

Heart Is Where the 'Home' Is in Charming Animated Comedy

There's no place like home, as the saying goes. But there are plenty of movies like *Home*, the latest release from DreamWorks Animation.

Borrowing elements, plotlines and cutesy characters from the likes of *ET*, *Men in Black* and *Despicable Me*, *Home* is far from original. However, the animated comedy is adorable, colorful and better than expected.

Based on the book *The True Meaning of Smekday*, the movie tells the story of a little alien named Oh (voiced by Jim Parsons, *The Big Bang Theory*), a member of the Boov alien race who are a bunch of cowards, always running away from trouble and avoiding anything fun. Despite being cowardly himself, Oh wants to have a good time, but ends up making a mess of things.

On a mission to escape their arch enemy, the Gorg, the Boovs, led by Capt. Smek (Steve Martin), take over earth, relocating all humans to Australia—except a spunky African-American girl named Gratuity “Tip” Tucci (Rihanna).

But then Oh accidentally sends an email party invite to Gorg, which, if not deleted in time, will lead to him to the Boov's new home and destroy earth. Now a fugitive, Oh predictably runs into Tip and the odd couple soon embark on an alien/human road trip. Oh promises Tip to help her find her mother, Lucy (Jennifer Lopez), who was abducted by Oh's kind.

Through a series of comic adventures with Tip, Oh comes to understand that being different and making mistakes is all part of being human. And while he changes her planet and she changes his world, they discover the true meaning of the word home—echoing “worlds collide,” the film's tagline.

The Boovs are funny and cute, reminiscent of the Minions in *Despicable Me*. Captain Smek, with leadership skills and quirks a la King Julien from the “Madagascar” series, is especially funny with his ridiculous fascination with human artifacts such as bubble wrap and a wheel barrow.

The movie also features catchy and uplifting songs from Rihanna, who created the whole soundtrack for the film.

Family-friendly for the most part, the unlikely buddy, science fiction flick’s best attributes are its various down-to-earth lessons, including not judging others, the pitfalls of lying, being yourself and learning from your mistakes. There are also touching lessons on hope, friendship and the importance of family.

Above all, *Home* has heart, which is almost a rare attribute in animated films nowadays.

Content Watch: *Home* is rated PG for mild action and some rude humor. DreamWorks is known for using plenty of potty humor and risqué double entendres in movies such as *Shrek*, *Kung Fu Panda* and *Puss in Boots*. It’s toned down for this film, but there are some name calling and literal bathroom jokes, including taking a pee break and not drinking the lemonade.

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