

‘I Am Groot’ is a lighthearted 20 minute experience

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: ««

out of «««««

Running Time:
21 minutes

(5 animated shorts, roughly 4 minutes per shot)

This series of animated shorts is available to stream exclusively on Disney+.

As the summer winds down, August is typically seen as a month that doesn't offer quite as many high-profile films. 2022 is an anomaly in that there are very few new movies in general. There will certainly be a few notable efforts in the coming weeks, but it truly feels like an abnormally muted close to the season.

In fact, the horror/comedy “Bodies Bodies Bodies” is the only new flick arriving at cinemas. It is receiving plenty of positive buzz, but wasn't screened early enough in this reviewer's neck of the

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woods to make print deadlines. Thankfully, there is one unusual property that is being made available on the Disney+ streaming platform and Marvel Studios.

"I Am Groot" is a series of very brief animated shorts about the "Guardians of the Galaxy" character that is arriving on Disney+. For those unfamiliar with the film series, the titular tree-like alien generally referred to as Baby Groot is the central protagonist of these episodes. Each segment details an element of the cute plant's experiences growing up. While the tone is humorous and many cracks revolve around the lead acting just like a human infant, there are a couple of adult-themed gags and shocks in which the character lashes out more violently against foes.

"Groot's First Steps" shows the protagonist feeling jealous after the arrival of another plant on Star-Lord Peter Quill's spaceship. The insecure creature breaks free from his pot and attempts to assert dominance as the prime piece of foliage onboard. It features a few chuckles, but is very simple and doesn't include any real threat to the protagonist or big thrills.

"The Little Guy" fares better, following Baby Groot exploring the surface of a planet and finding new and tiny lifeforms beneath the dirt. After treating these beings like ants, the alien experiences a comeuppance from the dirt-dwellers. More of the jokes land in this segment and the otherworldly visuals and new extraterrestrial beings have a striking appearance.

The third and fourth episodes are the best ones in the set. "Groot's Pursuit" involves the tree-figure in pajamas and wearing a headlamp while investigating an invader on the ship. There's more suspense in this clip. It also involves an entertaining and unexpected confrontation and an effective final twist at its close.

The next short, "Groot Takes a Bath," is a series of simple but genuinely funny sight gags involving the character cleansing himself in an otherworldly mud bath and becoming something of a living Chia Pet. A lot of unexpected foliage begins growing on the figure in a variety of places, resulting in some surprised reactions and entertaining play as the character tries out some new looks.

The final bit, "Magnum Opus," includes an appearance by one of the lead's best friends. The story involves Baby Groot attempting to paint a family portrait and causing chaos on the ship,

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destroying important equipment while seeking out necessary art supplies. Like others in the program, this short is well animated. It does feature an entertainingly exasperated comment from a shipmate, but the specific material does not lend itself to as many humorous sights or rib-tickling moments as the previous two shorts.

In the end, it's all very slickly produced. But readers should also be aware that the shorts are little more than an excuse to deliver a gag or two and little else. There is nothing here that ties into future movies and the programs are over so quickly that there isn't any character development. Viewers don't learn anything new about Baby Groot, only that the infant acts just like a curious, jealous and occasionally angry human newborn.

In the end, "I Am Groot" is a lighthearted 20 minutes that'll provide a few laughs, but isn't essential in any way. If you already have Disney+ it's a chuckle, but this title alone certainly shouldn't inspire any Marvel film enthusiasts to order the steaming app.

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