

## ‘Despicable Me’ With Steve Carell Falls Short of World Domination

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 9, 2010 - 11:19am

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Dana Gaier](#) [3]
- [Despicable Me](#) [4]
- [Elsie Fisher](#) [5]
- [Jason Segel](#) [6]
- [Julie Andrews](#) [7]
- [Kristen Wiig](#) [8]
- [Miranda Cosgrove](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Russell Brand](#) [11]
- [Steve Carell](#) [12]
- [Will Arnett](#) [13]



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Despicable Me” is a mildly entertaining diversion on a summer afternoon. It’s a film that’s as equally difficult to hate as it is to love — kind of like its morally complex lead Gru (Steve Carell) — that falls just short of animation domination.

It’s certainly possible that yet another summer masterpiece from Pixar (“Toy Story 3”) has made me cynical about animation from other studios but, to this viewer, “Despicable Me” doesn’t follow through on its clever opening act. That’s when we meet Gru, a super-villain who hasn’t recently pulled off a feat more impressive than stealing the Statue of Liberty from in front of New York, New York in Las Vegas. When his competition, the younger Vector (Jason Segel), silently lifts the pyramids of Egypt, Gru knows its time to do something more daring than merely freeze-raying the people ahead of him in line at Starbucks or face irrelevance.



Gru (Steve Carell) enjoys an amusement park.

*Photo credit: Universal*

With the help of his minions — Twinkie-shaped, yellow creatures with eyes and limited vocabularies that should sell well at toy stores through the year — and Dr. Nefario (Russell Brand), Gru hatches a plan to steal the moon. Yes, the entire moon. He’ll take a shrink ray into outer space, zap the moon, and carry it home in his astronaut suit. Small problem — Vector has the shrink ray Gru needs to finish the job.

To get the device so essential to his plan for universal domination, Gru plans to use the gawky super-villain’s love for cookies that are sold door-to-door by adorable orphan girls. So, he goes and adopts three awfully cute sisters – Margo (Miranda Cosgrove), Agnes (Elsie Fisher), and Edith (Dana Gaier) – and tries to use them as he does his minions. Of course, he also has to parent the wide-eyed waifs and ends up, obviously, falling in love with them. Gru may have never been supported by his truly awful mother (Julie Andrews) but that doesn’t mean he can’t be a super-parent.

"Despicable Me" looks great. It uses 3D more effectively than arguably any animated film to date as the colors never look washed out as they so often do in this new technology. And the design aesthetic resembles modern French animation (that's a good thing). The voice cast is notably talented with Carell, Segel, and the young Miranda Cosgrove delivering exactly what's expected of them and more. It's the kind of film that I wouldn't begrudge anyone from enjoying and I do think there's room for entertaining summer animation that doesn't support a deep intellectual reading like Pixar's recent work. Not everything needs to be "WALL-E."



Gru (Steve Carell) tells his minions about their new mission to steal the moon.

Photo credit: Universal

But I can only be honest with my experience and, to be blunt, I was bored. Maybe I'm the despicable one.

As the film goes through the machinations of the trio of orphaned waifs getting through to Gru like Cindy Lou Who got through to the Grinch, I found my mind wandering. There's a high-energy early sequence that recalls Mad Magazine's "Spy vs. Spy" that's almost worth seeing on its own but the film never develops a consistently engrossing rhythm. Great animation draws you into a completely realized world where it becomes easy to forget about the problems of real life. My mind consistently wandered back to reality while watching "Despicable Me."

"Despicable Me" is a relatively unambitious, light comedy and for many audiences that will be more than enough in the mediocre season we're currently suffering through at the movies. It's just missing that often-intangible variable that makes a borderline project like this one into something more. If the film does well enough to support a sequel, I'll be there in the hope that the filmmakers find that missing key ingredient. Sometimes it takes a super-villain more than one try to achieve world domination.

*"Despicable Me" features voice work by Steve Carell, Jason Segel, Russell Brand, Julie Andrews, Will Arnett, Kristen Wiig, Miranda Cosgrove, Dana Gaier, and Elsie Fisher. It was written by Ken Daurio and directed by Pierre Coffin & Chris Renaud. It is rated PG and opens on July 9th, 2010.*



[14]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [15]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [14]

**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 17 2024 - 2:42pm):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/11243/despicable-me-with-steve-carell-falls-short-of-world-domination>

#### Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/brian-tallerico>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/dana-gaier>

[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/despicable-me>

[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/elsie-fisher>

[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/jason-segel>

[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/julie-andrews>

[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/kristen-wiig>

[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/miranda-cosgrove>

[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>

[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/russell-brand>  
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/steve-carell>  
[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/will-arnett>  
[14] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>  
[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>