

VIEWING GUIDE

# Indulge in March movie madness

Brian Truitt USA TODAY

March Madness isn't just for the hoopsters. This month is also a slam dunk for new movies coming to your favorite streaming services. • Netflix, Peacock, Disney+, Max and more have plenty to offer if you're mad about flicks to watch from your couch. There's theatrical fare finally ready to stream, including this year's best picture Oscar winner, a witchy blockbuster and a Hugh Grant horror film, plus a bunch of original stuff such as a fresh Tyler Perry thriller and a Millie Bobby Brown/Chris Pratt adventure. • Here are 15 notable new movies you can stream right now:

**'Anora'**

The stripper dramedy won five Oscars, including best picture, with its acclaimed story of a hot-tempered, Cinderella-esque sex worker (Mikey Madison) who elopes with a Russian oligarch's son (Mark Eydelshteyn). Things then go sideways in a narrative with themes of class structures and human connection.

• Where to watch: Hulu

**'Better Man'**

Even with signature tropes of its ilk and the career-tanking vices of many a "Behind the Music" episode, the Robbie Williams biopic's unconventional storytelling — i.e., the pop star being presented as a cheeky singing chimpanzee — match the fantastical nature of Williams' rise-and-fall-and-rise-again tale.

• Where to watch: Paramount+

**'Control Freak'**

Beware this body horror flick, because you might never scratch your head again. A stressed-out motivational speaker (Kelly Marie Tran) has her very controlled life torn asunder when a constant itch on her noggin turns out to be a parasitic demon, one that forces her to revisit the sins of her Vietnamese parents' past.

• Where to watch: Hulu

**'The Electric State'**

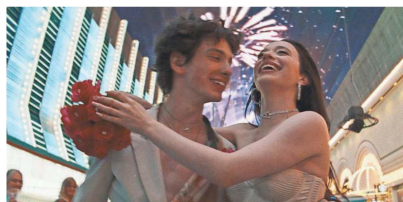
This one's for the Chris Pratt and Millie Bobby Brown completists. In an alt-history America where robots revolted against man, the sci-fi adventure centers on an ex-soldier (Pratt) and a teen (Brown) looking for her brother who team up with a bunch of mechanical mascots to thwart a villainous tech magnate (Stanley Tucci).

• Where to watch: Netflix

**'Heretic'**

Though Hugh Grant is not known for being a horror staple, he splendidly plays the villain in this thriller. His sinister Mr. Reed invites a couple of young Mormon missionaries (Chloe East and Sophie Thatcher) into his house with the promise of blueberry pie and religious conversation but ends up putting them through the philosophical and physical wringer.

• Where to watch: Max



A Brooklyn sex worker (Mikey Madison, right) elopes with a Russian oligarch's son (Mark Eydelshteyn) in the Oscar-winning "Anora." PROVIDED BY NEON

**'Kraven the Hunter'**

The old-school Spider-Man supervillain is turned into a bit of a secret-agent man in this comic-book flick. Aaron Taylor-Johnson stars as the title character, given animalistic powers as a youngster, who hunts criminals and scrambles to save his brother (Fred Hechinger) from enemies of their Russian mobster father (Russell Crowe).

• Where to watch: Netflix

**'Moana 2'**

The animated sequel plots an extremely familiar course but at least does so with fresh new personalities and more inspired Pacific Island influence. The best reason for a "Moana" revisit, though, is still the dynamic pairing of the empowering title wayfarer (voiced by Auli'i Cravalho) and her trickster demigod sidekick Maui (Dwayne Johnson).

• Where to watch: Disney+



Moana (voiced by Auli'i Cravalho, right) leads a new crew of unlikely seafarers including Loto (Rose Matafeo), Kele (David Fane) and Moni (Hualalai Chung) in "Moana 2." PROVIDED BY DISNEY

**'O'Dessa'**

In this extremely trippy rock opera, "Stranger Things" standout Sadie Sink stars as the title farm girl, whose father was a rambler with a guitar that prophesied the coming of a musical messiah. When the heirloom is stolen, O'Dessa ventures to the city to find it, runs afoul of a game-show-host dictator and winds up on a dystopian "American Idol."

• Where to watch: Hulu

**'The Outrun'**

Saïraa Ronan stars in this thoughtful addiction drama as a young alcoholic Scottish woman who leaves rehab to go back home to the Orkney Islands. After struggling to reconnect with her mom and community, she gets back to her science roots — and turns her life around — by taking a gig searching for a rare bird.

• Where to watch: Netflix

**'The Parenting'**

A gay couple (Nik Dodani and Brandon Flynn) rent a palatial countryside house for a getaway where their parents can all meet each other, then everyone discovers the place contains a pesky poltergeist. Relentlessly silly instead of scary, the horror comedy is worth a watch just for goofy Brian Cox playing a possessed dad.

• Where to watch: Max

**'Revelations'**

Netflix has become a launchpad for intriguing, genre-bending Korean shows and movies. ("Squid Game," anyone?) This psychological thriller is the latest, centered on a pastor (Byu Jun-yeol) believing in revelations, a detective (Shin Hyeon-bin) haunted by visions of her dead sister, and a case of a missing girl.

• Where to watch: Netflix

**'Sing Sing'**

Colman Domingo stars in this unforgettable prison drama based on a true story and featuring a talented bunch of ex-con thespians. Incarcerated for a crime he didn't commit, Divine G (Domingo) recruits a mysterious figure, "The Lady" (Willa Fitzgerald) and "The Demon" (Kyle Gallner). What unfolds is a nonlinear narrative centering on a cat-and-mouse chase, a serial killer's murder spree and an ending that'll make you watch it again.

