

# **Disney's *Feast* Analysis and Review**

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*Feast* is an animated romantic comedy short film from Walt Disney Animation Studios and was directed by Patrick Osborn. The story was created by Raymond S. Persi and Nicole Mitchell, and the production designer was Jeff Turley. At the Annecy International Animated Film festival, it premiered on June 10, 2014. It won the Best Animated Short Film award at the 87th Academy Awards and the Annie Award for Best Animated Short Subjects at the 42nd Annie Awards.

The film shows a family through the meals a dog eats. The protagonist is a Boston Terrier puppy called Winston. He is adopted by James, who feeds him all sorts of tasty junk food. The majority of the film is different shots of Winston gulping down delicious-looking food. James gets into a relationship with Kirby, and this causes Winston to only have greens to eat, which he detests. He gets angry and protests to no avail. However, James and Kirby break up, and Winston gets to eat junk food again. Winston is very happy until he notices James holding a parsley and being depressed, which is when he decides to help the two get back together again. Winston bites the parsley and runs to Kirby while resisting the food in his way, with James running after him. James and Kirby reunite and marry, and Winston is shown with a modest meal. However, he seems very content. Afterwards, a meatball rolls towards Winston, and when he follows the trail he sees James and Kirby's baby. The resolution shows Winston happily frolicking with kids with access to his favorite food.

The story has a solid structure, with all of the beats where they should be. The inciting incident is when Winston encounters James, and we enter act two with Winston being adopted. The fun and games or rising action beat is Winston eating various foods. The midpoint is usually when some significant change or event takes place, and in *Feast* it is when James meets Kirby. The enemies close in beat is when Winston only has his hated greens to eat, and the all is lost is

when Kirby leaves. The dark night of the soul is when Winston sees James' depressed face, and the break into act three is when Winston races to search for Kirby. The climax is James and Kirby meeting again, and the resolution is their marriage and Winston's new life with the kids. What I found interesting was the opposite emotional arcs of Winston and James. When James was at his lowest after breaking up with Kirby, Winston became happy after being able to eat his favorite food again. When James reunited with Kirby, Winston ended up back to having modest meals. Of course, Winston's inner need is fulfilled since he looks satisfied, and his external want for food is also satisfied again in the resolution. There isn't a clear-cut story message, but Winston managed to be emotionally fulfilled by helping James and Kirby at the expense of his own wants, and ends up getting the food he desired anyway precisely because of his actions. One could say what goes around, comes around.

In making the short film, the Disney animators drew a lot of sketches of real Boston Terriers, exaggerating and humanizing their emotions. Storyboarding ideas were done on paper, and images of potential scenes were pinned on a board to be easily rearranged. Everything was designed in great detail, such as the dynamics of Winston's tongue. *Feast* has a unique artstyle involving solid blacks of color with no lines, which made clarity a challenge. In an interview with Patrick Osborne, he mentioned that each frame had "nothing simulated, nothing automatic, it's all an artist shaping each thing." *Feast* was the first time the Meander system, which was developed for Paperman, was used in color. The final rendering was done with Hyperion, which was built for *Big Hero 6*.

The film uses squash and stretch quite subtly and sparsely. The forms are generally very solid and consistent, but in some moments, especially when Winston bounds around, the use of squash and stretch can be seen. The characters all have appeal. James is very round and

friendly-looking, while Winston has the innate appeal of a cute puppy. Everything is polished with good solid drawing, and proper anticipation is given so actions are clear. One thing that impressed me was the staging, which made excellent use of lighting and having objects frame Winston. Winston's ears are a good source of overlapping action and follow through, and his fluid movements are arced with slow in and slow out. Winston's expressions are exaggerated for clarity, without seeming overdone.

Overall, I rate this film a five out of five. I admire that it is able to have a solid storyline in such a short duration. Winston is adorable, and the visual design is excellent. The use of solid colors is unique, and possibly because of that decision the colors are vivid and evocative.

## References

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