

The Fantastic Four: First Steps: 'Pleasant Enough' But Lacks Tension

The Fantastic Four: First Steps - Marvel Studios and Disney's The Fantastic Four: First Steps looks a lot like DC's Superman. Here's a look at the latest Fantastic Four storyline.

Marvel Studios and Disney's The Fantastic Four: First Steps looks a lot like DC's Superman on its opening day: an estimated \$56 million on Friday and a three-day total of around \$125 million in the US.



1. Fantastic Four: First Steps
2. Director: Matt Shakman
3. Cast: Pedro Pascal, Vanessa Kirby, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Joseph Quinn, Julia Garner
4. Duration: 1 hour 55 minutes

Review of the movie The Fantastic Four: First Steps

Despite great performances from Pedro Pascal and other actors and an engaging plot, this nostalgic vision of Marvel's future just isn't compelling enough.

Producers make all sorts of claims about their films. But Marvel superhero series producer Kevin Feige was right when he called **The Fantastic Four: First Steps** 'a movie that requires no homework.' That's a relief. This time, you don't have to scour Wikipedia to learn about the characters' complicated and back-breaking histories. That's one of the strengths of this standalone film.

Additionally, the film benefits greatly from a cast that plays their roles realistically in unbelievable situations, especially Pedro Pascal as brilliant scientist Reed Richards and Ebon Moss-Bachrach as his best friend Ben, aka The Thing, a giant man made of stone. However, how much you enjoy this film may depend on whether you enjoy spending a few hours at a theme park, as this cute Disney movie does.

The subtitle "First Steps" says a lot about Fantastic Four - this movie is like a warm-up, introducing characters who will become key players in the MCU.

The Fantastic Four effectively sets up the superhero story. Mark Gatiss plays a cheerful talk show host who introduces the team by reminding the audience what happened four years ago. The four were on a mission in space when a cosmic disturbance changed the team's DNA. Richards, in addition to his natural talent, now has elasticity. His wife, Sue Storm (Vanessa Kirby), can project force fields from her hands and also turn invisible. Her brother, Johnny (Joseph Quinn), becomes the Human Torch, who can turn into a flying flame. And Ben looks exactly like his cousin Richie from "Bear" until he becomes a super-strong, rock-hard being, a permanent state. Now, for some reason, they all live together, saving the world when necessary. They also set up a humanitarian fund, and it seems like Sue used it to bring about global peace, but that detail was very quick, as part of a beautiful scene.



The first comic featuring these characters appeared in 1961, and the film's aesthetic is rooted in that era, right down to the Fantastic Four's identical blue uniforms and '60s-style white boots. This isn't a world where SpaceX or Blue Origin (the space ventures of today's real-life billionaires) are just a passing thought. This is a land of flying cars, a tiny robot named HERBIE who helps around the house, and the square screens of early televisions. For all his scientific prowess—he's just discovered a way to teleport objects—Reed still writes his equations on a blackboard. If you've ever caught a glimpse of the old TV shows *The Jetsons* or *Lost in Space*, which ran around the same time as the first Fantastic Four comics, you'll recognize this cartoonish space-age future.

Family is the main theme of the film, even more so than saving humanity. Early in the film, Sue learns she is pregnant. Worried about being a father, Reed uses HERBIE to protect the house and lab from children. Johnny and Ben are sometimes funny characters, but always excited to be uncles.

But soon, Earth needs saving from a space monster called Galactus, a giant in armor with glowing eyes who survives by devouring planets. He sends a messenger, the Silver Surfer, to announce his plan to devour Earth. In motion capture, Julia Garner plays the Surfer, a lithe metallic figure—the film's most exquisite and brilliant visual effect—with whom Johnny immediately falls in love.

As the plot & action kicks in, the film feels like a children's adventure story in its simplicity, although oddly enough it also includes Sue going into labor in space, as the group chases Galactus and is chased by the Surfer. The main effects are swirls of light and Johnny in flames flying across the screen. True to Marvel's action style, the film is somewhat simplistic but still retains a colorful, classic aesthetic.



Despite the team's bizarre plots to save the world, the actors ground their characters in emotional reality. In the final act, we see Reed stretch out like rubber, while Sue tries to fend off Galactus with her force field. But for the most part, Pascal and Kirby bring a strong parental energy to their roles. And throughout the film, Moss-Bachrach, using his voice almost entirely, brings Ben to life as a person, a loyal friend, and a lonely man hidden beneath that rough surface.

The director, Matt Shakman, has worked primarily in television and has directed every episode of Marvel's WandaVision. Like that film, he skillfully balances the characters' emotions with their magical action. But for all its finesse and subtlety, the film still doesn't have the tension or suspense to be as engaging as it should be. Marvel has announced that these characters will return in future films, so we know they won't die. The best superhero movies allow for the absurdity of their plots, but the absurdity of the Fantastic Four is always there to catch the eye.

Finally, the subtitle "First Steps" says a lot. This film is like a warm-up, introducing characters who will become the main players in the MCU. The post-credits scene at the end of the film announces that the Fantastic Four will return in Avengers: Apocalypse, the next installment in the series.

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