

# ***“How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World”***

By Helen Lutz

Hollywood loves sequels especially when the first one is successful. Sometimes sequels work like with “The Fast and Furious,” the Bourne series and the Harry Potter movies. Others don’t end up so well like “Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights” and that ever popular “Son of The Mask.” Many of us still enjoy two beloved animated story lines, “Toy Story” and “Shrek.” Watching them never seems to get old.



Director Dean DeBlois delivers the third installment of his much loved “How to Train Your Dragon” series in “How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World.” Jay Baruchel and America Ferrera reprise their roles as our Viking leading man and lady, Hiccup and Astrid. Hiccup now holds the position of chief of their tribe’s delightful village of Berk where the Vikings and dragons live in harmony. The creativity and colors of both the town and the dragons are vivid and bring life to the characters.

As the movie opens we watch Hiccup lead a raid on some very unfriendly dragon hunter ships. Not everyone lives in peace with the dragons which are still hunted and traded. In a not so surprise attack, Hiccup and his team set all the dragons free, except for one. The one is a very special translucent Night Fury which sadly goes unseen.

Unfortunately, Hiccup’s dragon raids attract the attention of the despicable Grimmel, a Dragon Killer voiced by F. Murray Abraham. Grimmel has killed almost all the Night Fury dragons and is in search of Hiccup’s Toothless. What better way to draw the dragon out but with a beautiful female Night Fury as bait?

Back in Berk the Vikings and dragons are struggling with overpopulation. With each successful raid, the town becomes more crowded and resources stretched. Hiccup remembers his father telling him tales of a Hidden World where dragons live in peace and harmony somewhere at the edge of the world (the world is still considered flat). Taking flight with his dragon sidekick Toothless, the last Night Fury, Hiccup goes in search of the Hidden World as well as a new place for his tribe to settle.

DeBlois takes us on an adventure as Hiccup and Toothless search for the Hidden World and a safe place to resettle the Vikings and dragons. However, much like the song “Puff, the Magic Dragon” Hiccup’s and Toothless’ relationship continues to grow and with growth comes more and more independence. Hiccup finds that he is drawn to Astrid while Toothless spends time away with the lovely Night Fury now named Light Fury (she is an amazing character). Will Hiccup and Toothless ever find the Hidden World? Can the dragons ever be totally safe? Will Grimmel be successful in trapping Toothless?

In this final chapter of “How to Train Your Dragon” Hiccup finds that he has grown into a man and strong leader and not just due to the strength of Toothless. It’s a story of the coming of age for both Hiccup and Toothless as the bonds of friendship begin to loosen and our two main characters explore and experience the progression of life; not necessarily together.

“How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World” is nothing short of delightful. The story is simple and sweet which keeps kids of all ages smiling. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World” ♡♡♡♡. This one will steal your Hart. Good spoiler: the journey into the Hidden World will take your breath away as it is the most beautiful animation I’ve ever seen – the black light special effects are spectacular ... well worth the price of admission and popcorn.