



# ABC CLARION

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## On Friendship

by Victoria Tian

One of the biggest lessons you learn quite early on in life is the importance of friendship. Success comes and goes, wealth can dissipate in the blink of an eye, and even health fluctuates over time. Friends, or the family you create for yourself, are one of the more reliable ways to ensure happiness. They help you create amazing memories on what would otherwise be ordinary days and allow you to bounce back after depressing events happen to

you.

Unfortunately, friendship can also be the cause of extreme unhappiness. Many people struggle with finding a friend group that suits them, and others feel dissatisfied with the social relationships they are already in. These issues tend to crop up as a result of the picture in our minds of what true, ideal friendship is supposed to be. The aforementioned image usually consists of a tight-knit clique of like-minded

people who hang out together frequently, know pretty much everything about each other, and have plenty of inside jokes that no one else outside of the group would understand. Unfortunately, not everyone can have something like this. But the fact that some people do not should be considered perfectly okay, even normal.

Here are some harsh, not-commonly-known truths about friendship that everyone should be

aware of ahead of time.

1. Genuine friendship is rare. You meet a lot of people in your life, and you become friends with some of them. However, you should consider yourself lucky if you manage to have one person who is truly there for you through thick and thin over a long period of time. Extremely lucky if there are two or more of these such people in your life. Although everyone is supposed to have a best friend, it doesn't always happen.

2. Quite a few friendships are one-sided. It's heartbreaking. Friendship has to be a two-way street. Let go of the relationship if the other person does not reciprocate. On the other hand, if you are the one who is not putting in your part, either do so immediately or stop the relationship. It is not fair to the other person if he/she is still putting in time and effort to try to make it work.

3. Some friendships will just disappear. Either you guys don't see each other much anymore, or

you both have joined new friend groups, or you just realize that you never quite knew each other in the first place. People can outgrow another person too. Don't place the blame on yourself or anyone else, and don't spend too much time dwelling on the matter. Accept the truth, and move on.

4. The situation you are in now is not forever. Try to be as happy as you can with the relationships you are in at the moment, because they may all fade in a heartbeat when circumstances shift. The same holds true if you aren't satisfied with your current relationships; know that they are only temporary. For instance, if it feels like no one around you really "gets" you, don't worry too much about it. You will be able to meet plenty of new individuals in the future. And if you don't feel that close to your friend group, understand that most of you guys will probably grow apart and move on one day anyway.

## Zootopia Review

by Siyu Hou

After *Let It Go* became a household song in 2014 with the release of *Frozen*, Walt Disney Animation Studios has done it again, bringing out its second biggest release of all time (behind *Frozen*), *Zootopia*. As you can probably derive from the title, the movie is about animals. Set in a world where, thanks to evolution, animals are stripped of their savage nature and are able to thrive in relative harmony, the story centers on Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin), a rabbit who comes to the city with a big dream but learns about reality the hard way in a seemingly hearty and convivial society as she embarks on a journey with fox Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman).

Since its release on March 4th, the animated feature has hopped into both people's hearts and the \$800 million box office bracket. It has even garnered an impressive 98% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes. In fact, *Zootopia's* commercial success and appeal to both critics and viewers shouldn't come off as a surprise. Take a quick glance at recent well performing animated movies and you will see a trend emerging. From *Inside Out* in 2015 to *Kung Fu Panda 3* in 2016, studios seem to have figured out the golden ingredient for luscious box office numbers: bombard the audience with cute and adorable looking characters. After all, who would be able to resist a fluffy and clumsy baby Po that smiles with watery puppy eyes, let alone a

whole village of them? The fact that out of the plethora of positive commentaries many resort to denoting the characters' lovable looks suggests that consideration for other aspects are easily overlooked when there is overwhelming visual appeal. The filmmakers at Walt Disney Animation Studios, taking advantage of this trend, certainly did not fail to deliver stunningly designed sets and characters in *Zootopia*. Disregarding all else, an animated feature is worth the ticket if it depicts a world visually alluring enough that at the end of the movie, the viewers long to live in it. *Zootopia* does exactly that. The design of its metropolis is so delicately structured that one would genuinely think animals live a better life than humans. The initial scene of Judy's arrival by train is perhaps one of the most remarkable parts of the movie. The long shot of the grandiose urban jungle paired with Shakira's catchy "Try Everything" is imbued with vivacity and élan, immediately instilling a sense of ambitious excitement in the audience for the incoming adventure. Furthermore, the movements and facial expressions of each character are animated with such meticulous vividness that the viewers are able to overlook the anthropomorphic nature of the movie and relate to Judy and others as if they were humans.

On that note, the movie's success has just as much to do with

its applicability to the real world as with its pleasant visuals, garnering appreciation from both adults and children with its multi-layered significance. The animal charmer keeps children engaged with a twisting plot and conveys a universal theme of pursuing one's dreams. However, when looked at with a more mature perspective, the film addresses real-world sociopolitical issues such as prejudice, racism, and gender discrimination. One can easily parse the parallels between prejudice in *Zootopia* and many prevailing biases in our civilization. The latent tension between predators and prey reflects the marginalization of certain groups of people in our society. And the discrimination that Judy experiences as other animals regard her as the "dumb and cute bunny" reflects the unequal treatment of different genders in the real world. Thus, perhaps the movie's most notable aspect is its nuance in exploring topics which even live-action movies are often hesitant to shed light on. To prevent its not-so-subtle real life applications from dominating the film's focus and becoming heavy handed, witty filmmakers keep adult viewers busy with references - nod to *Godfather* - and appropriate mature humor. At the end of the day, one can observe movie theaters where parents are cracking up instead of dozing off in front of a kid's movie.

## The End

by Audrey Zhou

The beginning  
the flower buds,  
the start of something new,  
everything is simple,  
youthful and friendly,  
small white roses grow,

They blossom,  
the sun shines through  
through the glistening branches of trees,  
the bees buzz  
busy with their work,  
the roses become more beautiful,  
a sweet smell enveloping the surroundings,  
simple is the surroundings now,  
bitter is what will follow,

Abruptly it hits,  
the lightning strikes,  
the thunder roars  
as the storm rages on,  
protected beneath a tree,  
the roses continue to grow,  
slight thorns emerging below,  
distant is the world,  
awaiting the wind,  
they grow in angst,  
some ignore their fate,  
others anticipate it,  
all to be blindsided by the blast,  
for nothing can really prepare you for  
the end.

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