

'Sausage Party' has enough meat to earn it a recommendation

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 12 August 2016 00:35



Rating: ««« out of 4 stars

Running Time: 89 min.

Occasionally, when you watch a movie, you wonder whether the creators were smoking something when they wrote it. Very rarely, however, is one absolutely convinced. OK, one can't say with absolute certainty how *Sausage Party* came about, but it's easy to imagine creators Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg, and Jonah Hill dreaming this one up on the couch in a cloud of smoke.

Regardless of how it came to be, the result is a uniquely vulgar and outrageous R-rated animated comedy that provides laughs and gross-outs in equal measure.

Each and every morning, the products at Shopwell's awaken and sing a song created by the heavens that tells them their purpose in life... to be chosen by the gods (human shoppers) and taken to "The Great Beyond." But when a crazed, wild-eyed bottle of Honey Mustard (Danny McBride) returns from the outside with a different tale of what lies beyond the store doors, sausage Frank (Seth Rogen) begins to question everything.

After an accident separates him from his package mates, he goes on a mission with his sweetheart bun Brenda (Kristen Wiig) and other products to learn the truth. In the process, they are pursued by The Douche (Nick Kroll). And yes, he's *literally* a douche, out on a personal vendetta against the sausage.

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There’s more outrageous material, but it would take too long to go into. Pretty much every double-entendre and visual pun involving food comes into play over the course of the running.

The film could easily have fallen flat, but the talented voice work from the leads, as well as the likes of Edward Norton, Craig Robinson, Jonah Hill, Bill Hader, and Paul Rudd deliver the material with impeccable timing.

Visually, this isn’t exactly a Pixar production, but the images possess a unique and original visual style. There are a few creative angles interspersed as the characters move through the shop and are carried around by various customers.

While the jokes may be rude, there’s a welcome subversive streak that adds a little more weight to the humor.

Obviously, the store is a microcosm of society, and various religions are satirized or poked fun at over the course of the movie — even products on different aisles have interpreted the song differently and adapted wildly contrasting belief systems.

Along the way, the main characters have to come to grips with what they’ve learned as well as influence change and a better tomorrow for their kind. Of course, in this story, it comes in the form of a bizarre supermarket revolution of sorts, but it all adds a little extra food for thought (pardon the expression).

The humor isn’t always on the mark and is sometime a bit on-the-nose, but there are several hits that result in chuckles and shocked guffaws.

There are three or four outrageous moments in particular that really stand out. The opening musical number is very entertaining. Michael Cera voices Barry, whose trip outside the store results in consistently hysterical material.

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Other great moments include a trip to the home of a drug addict (James Franco), as well as an elaborate, over-the-top confrontation during the climax between good supermarket products, bad supermarket products, and shoppers.

There's a dark sense of humor, and some surprisingly grim things happen to the characters, adding to the shock-value. And yep, viewers should also prepare themselves for a bizarre food orgy, too.

Sausage Party is certainly unlike any other film of its kind out there; I can't think of another animated escapade in which a character cooks up bath salts like heroin and injects them for a psychedelic high. This is certainly an antidote to the family friendly material that dominates this style of feature. Sure, the tale is dopey and uncouth at points, but it's breezily paced and pushes boundaries. It is most certainly not for everyone, but there's definitely enough meat in *Sausage Party* to earn it a recommendation.

***By Glenn Kay
For the Sun***