

Wreck-It Ralph



Wreck-It Ralph is a 2012 American computer-animated family-comedy film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Pictures. It is the 52nd animated feature in the Walt Disney Animated Classics series. The film was directed by Rich Moore, who has directed episodes of *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*, and the screenplay was written by Jennifer Lee and Phil Johnston from a story by Moore, Johnston and Jim Reardon. John Lasseter served as the executive producer. The film features the voices of John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Jack McBrayer, and Jane Lynch. The film tells the story of the titular arcade game villain who rebels

against his role and dreams of becoming a hero. He travels between games in the arcade, and ultimately must eliminate a dire threat that could affect the entire arcade, and one that Ralph may have inadvertently started.

Wreck-It Ralph premiered at the El Capitan Theatre on October 29, 2012, and went into general release on November 2. The film earned \$445 million in worldwide box of-

ical and commercial success, winning the Annie Award for Best Animated Feature and receiving nominations for the Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature Film and the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. *Wreck-It*

Ralph was released on Blu-ray and DVD on March 5, 2013.



fice revenue, \$188 million of which was earned in the United States and Canada; it was met with crit-

PLOT

When Litwak's Arcade closes at night, the various video game characters leave their normal in-game roles and are free to travel to other games. Within the game *Fix-It Felix, Jr.*, the characters celebrate its titular hero but shun the game's villain character, *Wreck-It Ralph*. Back at home, Ralph finds the other characters celebrating their game's 30th anniversary without inviting him. Felix reluctantly invites Ralph to join them, but the others ostracize him, saying he would have to earn a medal, just as Felix does in their game.

At Tapper's, Ralph learns that he

can win a medal in the first-person shooter game *Hero's Duty*. Between game sessions, Ralph climbs the game's central beacon and collects the medal, accidentally hatching a Cy-Bug, one of the game's enemies. The Cy-Bug clings to Ralph as he stumbles into an escape pod that launches him out of the game. Meanwhile, with Ralph missing, a girl reports to Litwak the arcade owner that *Fix-It Felix, Jr.* is malfunctioning. Since broken games get unplugged, leaving their characters homeless, Felix goes to find Ralph.

Ralph crash-lands in *Sugar Rush*, a kart-racing game. King

Candy and the other racers refuse to let Vanellope participate, claiming that she is not really part of the game. Ralph helps Vanellope build a kart. At her home in *Diet Cola Mountain*, an unfinished racing course, he discovers that she is a natural racer.

Back in *Hero's Duty*, Felix meets Calhoun, who warns that the Cy-Bugs are capable of taking over any game they enter. Calhoun finds hundreds of Cy-Bug eggs underground, and Felix becomes imprisoned in King Candy's castle during his search for Ralph.



King Candy hacks the game's code to retrieve Ralph's medal and offers it to him, explaining that letting Vanellope race would be disastrous for both her and the game. Fearing for Vanellope's safety, Ralph wrecks the kart and returns to his own game, but finds that everyone has evacuated, expecting the game to be unplugged in the morning. Ralph then notices Vanellope's image on the *Sugar Rush* cabinet and realizes she is an intended part of the game, not a glitch.

Ralph returns to *Sugar Rush*, finds Felix and Vanellope, and asks Felix to fix the wrecked kart. When Vanellope catches up to

King Candy, her glitching reveals that he is actually Turbo, a character from an old game, *Turbotime*, who sabotaged a newer game out of jealousy, causing both to be unplugged. Vanellope escapes from Turbo, who is consumed by a Cy-Bug. The group flees the doomed game, but Vanellope finds she cannot pass through the exit. Calhoun says the game cannot be saved without a beacon to attract and kill the Cy-Bugs.

Ralph heads to *Diet Cola Mountain*, where he plans on collapsing its Mentos stalactites into

the cola at the bottom, causing a blinding eruption that would attract the bugs. Before he can finish, Turbo, merged with the Cy-Bug that had consumed him, carries him away. Ralph breaks free and dives

toward the mountain, intending to sacrifice himself to start the eruption on impact. Vanellope in turn uses her glitching abilities to save Ralph. The eruption starts and draws the Cy-Bugs to their destruction, including Turbo. Vanellope crosses the finish line, restoring her memory and status as Princess Vanellope, the game's ruler and lead character, while keeping her advantageous glitching ability. Felix and Ralph return to their game in time for Litwak to see that it still works, sparing it from being unplugged. Calhoun and Felix marry, and the characters of *Fix-It Felix, Jr.* gain a new respect for Ralph.

Video Game Cameos and References

In addition to the spoken roles, Wreck-It Ralph contains a number of other video game references, including characters and visual gags. At the meeting of video game villains, the above characters include, in addition to any mentioned above: Bowser from Super Mario Bros., Doctor Eggman from Sonic the Hedgehog, and Neff from Altered Beast.

