

Promised Land



Good morning, y'all. Well we scooted over to the Walmart in Blairsville to get our shopping in before the apocalypse of storms hit. We're getting predictions of massive thunderstorms and combinations of hail and rain. One of the weather drones went on to say that while storm conditions were "moderate", tornadoes were "likely". I'm probably going to need to suss on that thought for a week or so. Tornadoes being "likely" while the storms were predicted to be moderate. Maybe I'm more sensitive than most, living in a tin house and all. In my dictionary, moderate storms and tornadoes don't appear on the same page. Like I said, maybe I'm just sensitive.

Well, we got to the Walmart without having our car thrown into a ditch by crazy out of control moderate wind. Mulva headed to the produce section first thing. The strawberries are supposed to be coming in. We've been told that they are particularly sweet this year. I headed over to the electronics section to do my "dumpster dive" in the discounted movie bins. I uncovered a sleeper, at least for me. It was called **"Promised Land"** and starred Matt Damon. Matt Damon happens to be one of the few actors that Mulva and I both will watch anything he's in.

I don't know why that is with some actors. There are folks that Mulva likes that I can not abide. Same thing for Mulva. I can go on for hours about a particular actors credentials to no avail. If Mulva doesn't like them, she doesn't like them, and that's it. Academy awards or not, once Mulva has made up her mind about an actor, he is set in stone. Matt Damon is set in stone, and that stone is high up on a pedestal. It's good when we agree.

Well the plot of this movie is about a country boy who grew up on a farm and then went off to college and became "citified". As the story opens, Matt Damon is being considered for a promotion that will keep him in the office of a major oil company based in New York City. Damon and his partner, played by Frances McDormand, head off into the wilds of Pennsylvania for one last field trip of signing up leases for drilling rights to the local's land. There is a great deal made about farming not being

what it used to be, and how this money from an oil lease would bring prosperity to their town and region. Early efforts are successful until Damon hits a speed bump in the form of Hal Holbrook. Holbrook's character wants everyone to do more research on the effects of fracking and what it would mean for the land long term. There ensues a divide in the town between folks for and against, and then it gets really ugly when an environmentalist enters the town.

The environmentalist is played by John Krasinski, who does a very good job stirring up the locals in opposition to the drilling company. An interesting side note is that Krasinski and Damon wrote the screenplay for the movie from a story by Dave Eggers. The topic must have been close to the hearts of Damon and Krasinski.

The story itself is presented as an almost life and death decision for the townspeople. There is a huge back and forth with people voicing their opinions on a very emotional level on both sides of the issue. Some want the riches and the good life it promises. Others want to maintain their family farms as they have done for generations. It is a true, "neighbor versus neighbor" struggle. Mixed in with the struggle is a little romantic interlude, and you've got the makings of a really enjoyable Date night movie.

"Promised Land" was not a big blockbuster at the box office, nor did it win any significant awards. It was just a real life depiction of the struggle that farmers who have mineral deposits on their land face. I think most farmers around here would love to be faced with that dilemma. I know that I would be up to the challenge, if given the opportunity.