• Where to watch: Max

**'Strange Darling'**

The twisty thriller begins with a one-night stand between two mysterious figures, "The Lady" (Willa Fitzgerald) and "The Demon" (Kyle Gallner). What unfolds is a nonlinear narrative centering on a cat-and-mouse chase, a serial killer's murder spree and an ending that'll make you watch it again.

• Where to watch: Paramount+

**'Tyler Perry's Duplicity'**

Perry's latest soapy thriller stars Kat Graham as an attorney out for justice and helping her best friend (Meaganandy) when her husband is shot by a white cop. As racial tensions threaten to embroil the city, the lawyer's search for the truth goes some personal and surprising ways. (The thing isn't called "Duplicity" for nothing.)

• Where to watch: Prime Video

**'Wicked'**

Jon M. Chu's enchanting "Wizard of Oz" prequel is all about its two leads and one showstopping rendition of "Defying Gravity." Cynthia Erivo stands out as the rebellious outsider Elphaba (aka the future Wicked Witch of the West), and Ariana Grande is her rival-turned-bestie, the heir-whipping, doe-eyed Glinda.

• Where to watch: Peacock

STREAMING PREVIEW

## Natalia Grace's 'Family' drama is distasteful and exploitative



Kelly Lawler  
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There has rarely been a child whose life has been so publicly examined as Natalia Grace's.

The Ukrainian adoptee with a rare form of dwarfism generated international headlines over the past decade after her adoptive parents, Indiana couple Kristine and Mark Barnett, convinced a court to change her legal age from 8 to 22, and then abandoned her in an apartment. Years later, Kristine and Mark were criminally charged with neglect, although Mark was acquitted and charges against Kristine later were dropped. In 2023, Natalia legally restored her birthdate to 2003 after extensive DNA testing.

It is a sensational story, and grimly fascinating. How did the Barnetts come to suggest that Natalia was an adult posing as a child? What went on in their Indiana home? Where is Natalia now? All these questions have been asked and answered — and allegations made and denied — in countless news reports and investigation Discovery's three-part 2023 docuseries, "The Curious Case of Natalia Grace." The young woman, now 21, has told her story many

times. But now a fictionalized Hulu drama is going to speak for her, and it does no better job representing this sad tale than a decade's worth of exploitative tabloid headlines and the rather crass docuseries did. We're right back at sensationalism and exploitation, and the resulting TV show isn't even that good.

"Good American Family" (streaming Wednesdays, 8-10 p.m.) stars Ellen Pompeo and Mark Duplass as the Barnetts and British actress Imogen Faith Reid as Natalia. Over eight episodes it chronicles their stranger-than-fiction story, first from the Barnetts' point of view, then Natalia's. In the first four episodes, the couple are portrayed as selfless parents to a nightmarish sociopath who planned to kill them and their biological sons. In the last four, Natalia is a victim of neglect and violent abuse by the Barnetts and later, a terrible miscarriage of justice by the courts. But this ham-fisted and halfhearted approach to a ripped-from-the-headlines series has nothing new to say.

It's a "having cake and eating it, too" approach to the conflicting allegations among the three principal players, but the "multiple perspectives," as helpfully pointed out by the legal disclaimers at the top of each episode, don't offer insight so much as incoherence and dissonance. The first half of the series is fundamentally opposed to the second. Was Natalia a violent threat? Were the



Imogen Faith Reid is Natalia in "Good American Family." PROVIDED BY HULU

Barnetts neglectful and abusive? The answer, according to Hulu and creator Katie Robbins ("The Affair"), is seemingly yes to both. So in the first four episodes, we watch a knockoff of the 2009 horror film "Orphan," and in the last four a parade of horrifying child abuse.

The messiness of the structure, and the lack of care with which the scripts tell this sensitive story, make "Family" an unpleasant and bleak watch with no narrative sense. The actors all are working tirelessly with the material they're given; they are not at fault. Reid is a multifaceted discovery (although she's 27, which seems a questionable choice). It may be odd to see Pompeo, the doctor of America's emotional wounds for two decades on ABC's "Grey's Anatomy," without scrubs or a doctor's coat, but she wasn't resting on her acting laurels for all those years. Her Kristine is as repugnant as she is delusional, and Pom-

peo can play a villain as well as a hero. Duplass slides easily into his role as an ineffectual loser. Christina Hendricks shows up in the second half of the series as Natalia's unofficial new mother, with a slight drawl and a warm hug.

This hand-wringing and bothsiding is an illogical and terrible way to structure a TV show, but it is an especially infuriating way to depict this young woman's life, which already has been the subject of so much distasteful public scrutiny and debate. It is an immutable fact that she was a child while in the care of the Barnetts and after they abandoned her, yet online commentary continues to wink and nod to the idea that she was an adult con artist living out a horror movie. In the end, it doesn't matter whether the Barnetts' allegations about her behavior are true: She was still a child when they left her alone in an apartment. Children all over the world have violent behavioral problems, yet we don't suddenly decide they're old enough to live alone.

"Family" is a series that really should not have been made. In our cultural thirst for true-crime content, we can sometimes cross a line. Not every awful thing we read in the news needs to be an Emmy-hopeful limited series with a famous cast. Sometimes tragedies are just things.

Our curiosity over Natalia Grace should be well-sated by now.