

‘Finding Dory’ Essentially Finds Its Sweet Spot

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 16, 2016 - 3:06pm

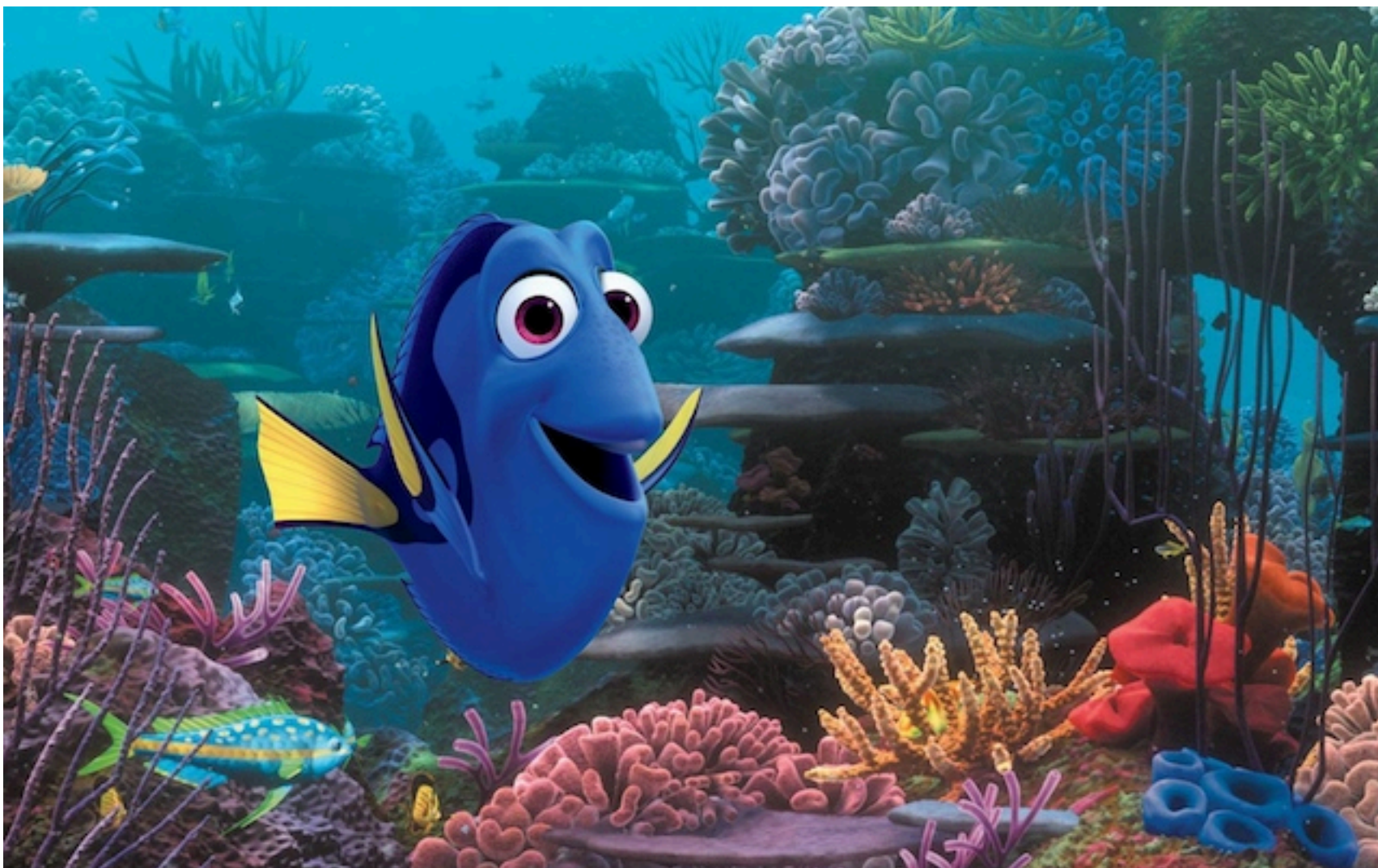
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- [Andrew Stanton](#) [3]
- [Angus MacLane](#) [4]
- [Bill Hader](#) [5]
- [Diane Keaton](#) [6]
- [Ed O'Neill](#) [7]
- [Ellen DeGeneres](#) [8]
- [Eugene Levy](#) [9]
- [Finding Dory](#) [10]
- [Hayden Rolence](#) [11]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [12]
- [Idris Elba](#) [13]
- [Kaitlin Olson](#) [14]
- [Movie Review](#) [15]
- [Pixar](#) [16]
- [Sigourney Weaver](#) [17]
- [Spike Walters](#) [18]
- [Ty Burrell](#) [19]
- [Walt Disney Studios](#) [20]



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Pixar’s sequel to its underwater animated tearjerker “Finding Nemo” isn’t quite in the same league, but “Finding Dory” is satisfying all the same. This time the story focuses on Marlin and Nemo’s forgetful friend Dory, as she searches for the family she can’t quite remember.

Dory (voiced again by Ellen DeGeneres) embarks on a trip back across the ocean – when she has a sudden flashback – and remembers something about her parents. Marlin (Albert Brooks) and Nemo come along for the ride, to help keep the forgetful fish on the right track. While the action starts in the open ocean, the animation of Pixar has changed up the scenery this time too, trading the undersea life for a scenic aquarium on the California coast.



