



Curious George



Basic Release Information

Genre: Children's, Animated, Comedy
Release Date: February 10, 2006
DVD Release Date: September 26, 2006
Running Time: 84 minutes

Box Office Results

Opening Weekend: \$14,703,405 in 2,566 theaters
Total Gross: \$58,360,760
Closing Date: May 4, 2006
In Release: 84 days / 12 weeks

“Every time we diverted from the essence of those H.A. Rey illustrations, it was always frustrating, it was always a little disappointing. Ultimately, we decided that instead of reinventing it, let’s celebrate it.”

Producer Ron Howard

Synopsis

It was just another day at the Bloomsberry Museum. Ted, the usual guide of the museum, is giving a tour to a group of schoolchildren and their teacher,

Maggie, who, by the way, has a crush on Ted. After the tour, the museum's owner, Mr. Bloomsberry, informs Ted the museum has to close because attendance is too low. Bloomsberry Jr. is pleased, as he has other plans for the museum. But suddenly, those plans are foiled by a plan his father comes up with.

In a last ditch effort to save the museum, Mr. Bloomsberry tells Ted of his secret journal with a map to a lost shrine of the African tribe of Zagawa. All Ted needs to do is find the idol, bring it back to the museum, and suddenly Bloomsberry Museum will be famous again with a never before seen new exhibit. At first Ted wasn't sure, but with Mr. Bloomsberry's journal in hand, what could go wrong. So, off to Africa he goes in search of the Zagawa idol.

All doesn't go according to plan. Bloomsberry Jr. wants to convert the museum into a parking lot, so he plans to sabotage the African excursion. Once in the jungle, a mischievous little monkey spies Ted. Seeing Ted's bright yellow hat, Curious George decides to make friends with the visitors to his jungle thus making the search for the idol a little more complicated.

After searching the jungle, Ted finds what he believes to be the ancient idol of the African tribe of Zagawa. However, he's shocked to discover that instead of being gigantic, it's actually quite tiny. He sends a picture of his discovery to Mr. Bloomsberry who believes the idol is huge and begins making plans for the Grand Opening of a brand new exhibit showing off the gigantic idol. Ted, feeling somewhat down from what he believes is a failed venture, succumbs to the charm of his newfound playful monkey friend. When it's time to leave Africa and head back for home, Ted doesn't realize his new friend, Curious George, stows away onboard the ship.

Once home, things go from bad to worse when through a series of events, Ted finds himself without a job, and heading back to Africa to return George to his natural habitat. But alas, the movie doesn't end in Africa. No, in true Curious George style, (but without giving away the ending), they all live happily ever after.

Review

How can you go wrong with such a classic children's story as this? For more than 65 years, a little monkey named Curious George has captured the hearts and imaginations of young and old all over the world. Over 30 million copies of H.A. Rey's books have been sold in 17 languages, and the original story of Curious George has never been out of print since it was first published. However, this is the first time he's hit the big screen and Ron Howard does an incredible job

producing this animated feature film. One aspect of this movie placing it above other animated films of the time, revolves around the fact Ron Howard decided to stick with simple animation. In a world of clamation and other 3D movie tricks, it's refreshing to see simple cartoon animation done like it should be. Of course, the choice of animation style helps remind us of the classic story of Curious George we've read for years in books.

Will Ferrell is the voice of The Man in the Yellow Hat and personally, as we walked out of the theater, we commented to one another that it's probably the best thing we've seen him, or should we say heard him, do. Ferrell has a tendency to over-act while constantly reaching for the joke. This could be a result of his years with Saturday Night Live where they always seem to be reaching for humor. Unfortunately, on the big screen this just doesn't work for him. However, when he's an animated character working with a monkey, all is well. There are other great names lending their voices for the movie as well. Drew Barrymore plays Maggie while Dick Van Dyke captures the character of Professor Bloomsberry wonderfully. Dick Van Dyke has been fascinating audiences for years with his slapstick fall down comedy, and he shines once again in this role.

Another aspect of Curious George making it a great movie, is the music. Jack Johnson writes and performs his own songs written specifically for the movie. I'm sure part of the challenge in such a project revolved around making the music carry some of the story line, especially since Curious George does not talk. Johnson rose to the challenge aiming to make the words and music coincide with the thoughts and feelings of Curious George. The end result, a soundtrack strategically woven through the storyline and plot of the movie, adding to a sense of excitement and understanding while viewing it. Just how good is the soundtrack you ask? It's so good I have it in my collection.

Family-Friendly Review

Yes, you simply can't go wrong with this movie. It's family friendly all around. Take the whole family, young and old, and everyone will enjoy it! Throughout the movie, kids in the theater sat captivated by what was going on. It's colorful, fun, and yes, it has something for the whole family. Kids will laugh, and there are even a few inside jokes for adults, including an incredible King Kong sight gag! For adults, the plot holds solid through the entire movie, and it even has a surprise twist ending that just might catch you by surprise. It's refreshing to see a family-friendly G-rated movie with jokes for the whole family. Many times such movies go for crude inside jokes to keep the adults' attention, but Ron Howard

did not choose that road. For this, we certainly do applaud him.

Once again, just as with the books, many lessons are learned from Curious George. Ted shows loyalty to both Professor Bloomsberry and George and he's willing to make sacrifices for both of them. He accepts responsibility for his own mistakes, and in the end says the museum must be saved because "the world needs a place where kids' brains can grow." Maggie sees the good in everyone, and even Professor Bloomsberry discovers he needs to pay more attention to his own son encouraging him in his ventures.

As with anything, there are some changes in the storyline as compared to the original 1941 Curious George books. In those, The Man in the Yellow Hat was a gun-toting poacher. Also in the original, George isn't a stowaway. Instead, he's lured with the yellow hat and caught in a bag and taken home. Once in the big city, the man then teaches George how to drink booze and smoke a pipe. As a result of the slight changes to the storyline of this Curious George, one could say we have a George and a story teaching more positive lessons than the original.

Discussion Starters

- Even though we laugh at the mischievous Curious George, what lessons can we learn from him and his behavior?
- What does Ted teach us about loyalty?
- Is it ever okay to lie?
 - Remember the line in the movie that says, "Do you just want me to tell you what you want to hear?"