

‘Toy Story 3’ is a Perfect Play Date For the Entire Family

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 18, 2010 - 2:35pm

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Rating: **5.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Very few recent films are as purely entertaining or thematically satisfying as Pixar’s “Toy Story 3,” not only one of the best movies of the year but one of the best in the history of animation. Brilliantly tying up the two films that came before in a way that so many sequels fail to do, the geniuses at Pixar have done it again. It’s another masterpiece.

Most animated sequels serve as nothing more than “greatest hits” compilations of the films that came before. Junk like the last two “Shrek” sequels are perfect examples of writers taking what families know and love and simply putting them on-screen again. They’re more like repeats than continuations or advancements of the story and seem designed merely to sell toys to a new generation born since the release of the last film in the franchise.



Toy Story 3

Photo credit: Pixar

An entire generation has now grown up with Woody (Tom Hanks) and Buzz (Tim Allen). There are millions of boys like Andy who are at the crossroads where they must put away childish things and move on to the next phase of life. And yet there are lessons of childhood that must never be forgotten including the importance of imagination and the need for loyal friendship. Michael Arndt’s Oscar-worthy script for “Toy Story 3” merely asks that kids of all ages pull out their toys one final time and remember the lessons of childhood before moving on. It’s a better film than even the most diehard Pixar supporters hoped that it would be.

Most films can be broken down into three acts and the structure of “Toy Story 3” is one of its most brilliant elements. The first act is the

“refresher course.” All of the characters and most of their catch phrases are reintroduced as the film opens with a clever action sequence that is, of course, merely a product of a home video of one of Andy’s more memorable playtimes. Pixar’s biggest weakness as a studio has always been in the action department and opening with a speeding train is almost a statement that you’re about to see something a bit different.



Toy Story 3

Photo credit: Pixar

After the opener, the plot of the film kicks in as we learn that Andy is about to head to college. His mom gives him an ultimatum regarding his old toy chest – he can take his playthings to the garbage, attic, or give them away. After a mix-up sends all of the toys to the curb, Woody, Buzz, and the rest of the gang end up at a daycare center and all but the cowboy seem resigned to the fact that this will be their home for long time to come.

At the daycare center, Arndt and the team introduce a series of new characters including Lotso (Ned Beatty) and even a Ken doll (Michael Keaton) but the piece never feels cluttered with newbies like some sequels. We never lose the focus on our leads and they are the heart of the story.

For the mid-section of “Toy Story 3” — the second act — the film becomes a marvelously entertaining action comedy. It’s a riff on prison movies like “The Great Escape,” as the daycare center proves to be a lot more dangerous than Andy’s toys could have ever imagined.



Toy Story 3

Photo credit: Pixar

The bulk of “Toy Story 3” is a variation on that opening scene in that we watched a memory of Andy having an elaborate playtime and now we, the audience, are provided one last blowout extravaganza with the characters we know and love. Funny, action-packed, and remarkably clever, the majority of “Toy Story 3” is pure entertainment.

If that sense of unbridled fun were the closing emotion to “Toy Story 3” it would still be one of the most entertaining films of the year but, without giving anything away, the final act of the film is arguably the best thing that Pixar has ever done. It thematically ties up not just this trilogy but the entire Pixar canon. The themes that have defined the films — the power of imagination and the importance of sharing it — are distilled into a remarkably moving finale. Most animated films collapse as the writers run out of new jokes and we’ve seen all the visual tricks the animators have up their sleeve. But “Toy Story 3” gets better as it builds.

With fifteen years since “Toy Story,” we’ve all grown up with the kid who called his best friends Woody and Buzz. Walking out of “Toy Story 3,” I couldn’t wait to share it with people; to someday watch again with my son. And again. And again.

‘Toy Story 3’ features the voices of Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Joan Cusack, Ned Beatty, Don Rickles, Michael Keaton, Wallace Shawn, John Ratzenberger, Estelle Harris, and Jodi Benson. It was written by Michael Arndt and directed by Lee Unkrich. It opened on June 18th, 2010. It is rated G.



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