

Wish Dragon

Wish Dragon is a 2021 animated fantasy comedy film written and directed by Chris Appelhans^[6] (in his feature directorial debut) and produced by Sony Pictures Animation and Tencent Pictures. The film stars Jimmy Wong, John Cho, Constance Wu, Natasha Liu Bordizzo, Jimmy O. Yang, Aaron Yoo, Will Yun Lee, and Ronny Chieng. Jackie Chan produced the film and voiced Cho's role in the Chinese Mandarin version.^[7]

Wish Dragon was released theatrically in China on January 15, 2021 and on Netflix internationally on June 11, 2021.^{[8][9]}

Plot

Din is a working-class college student in Shanghai who dreams of reuniting with his childhood friend Li Na, who moved away ten years ago from their neighborhood with her father, Mr. Wang, and now lives a lavish life. One day, Din is given a teapot by an elderly man, from which emerges Long, a wish dragon. Long informs Din he will grant three wishes to his master, i.e. whomever holds the teapot. Din will be Long's tenth and final master and will free Long from his servitude, allowing him to enter the Spirit world. Subsequently, Din is chased by a trio of goons led by a man named Pockets, sent by Mr. Wang to recover the teapot in hopes of saving his failing business. Din uses his first wish to fight the goons and escape.

The next day, Din and Long arrive at Li Na's birthday party. Din makes his second wish—to temporarily appear as a wealthy princeling for one day, hoping Li Na will notice him and rekindle their friendship. Li Na is disappointed when she learns her father will not be attending her birthday party. Din, sticking to his disguise as 'Dan', comforts her and they are asked by Mr. Wang (via a video call) to share a meal together. Long warns Din that Li Na will leave him as soon as she finds out his identity, because of their different socioeconomic status.

During the date, Din asks Long for advice on how to act accordingly to his new status, but ends up upsetting Li Na in the process. They both end up in Din's neighborhood after the goons pursue Din again. Din reveals himself to Li Na, and they spend the rest of the day in the neighborhood reliving their childhood pastimes. However, Li Na finally retreats claiming that she has

<i>Wish Dragon</i>	
 <div>Official release poster</div>	
Directed by	Chris Appelhans
Written by	Chris Appelhans
Produced by	Aron Warner <div></div> Chris Bremble <div></div> Jackie Chan
Starring	Jimmy Wong <div></div> John Cho <div></div> Constance Wu <div></div> Natasha Liu Bordizzo <div></div> Jimmy O. Yang <div></div> Aaron Yoo <div></div> Will Yun Lee <div></div> Ronny Chieng
Edited by	Michael Andrews
Music by	Philip Klein ^[1]
Production companies	Columbia Pictures <div></div> Sony Pictures Animation

responsibilities and expectations she needs to meet, hurting Din's feelings. Later that night, Din angrily asks Long to make him rich in a last-ditch effort to be respected. Long reveals to Din that in life he was a wealthy and powerful lord whose reign ended in loneliness and tragedy and was punished by the gods for his selfishness by becoming a wish dragon. Long's servitude as a wish dragon is meant to make him appreciate the meaning of life, something he has failed to accomplish with all of his previous masters.

After tracking down Din, Pockets betrays Mr. Wang by taking the teapot for himself and asks the wish dragon for his first wish to turn everything he touches to gold. He drops Mr. Wang from a large scaffolding, mortally wounding him in front of Li Na. Din chases the goons, and eventually ends up fighting Pockets on Long's back. Pockets corners Din and prepares to hit him with his golden hand, but Long puts himself in the way, causing both him and Pockets (who accidentally touched himself) to turn into gold statues. Din is unable to stop Long's statue from sinking to the bottom of a river, while Pockets shatters to pieces against the ground.

Long finds his human self at the entrance to the Spirit world. Despite being tempted to go through the gates, he pleads with the guardian of the gate to return to Din because he has not used his third wish. The guardian agrees, on one condition. Din uses his last wish to heal Mr. Wang, and Long disappears.

Sometime later, Mr. Wang starts a restaurant featuring Din's mother's cooking, with both Din and Li Na helping. Din finds a teapot like the one Long resided in and releases him. Long tells Din the sole condition for his return to Earth was to stay and serve ten more masters. After saying goodbye to Long, Din places the teapot on a carriage driven by the elderly man from the beginning, who is actually the guardian of the gate to the Spirit world.

