

“Dr. Suess’ The Grinch”

By Helen Lutz

What two colors first pop into mind when Christmas is mentioned? Most of us would answer ‘red’ which is the color of jolly Santa’s suit. The other is ‘green’ which brings to mind the color of Dr. Suess’ Grinch; bet you thought I was going to say Christmas trees – fooled you. Illumination Entertainment brings the Grinch back to life in full animated color as we enter the Christmas season in “Dr. Suess’ The Grinch” voiced by Benedict Cumberbatch. “The Grinch” follows the Dr. Suess story of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” first published in 1957 which was intended to criticize the commercialism of the holiday. Since the original animated feature in 1966, “The Grinch Who Stole Christmas” has become a staple of the Christmas cartoons along with “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” “Frosty the Snowman,” and “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.”



As the story opens we see a fabulous Whoville decorating for the holidays. All the Whos are in the Christmas Spirit as the town welcomes the season and arrival of Santa Claus. High above Whoville, atop Mount Crumpit, the Grinch lives alone in his cave with his trusty dog Max. I found the creativity of the Grinch’s cave fun and interesting as well as the Max character. Every morning Max prepares the Grinch his special latte complete with a frowny face and brings it up to his bedroom via a dumb waiter along with breakfast.

Breakfast presents a bit of a problem for the Grinch. He thought he had prepared for the long winter; however, it seems some binge eating has left his cupboards bare. It’s necessary for him to travel down the mountain to Whoville to restock during his least favorite time of the year. It’s fun to watch as he traverses the city trying to dodge the merriment.

The Grinch runs into ‘Mr. Whoville Christmas’ – none other than Mr. Brickelbaum (voiced by Kenan Thompson) who has the biggest Christmas display and embodies the spirit. Brickelbaum also considers himself a best bud of the Grinch. During their encounter the Grinch learns that Whoville is planning a Christmas three times bigger than any they’ve ever celebrated. The very thought of this is more than the Grinch can stand.

Back in his cave he devises his plan to steal Christmas. He’s the first bad Santa as he goes looking for a sleigh. Of course a sleigh will require reindeer and Fred is a nice addition to the story. Since his closet only holds suits fitting his mood of the day: Wretched, Miserable, Very Miserable, Nasty and Grumpy, it’s necessary for him to put together his ‘Santa’ suit, complete with white fur. He’ll sneak into the Whos’ houses and steal their presents, decorations and feasts on Christmas Eve dressed as Santa.

Little Cindy Lou also plots a Christmas Eve plan to catch Santa. She’s grown up a bit, but needs to ask Santa for a special gift. Watching her plan the trap with her little friends is funny, however, I think that “The Grinch” got a PG rating due to a well placed cookie (a scene which is funny but could/should have been left on the cutting room floor).

Directors Yarrow Cheney and Scott Mosier fill “The Grinch” with extra fluff to turn the original cartoon into a 90 minute movie. The Grinch’s undersized heart still expands to full size plus when his theft of Christmas doesn’t destroy the spirit of the Whos; and yes, he still gets to carve the Roast Beast. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “Dr. Suess’ The Grinch” ♡♡ 1/2. Whoville is beautifully imagined and the story well-told even without Boris Karloff – and I really like Fred.