

# The Hunt for Red October ★★½

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**Year of Release:** 1990

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** See It

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If you're the type of person who goes on the submarine ride every time you visit Disneyland, you're going to love *The Hunt for Red October*. You'll also love the film if you enjoy cat and mouse military tactics, or if you're a Sean Connery or Alec Baldwin fan, or if you admired director John McTiernan's earlier films, *Die Hard* and *Predator*. In fact, the only people likely to be disappointed by *The Hunt for Red October* are those who have read the book, since films almost never live up to the novels which inspired them.

*The Hunt for Red October* is an epic thriller, adapted from Tom Clancy's best selling novel. Set in an era before Glasnost, the movie revolves around a top-secret Soviet submarine, called the Red October. The nuclear sub has a revolutionary propulsion system, which makes the vessel silent and allows it to escape sonar detection. The Red October embarks on its maiden voyage under the command of Captain Marko Ramius, played by Connery. Ramius has strict orders just to test the submarine, but he has other ideas. He takes the sub and its crew and disappears into the Atlantic Ocean. Is he planning to start World War III? CIA. Analyst Jack Ryan (Baldwin) doesn't think so; he's convinced that Ramius plans to defect to the U.S. Ryan is given three days to prove his theory and

find the missing sub.

The characters in *The Hunt for Red October* are paper thin, but the performances, thankfully, are rock solid. Baldwin and Connery anchor the film with their customary vigor. Sam Neil gives a sturdy performance as Connery's somber first officer. It's ironic to see Neil and Connery playing Russians, since both are best known for their roles as British agents, Connery as James Bond and Neil as Reilly, "Ace of Spies." The large cast also includes Scott Glenn, James Earl Jones, Tim Curry, and Joss Ackland, plus Richard Jordan as the smooth U.S. national security adviser.

The special effects are remarkable, but more than anything, *The Hunt for Red October* is distinguished by its water-tight plot. Screenwriters Larry Ferguson and Donald Stewart have gracefully navigated *Red October* through a story line full of twists and turns. They keep us involved in the action by unveiling plot strands at just the right moment.

The movie doesn't get as sweaty or breathless as *Die Hard*, because it would rather tell a good story than hit you over the head with non-stop action. The finale is rousing and suspenseful, but essentially, *The Hunt for Red October* is a superior pot-boiler.