

Kung Fu Panda 3 Movie Review

By Jacob Keller

It comes with no surprise to see a widely popular movie franchise try to stretch out its success in creating a sequel. The first two *Kung Fu Panda* movies grossed a combined \$380,683,654, and were arguably one of DreamWorks' best series. This begs the question: does *Kung Fu Panda 3* add to the series' greatness? Well the answer is no and yes.

Kung Fu Panda 3 promises to explore not only the relationship with Po and his newly discovered father Li Shin, but also the relationship between Po and the rest of his kind who he believed to be extinct, Po's journey to become a kung fu teacher, and his face off with the movie's antagonist Kai. Yet the movie only does a mediocre job at this. Although it has some scenes where Po and his father Li Shin realize how similar they are and how much they care for each other, towards the end of the movie Li Shin fades into the background like any of the other pandas. And when their relationship conflicts with Mr. Ling's relationship with Po, the person who raised Po, the movie again doesn't focus on it long. Mr. Ling's jealousy serves to do nothing for the movie. This means that these two things, things that had the potential to be very important to the movie, acted as filler. Its message about how people can have more than just one significant figure in their life is neglected.

Similarly, there is another message of the movie that could have been portrayed better. Although Po thought that there were no other pandas, and that having the opportunity to interact with other pandas would be a big deal in the movie, not much time was directed towards this. The pandas just felt like new faces, even though they should have felt important as a message about family and bonding. This message was only given attention in the climax, and it fitted awkwardly there; it seemed a bit out-of-the-blue and silly as the pandas ended up being key in defeating the villain Kai rather than Po himself. It felt like Po should have been capable by himself.

Po was tasked by his master to serve as a teacher, specifically to the "Furious Five," the elite kung fu fighting team in his land. He didn't end up teaching them even though he did grow to become a teacher. The "Furious Five" was an important group in the past two movies, yet it wasn't given much attention even though it should have. However, Po's training of the other pandas was entertaining and did highlight his growth. His battle with Kai emphasized the message of teamwork as he needed the other pandas - his family and friends - to help him, even though the message could have been placed better. The battle was a tad boring, but Kai was an interesting character. Problematically, Kai was similar to the other villains of the series in that he too was power hungry and fixed on conquering and revenge. Similarly, the message of "be yourself" was repeated in this movie, as it was in the other two, along with things like the exploration in self-discovery and inner peace.

In some ways *Kung Fu Panda 3* felt like a mediocre clone of the other two movies. However, it had some unique and funny moments. The movie was by no means bad. As a movie just for kids, it will serve well to entertain. Unlike the past two movies, where a lot of the humor was catered to everyone, there weren't that many funny moments for older audiences. At times *Kung Fu Panda 3* was boring. Overall the movie could be better, but it was entertaining for most of the time.