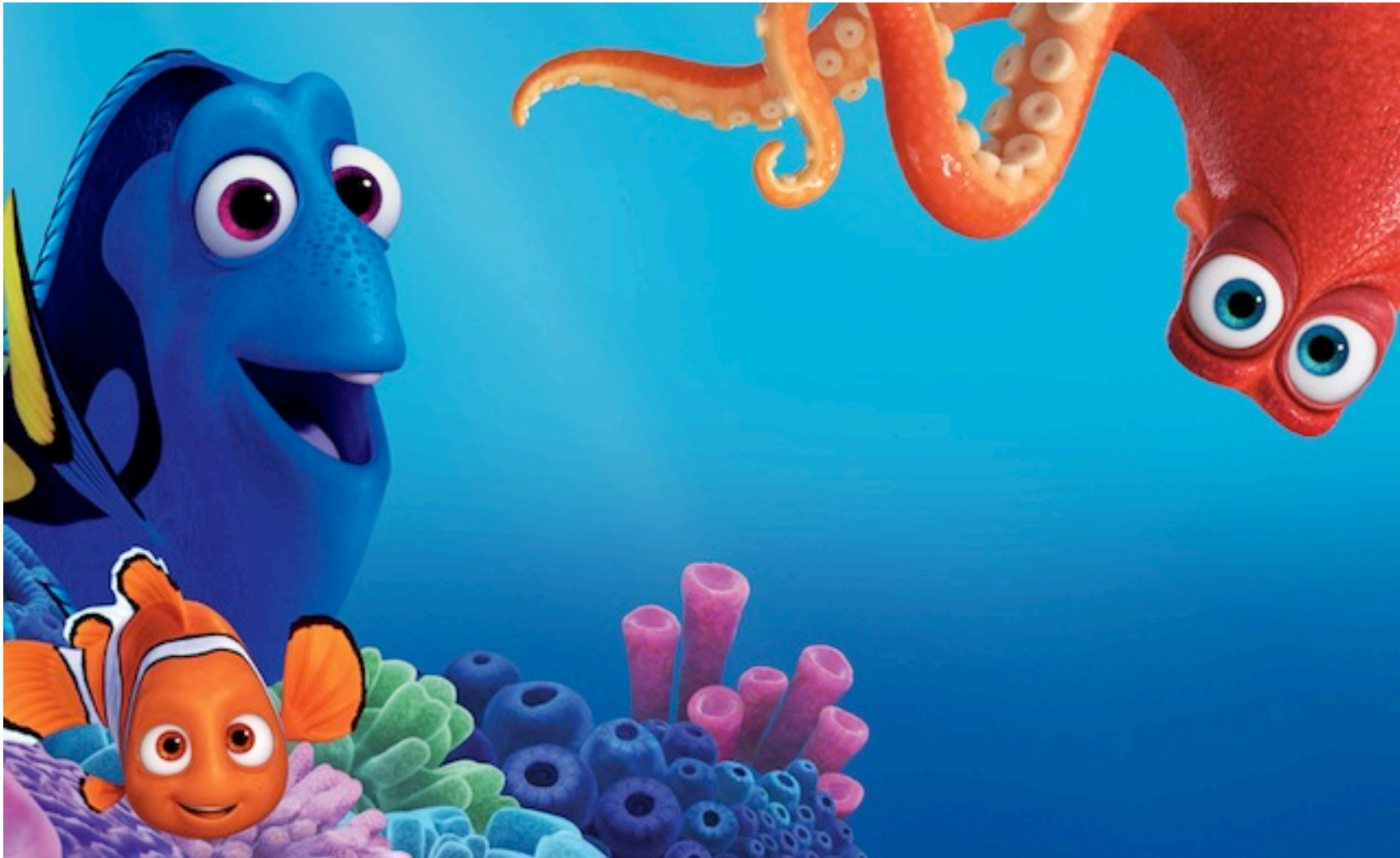
Ellen DeGeneres is the Voice of the Title Character in ‘Finding Dory’

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

When they arrive at the aquarium, “Finding Dory” becomes part prison break and part heist movie as Dory and company try to find a way to get inside to find her family. When she gets swooped up by animal conservationists and put in quarantine, Marlin and Nemo must try to formulate a plan to get her out.

Once she gets inside the aquarium, Dory hooks up with a serial escape artist octopus named Hank (voiced by Ed O’Neill of TV’s “Modern Family”) – but there’s a twist. Hank doesn’t want to go free and go back to the ocean, he wants a ticket to a life in a glass box instead. So they make an uneasy alliance as he helps her find her roots. Hank was one of my twins’ favorite characters. He seems designed to be that way, and O’Neal is passable as the crusty vet with a soft spot underneath. There’s also a near sighted whale shark (Kaitlin Olsen), and a Beluga whale (Ty Burrell) with no sense of direction to round out the cast. .

The animation is wonderfully detailed as usual, and Dory takes some interesting flights of fancy as she and her team explore every inch of the aquarium and the pipes within. It is enjoyable, without ever getting to the gut wrenching emotional core that turned “Finding Nemo” into such a beloved film. That’s not to say it’s message of family isn’t a cut above the usual animated movie platitudes – it is – but Finding Dory didn’t bring my twins anywhere close to tears.



Dory is Joined by Nemo (Hayden Rolence) and Hank (Ed O’Neill) in ‘Finding Dory’

Photo credit: Walt Disney Studios

To date, Pixar Animation Studios has a mixed record (for Pixar at least) when it comes to sequels. Few are outright stinkers (with the exception of “Cars 2”), but even fewer manage to hit the solid emotional bases that its “Toy Story” films do. But all in all, “Finding Dory” proves once again that Pixar’s second best is still better than most other animated filmmakers best efforts.

“Finding Dory” opens everywhere on June 17th, in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D showings. Featuring the voices Ellen DeGeneres, Albert Brooks, Ed O’Neill, Kaitlin Olson, Hayden Rolence, Ty Burrell, Diane Keaton, Eugene Levy, Bill Hader, Idris Elba and Sigourney Weaver. Screenplay by Andrew Stanton. Directed by Andrew Stanton and Angus MacLane. Rated “PG”



[21]

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