

'Secret Life of Pets' Fetches Laughs, Fun Story

Ever wonder what your pets do when you're not home?

Wonder no more because of *The Secret Life of Pets*, which cribs the concept by the classic *Toy Story*—the things toys do when you're not around.

The Secret Life of Pets is the fifth animated movie of the year to revolve around talking animals after *Kung Fu Panda 3*, *Zootopia*, *Angry Birds* and *Finding Dory*.

The film from the makers *Despicable Me* is cute and family friendly (for the most part), but it gives a bad bite for younger viewers with its unnecessary rude humor and talk of killing.

On the positive side, throughout the movie the theme and importance of friendship are emphasized, as well as the concept of accepting others just as they are.

This animal tale features spoiled Jack Russell terrier Max (voiced by Louis C. K.), who lives in a Manhattan apartment block populated by all kinds of seemingly perfect pets who lead outlandish secret lives while their owners are away.

Max adores his master, Katie (Ellie Kemper). But when she brings home a stray, mongrel dog, Duke (Eric Stonestreet), a fierce rivalry begins—much like the premise of *Toy Story*.

One day when Max and Duke, who are copycats of Woody and Buzz, are out for a walk, they come up against a gang of cats led by the vicious Ozone (Steve Coogan).

After being captured by animal control, the dogs are inadvertently rescued by not so cute, white, little, psychotic rabbit Snowball (Kevin Hart), who introduces them to the

Flushed Pets, a group of forgotten animals who live in the sewer. The encounter sets off a series of farcical events in an effort to return Max and Duke home—triggering an unlikely friendship ala Woody and Buzz.

The animation is top notch and very finely detailed, as New York City looks incredible and even the sewers are colorful. The film opens with beautifully with Taylor Swift's "Welcome to New York," as the camera pans around the gorgeously animated New York City parks and landmarks.

Although the film is funny, the trailer seemed to showcase most of the jokes and gags seen in the movie—there are three scenes of the head-banging poodle.

Chris Renaud (*Despicable Me*, *Despicable Me 2*) directed the \$75 million film, which earned an A- CinemaScore. *The Secret Life of Pets* dominated this past weekend's box office, racking up a massive \$103.2 million and launching the first new franchise of the summer.

It's a bona fide hit, but with its substantial amount of potty humor, the film is not "pawsome" for little eyes and ears. {eoa}

Content Watch: Rated PG for action and some rude humor, *The Secret Life of Pets* doesn't feature curse words, but there are several times characters use insults such as stupid, idiot and dumb, as well as "holy schnitzel," "heck," "oh my gosh," "shut up" and "Ah, pellet!" There are a lot of scenes of mayhem and destruction of property along with quite a lot of physical violence—all played for laughs. One character also experiences a very violent death. Most concerning was seeing all the talk about death, killing murdering the "humans." Max and Duke say they saved their lives by "putting their owner in the blender." Also, there are dogs trapped in a van, sinking under water. There are some scenes that might be too scary and intense for little kids.

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