

# reviews

👤👤👤👤👤 **SUBLIME**
👤👤👤👤 **TOP-NOTCH**
👤👤👤 **GOOD**
👤👤 **SO-SO**
👤 **WOEFUL**

## Slumdog Millionaire (MA) Out now

This year's big Oscar winner is not so much a feelgood winner as an unlikely fairytale, in which a dirt-poor boy from the Mumbai slums wins big on a TV game show. It's brilliantly played, with a breathless pace that flashes back to find the life lessons that gave the slumdog all those game show answers. Thoroughly enjoyable, however unrealistic.

**Scene stealer** The real-life dramas being played out off-screen.

**Hot extras** The Bollywood-inspired CD soundtrack in the limited edition.

**Verdict** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

## The Day the Earth Stood Still (M) Out now

Who better than Keanu Reeves to play an emotionless, expressionless alien in this big, dumb, fun blockbuster remake? He's suitably dull in saying mankind must be exterminated so Earth can survive. But while Jennifer Connelly and Kathy Bates add a human touch, it's the giant metallic robot Gort that steals the show with his cool *Armageddon*-style special effects. A slick modern update of the Red Menace classic.

**Scene stealer** Gort dissolving into millions of metal-munching bugs.

**Hot extras** Cool featurettes on remaking the classic, on Gort and on aliens.

**Verdict** 🌟🌟🌟



Marissa Gibson, Rowan McNamara and Mitjili Gibson in *Samson & Delilah*.

# Samson & Delilah

**STARRING** ROWAN McNAMARA, MARISSA GIBSON

**IN CINEMAS THURSDAY (M) 101 MINS**



**BEST BIT:**  
Samson's one word.

**WORST BIT:**  
The beatings.

**T**HERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANOTHER FILM quite like *Samson & Delilah*, a haunting, hopeful and highly original debut feature by indigenous film-maker Warwick Thornton.

On the surface, it's an almost impossible love story between two seemingly doomed Aboriginal teenagers. But, deep down, it's something even we Aussies have never seen before – an honest, unflinching and ultimately uplifting look at remote Aboriginal life.

What's more, not only does it star two indigenous kids who've never acted before, it's done almost entirely without dialogue. Only peripheral

characters speak in this remarkable, semi-silent Aussie gem, in which telling looks say so much without anyone saying a word.

No wonder Thornton's \$1.4 million drama, shot in just six weeks in Alice Springs, was selected recently to compete at Cannes. He's quite clearly captured lightning in a bottle.

In a tiny, nameless Aboriginal community, cheeky teenager Samson (Rowan McNamara) spends listless days sniffing petrol and trying to impress the more mature Delilah (Marissa Gibson). She's having none of it, shooting back dirty glances in response to his boyish advances while painting Aboriginal art with her elder aunty.

Just by the glances they exchange, it's clear the star-crossed couple have a troubled history. But you sense they are somehow destined to be together, as if by tribal decree.

When Delilah's aunty dies and she's blamed and beaten for the loss, Samson steals a car and flees with her to Alice Springs. They squat beneath a freeway bridge, with no money, no food and only each other to rely on in a world that has rejected them.

Even for those who've visited an Aboriginal community, *Samson & Delilah* is a shock to the system. Thornton neither sensationalises nor sanitises the world of those caught between white Australia and tribal life, in which substance abuse is rife, violence is ingrained and kids have nothing to do.

It's a tribute to his skill as a director that he's able to convey so much meaning and emotion without much dialogue. Samson says just one word during the entire film, and when he does, you will understand why he doesn't talk. It's the most heartbreaking scene of this haunting yet ultimately hopeful movie, a movie that will leave you – quite fittingly – lost for words.

SHANNON HARVEY