

Film Review: Delightful ‘Ferdinand’ Keeps it Simple & Funny

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 17, 2017 - 5:48pm

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CHICAGO – Like the repeat tenets of real estate, good animated films come down to story, story, story. And ‘Ferdinand,’ an older children’s tale adapted to modern audiences, combines a gentle source narrative with palatable visual and cartoon jokes. It’s fun for the whole family!



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The story of Ferdinand the Bull has roots in 1936, when an old timey writer of children’s books, Munro Leaf (who also wrote “Mr. Popper’s Penguins”), chronicled the scenario of a physically-strong-yet-gentle bull, who would rather sniff flowers than fight in the bullring. Three screenwriters – usually a red flag – adapted the story for modern kid audiences, yet maintained the gentleness and humor associated with it (the film is produced by Blue Sky Animation, the creators of the Ice Age series). Strong voice characterizations also make it work, including ex-WWE wrestler John Cena as the title character. The antics in the film were a reminder of the old Warner Bros. short cartoons, with sight gags, voice asides and a nice atmosphere of fun and laughs.

Ferdinand (voice of Cena) is a calf that is being raised in a ranch especially made for bull fighting animals. But Ferd doesn’t like to train for fighting, he likes to “stop and smell the roses.” His Dad (Jeremy Sisto) is a proud fighter, but after a ring match doesn’t come home. This has Ferdinand running away, where he ends up in a style of his nirvana, a florist farm.

He grows into the largest and strongest bull, but maintains his gentle nature. He gets too big for his new owners to take him to the town’s flower festival, but shows up anyway and eventually causes havoc. This gets him taken back to the bull training ranch, where he paired with a “calming goat” named Lupe (Kate McKinnon) and a band of fellow fighters who don’t understand him.

“Ferdinand” opened everywhere on December 15th, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring the voices of John Cena, Kate McKinnon, Bobby Cannavale, Anthony Anderson, Jeremy Sisto, Peyton Manning and Gina Rodriguez. Screenplay adapted by Robert L. Baird, Tim Federle and Brad Copeland. Directed by Carlos Saldanha. Rated “PG”



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The Title Character (Voice of John Cena) in ‘Ferdinand’

Photo credit: 20th Century Fox



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