[Beijing Sparkle Roll Media Corporation](#)
[Tencent Pictures Base Media](#)
[Flagship Entertainment Group](#)
Boss Collaboration Cultural Investment Holdings

Distributed by	Sony Pictures Releasing (China) Netflix (International)
Release dates	January 15, 2021 (China) June 11, 2021 (International)
Running time	98 minutes ^[2]
Countries	United States China
Languages	Mandarin English
Budget	\$25 million ^[3]
Box office	\$25.9 million ^{[4][5]}

Voice cast

- [Jimmy Wong](#) as Din Song, a working-class college student who dreams to reunite with his childhood friend Li Na
 - [Ian Chen](#) as young Din
- [John Cho](#) as Long, a cynical but all-powerful dragon capable of granting wishes
 - [Max Charles](#) as young Long
- [Constance Wu](#) as Mrs. Song, Din's strict but loving mother
- [Natasha Liu Bordizzo](#) as Li Na Wang, Din's childhood friend, who moved with her father years ago from the neighborhood where she lived and now lives a lavish life

- [Alyssa Abiera](#) as young Li Na
- [Jimmy O. Yang](#) as Short Goon, one of Pockets' goons; and a security guard
- [Aaron Yoo](#) as Pockets, a henchman hired by Wang to retrieve the teapot that Din has
- [Will Yun Lee](#) as Mr. Wang, Li Na's absent but caring father, whose company business is failing
- [Ronny Chieng](#) as Pipa God, the guardian of the gate to the Spirit world

[Nico Santos](#) and [Bobby Lee](#) voice, respectively: Buckley, Mr. Wang's assistant; and Diao (credited as "Tall Goon"), one of Pockets' goons. The film's director [Chris Appelhans](#) voices a hot towel waiter and a Nomani retailer. [Niu Junfeng](#) and [Jackie Chan](#) voice Din and Long, respectively, in the film's Mandarin dub.

Production

Wish Dragon is the first [Sony Pictures Animation](#) film to be produced by Base Animation, a new animation studio that is part of the VFX firm Base FX and also the first to feature visual effects and animation provided by [Industrial Light & Magic](#). The goal of the film and the Base Animation studio is to "make world class animation in China for China... and the world". Writer and director Chris Appelhans "wanted the film made in China, with a strong Mainland China creative team, an international cast of talent, and a focus on the hopes and dreams of contemporary China."^[10] The film is Appelhans' directorial debut.^[11] The film was officially completed on January 8, 2020.^[12]

Music

- "Endless Sky" by Weilin Lin, Kenton Chen and Katherine Ho
- "Free Smiles" by Tia Ray and Far East Movement
- "Bu Liao Qing (Love Without End)" by Carrie Koo Mei

Release

Wish Dragon was originally scheduled to be released on July 26, 2019, but at the [Annecy International Animated Film Festival](#) it was confirmed that it was delayed to 2020.^[13] In October, it was confirmed by *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts'* creator Radford Sechrist (who served as head of story on the film) that the film would instead be released in 2021.^[14] The film was released in China on January 15, 2021.

The film was released on [Netflix](#) on June 11, 2021, as part of its summer slate.^[9]

Reception

Critical reception

On review aggregator [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film holds an approval rating of 68% based on 25 reviews, with an average rating of 6.10/10. The site's critical consensus reads, "Although its juvenile humor may test some viewers' patience, *Wish Dragon* is a colorful and quirky romp that will warm audience's hearts."^[15] On [Metacritic](#), the film has a [weighted average](#) score of 59 out of 100 based on reviews from six critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".^[16]

Jennifer Green of *Common Sense Media* gave the film four stars out of five, saying it was "a China-set animated comedy has great messages, some scares."^[17] Peter Debruge of *Variety Magazine* wrote the film "contemporary China-based fantasy boasts a charming riff on '*Aladdin*.'"^[18] Natalia Winkelman of *The New York Times* wrote that "TBA"^[19] Petrana Radulovic of *Polygon* wrote that it was "doesn't go particular far beyond predictable parameters, but that isn't necessarily bad. It can be enough to see what well-worn fairy tale plot elements look like in an entirely new setting, one that gives them new resonance and relevance."^[20] Caroline Siede of *The A.V. Club* gave the film a rate 'B-' and wrote "thoughtful if slightly underbaked commentary on hustle culture and social status in the modern era," and noted that "the youngest of viewers could probably recognize they're watching *Aladdin* transported to 21st-century China."^[21] Sandy Schaefer of *Comic Book Resources* wrote that "it's a mostly enjoyable spin on a familiar tale that has valuable lessons to impart [...]."^[22] Mae Abdulbaki of *Screen Rant* gave the rate three stars out of five, writing that "a heartwarming, charming film with a great message and lovely characters." She also noted that the animation style is "exciting as well, sharp, distinct, and colorful."^[23] Joseph Stanichar of *Paste Magazine* says "A simple, cute, unoriginal animated film that seldom impresses, but still warms your heart a little."^[24]

Accolades

Year	Award	Category	Nominee	Result	Ref.
2021	Ursa Major Awards	Best Motion Picture	Chris Appelhans	Nominated	^[25]
2022	49th Annie Awards	Best Character Animation - Feature	Ketan Adikhari	Nominated	^[26]

Notes

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External links

- [Official website](https://www.sonypicturesanimation.com/projects/films/wish-dragon) (<https://www.sonypicturesanimation.com/projects/films/wish-dragon>)
 - *Wish Dragon* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5562070/>) at [IMDb](#)
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