and has to figure it out."

"Like a lot of us," Kunis adds, "Jupiter is one of those people who doesn't know if she's worth more or can achieve more, or if there's even any more to life than what she's been dealt. She's been kind of sleepwalking her way through it until someone or something comes along to shake her up. I think many people can relate to that moment in their lives. I certainly can. Sometimes you don't know which path to take or even what road you're on until something happens to make you realise there's more to life than this."



A mad, impossible journey

Says Lana: "We wanted to tell a story of a mad, impossible journey that leads her as far away as anyone could ever go, only to return to her own sense of 'home,' and the realisation of what is important to her."

"After our decade-long sojourn through The Matrix Trilogy," she continues, "I read The Odyssey over Thanksgiving at my parents' house. Then we watched The Wizard of Oz, and I was struck by the similarities of these two stories, especially in their concept of 'home'. Home is a centre of gravity and one of the ways we understand ourselves. Coming home makes us think about the ways we've changed and the ways we've stayed the same. That was the light-bulb moment when Andy and I first started thinking about Jupiter Jones as a woman who is unhappy, who feels trapped by the drudgery of her life, and who goes off into space and learns things about herself - like so many people who are unhappy with their lives and who go on journeys in search of what they want or need, only to return with a new perspective and appreciation for where they come from."

Better working together

But Jupiter doesn't make this journey alone. She has Caine. It doesn't take them long to realise that however strong they are as individuals they are even better working together, and it's not a small task they are facing. Once they understand the full extent of the Abrasax agenda, it's not only the fate of the Earth but of countless other planets and lives at stake.

The more Jupiter and Caine are drawn into the circles of power, and the more they learn about the true nature of their existence and the horror of the coming harvest, "Jupiter Ascending" raises some of the questions that have captivated us forever. As Andy Wachowski suggests: "It touches on the idea of who we are and where we fit in the universe; whether we are alone or whether there is life on other planets."

What if everything you believed about life on Earth was wrong? What if someone else is out there and what part do we truly play in the greater machinery of the cosmos?

Says Tatum: "Lana and Andy created a world that will open your mind to the possibility that we are just a very small grain of sand on an enormous beach."

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