Characters from Q*bert, including Q*bert, Coily, Slick, Sam, and Ugg, are shown as "homeless" characters and later taken in by Ralph and Felix into their game (Q*bert also speaks to Felix at one point using the signature synthesized gibberish and word-balloon symbols from his game, called Q*bertese). Scenes in Game Central Station and Tapper's bar include Chun-Li, Cammy, and Blanka from Street Fighter, Pac-Man, Blinky, Pinky, and Inky from Pac-Man, the Paperboy from Paperboy, the two paddles and the ball from Pong, Dig Dug, a Pooka, and a Fygar from Dig Dug, The Qix from Qix, Frogger from Frogger, and Peter Pepper from BurgerTime. Additionally, Lara Croft and Mario are mentioned in reference.

Additional references are based on sight gags. The "Cyborg" credited in the credits is based on Kano from Mortal Kombat and performs his famous "heart-rip" fatality on a zombie. The residents of Niceland and the bartender from Tapper are animated using a

jerky motion that spoofs the limited animation cycles of the sprites of many eight- and sixteen-bit arcade games. King Candy uses the Konami Code on an NES controller to access the programming of Sugar Rush. Throughout Game Central Station is graffiti that includes "Aerith lives," (referencing the character of Aerith Gainsborough from Final Fantasy VII), "All your base are belong to us," (an english phrase popularized from the game Zero Wing), "Sheng Long Was Here," (referencing an April Fool's joke around a made-up character Sheng Long from Street Fighter), and "Jenkins" (a nod to the popular Leeroy Jenkins meme from World of Warcraft). There is also a reference to the Metal Gear series when Ralph is searching for something in a box and finds the "Exclamation point" (with the corresponding sound effect from the game), and a Super Mushroom from Super Mario Bros. Mr. Litwak wears a black and white striped referee's shirt, a nod to the iconic outfit of Twin Galaxies founder Walter Day. One of the songs in the credits is an original work from Buckner and Garcia, previously famous for writing video game-themed songs in the 1980s. The Walt Disney Pictures closing production logo appears in a glitched state, a reference to the kill screen from many early arcade games such as Pac-Man.



CRITICAL REVIEW

Wreck-It Ralph received positive reviews from critics. The review aggregation website Rotten Tomatoes reports that 86% of critics have given the film a positive review based on 163 reviews, with an average score of 7.4/10. The site's consensus reads: "Equally entertaining for both kids and parents old enough to catch the references, Wreck-It Ralph is a clever, colorful adventure built on familiar themes and joyful nostalgia." At Metacritic, which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 top reviews from mainstream critics, calculated a score of 72 based on 36 reviews, or "Generally favorable."

The film earned an "A" from audiences polled by CinemaScore. Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun-Times gave the film 3 out of 4 stars and wrote, "More than in most animated films, the art design and color palette of Wreck-It Ralph permit unlimited sets, costumes and rules, giving the movie tireless originality and different behavior in every different cyber world." A.O. Scott of the The New York Times wrote, "The movie invites a measure of

cynicism – which it proceeds to obliterate with a 93-minute blast of color, noise, ingenuity and fun." Peter Debruge of Variety stated, "With plenty to appeal to boys and girls, old and young, Walt Disney Animation Studios has a high-scoring hit on its hands in



this brilliantly conceived, gorgeously executed toon, earning bonus points for backing nostalgia with genuine emotion." Betsy Sharkey of the Los Angeles Times said, "The movie's subversive sensibility and old-school/new-school feel are a total kick," while Justin Lowe of The Hollywood Reporter wrote, "With a mix of retro eye-candy for grown-ups and a thrilling, approachable storyline for the tykes, the film casts a wide and

beguiling net." Conversely, Christopher Orr of The Atlantic found it "overplotted and under-developed."

As of March 24, 2013, Wreck-It Ralph has grossed \$188,742,357 in North America, and \$257,100,000 in other countries, for a worldwide total of \$445,842,357. It is the fourteenth highest-grossing film of 2012, the fourth highest-grossing 2012 animated film, and the fifth highest-grossing film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios (behind The Lion King, Tangled, Aladdin, and Tarzan).

In North America, the film debuted with \$13.5 million, an above-average opening day gross for an animated film released in November. During its opening weekend, the film topped the box office with \$49 million, marking the largest Friday-to-Sunday opening for a Walt Disney Animation Studios production, nipping past Tangled's opening (\$48.8 million).

Outside North America, Wreck-It Ralph earned \$12 million on its opening weekend from six markets. Among all markets, its three largest openings were recorded in the UK, Ireland and Malta (\$7.15 million), Brazil (\$5.32 million with weekday previews), and Russia and the CIS (\$5.27 million).