

Moana destined to be another Disney classic

Disney's new family flick has fans old and new enthralled

by Jessi Zook

"Moana" is a must-see movie for any Disney-lover looking to be transported back to their childhood.

The movie follows Moana (voiced by Auli'i Cravalho), who grew up with the expectation that she'll follow in her father's footsteps and become the next chief of her island village.

But there's a catch: no one on the island is allowed to go past the ocean reef a couple hundred feet out into the ocean.

The society has an inexplicable fear of the water. Yet, Moana has always felt a strange calling to the ocean. Once her father (voiced by Temuera Morrison) picks up on this, he continually tries to stomp out the curiosity.

While his efforts seem to work, nothing can truly sway Moana's passion for the sea.

For a time, Moana goes on with her daily life, but a few years down the road her island's surrounding waters are suddenly void of fish and the crops that were once plentiful are no longer. This deterioration leads Moana's eccentric grandmother

(voiced by Rachel House) to tell her the truth that she's been hiding: Moana has been chosen by the ocean to reverse an age old curse that's slowly been destroying all of the surrounding islands.

With this newfound knowledge, Moana, who has never gone more than a couple hundred feet off her island and has no knowledge of sailing, must sail away to find Maui (voiced by Dwayne Johnson).

Maui, a demigod, is the one responsible for the destructive curse, and is the only hope of reversing it. Moana must somehow convince him to make things right.

What ensues for Moana is a life changing, high stakes journey that forces her to find herself and define what type of leader she will be.

She's pushed out of the only comfort she's ever known and into a completely new world. The journey she goes on pushes her to redefine herself and what's important to her.

This movie lived up to Disney's reputation of providing an adventure-filled, heartwarming film that's captivating for someone of any age.

It received a very impressive 97 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, which I think was well deserved.

The movie itself was wholesome with a good message for kids in a similar vein to a couple of movies that Disney has recently released.

It was all about pushing through challenges and learning to solve problems without enlisting the help



Moana, starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Auli'i Cravalho, has surpassed expectations | Disney.co.uk/moana

of others.

"Frozen" and "Brave", two major movies preceding "Moana", were similar in the sense that none have been the "typical" princess-in-search-of-a-prince movie that became popular in the '90s.

Instead, "Moana", like the other two, was action packed and empowering. Moana faced many challenges and, rather than depending on others, pushed forward on her own.

The prominent female protagonist was able to teach girls and boys alike that nothing should stand in their way and be a reason to give up, whether it be physical weaknesses, emotional restraints, or hot lava sea monsters coming up

from the deep.

In many ways, it also had many strong connections to "Mulan". In both movies, the female protagonists are forced to go against the existing expectations held for them in search of something more.

In "Mulan's" case, this was a gender stereotype. In Moana's, it was expectations for her future as well as common beliefs about the ocean among her community.

Moana has to risk everything in order to do what she thinks is right, even when those around her may not fully support that decision.

Despite the familiar themes in the movie, "Moana" became something wonderfully new through its quirky characters, incredible graphics, and

intriguing South Pacific legends. But above all else, my favorite part had to be the music. No Disney movie is complete without the sporadic outbreak of song and "Moana" was no exception. Throughout the movie, the plot was enhanced (and clarified) through upbeat and comical numbers. My favorite was hands down "You're Welcome" sung by none other than Dwayne Johnson. I had no idea that he could sing, but the song was anything but a disappointment.

With so much preceding "Moana", I was half expecting it to be a flop, but the movie lived up to its hype and is definitely worth a watch if you're looking for something to do this weekend.

New "Gilmore Girls" episodes lack authenticity

Despite 10 year hiatus, the new story arc falls flat

by Helen Fagan

The Netflix original 4-episode series "Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life" was a much-needed continuation of the endearing story of a teen mom and her daughter navigating through life, laughing every step of the way.

Though this new story, fans of the previous series, the end of the show ultimately left fans where they were at the end of the original series—unsatisfied.

The Netflix original series premiered on November 25. The series consists of four 1.5 hour episodes, each a snapshot of Rory and Lorelei's life during a single season of the year.

The episodes are titled Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, and combined take the viewer through a year in the family's life.

The show is set in current time, thus Rory is 10 years older than she was in the finale of the original show. Like "Gilmore Girls" did, the show did not fail to be littered with current pop culture references like Uber, Hamilton, and Brexit.

The first few episodes were exactly what "Gilmore Girls" fans needed. The show opens with Rory returning to Stars Hollow for a few days, and the viewers quickly learn of her remarkably successful writing career and international recognition.

For the fans who have watched Rory grow up from her days at Chilton through her years at Yale,

affirmation that Rory managed to make something of herself was exactly what fans wanted to see.

But as the show went on, the satisfaction of many fans, including myself, began to fade. Through the second and third episodes it seems as if Amy Sherman-Palladino, the show's creator, is trying too hard to squeeze the franchise for every last dollar.

Though I realize Rory and Lorelei are fictional characters whose lives have always been overdramatic to incite viewership and ratings, many moments in A Year in the Life seemed simply too contrived.

In the course of one episode that spanned only a few weeks, Lorelei stopped speaking to her mother, began keeping useless secrets from Luke, got in an explosive fight with Rory, and left Stars Hollow to "do Wild" and hike the Pacific Crest trail as seen in Cheryl Strayed's memoir.

The final scene shows Lorelei and Rory sitting on their porch... Rory tells Lorelei she has something to tell her, and the series ends with the four words that Sherman Palladino had wanted to end the original series with.

Lorelei's crisis was meant to shock viewers into continuing to watch to see if their loveable, strong

mom recovered from pretty much ripping at the seams.

But an argument with every other major character was just too much drama, and not characteristic of the Lorelei fans learned to love in "Gilmore Girls".

Instead of being so shocked that I couldn't stop watching, I became too shocked to the point where all I wanted to do was turn off my computer. Lorelei and Rory always seemed real to me. Like many other fans, I identified with their coffee addictions and friend troubles. The seemingly never-ending drama with Lorelei came across to me as simply too fake.

Sadly, this drama only continued to the end of the series.

The series ends with gut-wrenching words. The final scene shows Lorelei and Rory sitting on their porch, conversing. Rory tells Lorelei she has something to tell her, and the series ends with the four words that Sherman Palladino had wanted to end the original series with.

In writing the series, those words probably seemed delightfully full-circle. Add drama to what should be a merely satisfying ending, it exhausts the viewer instead of appeasing her.

Though some fans may wonder in joy about what comes next and long for a sequel, those words exhausted me. All I could think about was, "Oh god, this again."

All in all, I was happy to delve again into the lives of Rory and Lorelei. But the series went too far in their quest to satisfy fans. Looking back, I would have been happier if I hadn't watched the sequel.

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