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## ***“Kung Fu Panda: A Timeless Animated Masterpiece”***

By Alex Stockton

The movie series *Kung Fu Panda* is one of, if not the greatest animated film series of all time! *Kung Fu Panda* is a four-part animated movie series that revolves around the main character Po the Panda. One of the main purposes of the *Kung Fu Panda* movies is to spread its motivational messages with the world. While the films seem to be directed at an audience of children, the movies relate to people of all ages. The humor and storylines can not only hook young kids, but adults as well.. The first and arguably the best movie in the series starts in ancient China and revolves around Po, a simple cook for his dads noodle shop. Nothing too special about Po except his love for kung fu. He often dreams about becoming a kung fu master and being a hero. When the villainous snow leopard Tai Lung threatens Po's homeland, he is chosen to fulfill an ancient prophecy and defend the Valley from attack. Training under the legendary master Shifu, Po has to quickly learn to master the ancient fighting style if he wants to save the valley. *Kung Fu Panda* is one of the best animated film series of all time because of its motivational messages, its in-depth backstories for its villains, and because of the comedy that connects with people of all ages.

One of the biggest reasons why *Kung Fu Panda* is such a good movie is because of its motivational message. Throughout the movie the audience is subject to a multitude of inspiring quotes and messages. Not only does *Kung Fu Panda* focus on its main overarching message of believing in yourself, it also gives the audience an abundance of additional messages throughout the story. At the start of the movie Po is self-conscious and not very confident. He doesn't have a lot of faith in his own abilities. It isn't until Po has someone believe in him like the great Master

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Shifu, that he truly understands how to use his own abilities properly. Once Po realizes someone else believes in him, he starts to believe in himself and this confidence is what makes him such a great protagonist. The overall message of the movie is shown through Po's progression as a character. What makes this message so great is the fact that many people can relate to this in the real world. There are many people who struggle with believing in themselves and when they watch this movie they might find the ability to believe in themselves.

Motivational messages aren't the only thing the *Kung Fu Panda* movies are effective at, they also excel at creating in-depth backstories for its villains. All the villains have such interesting and compelling upbringings that the audience gets invested in their characters. In the first movie the antagonist Tai Lung is introduced as a name to be feared. A master of martial arts that is almost unbeatable. But once a little more is revealed about his background the audience gets invested in him as a character. Tai Lung was an orphan who was taken in by the great Master Shifu. He was rigorously trained as a martial artist when he was young, Shifu promised him that if he kept training, he would become the famous Dragon Warrior. Once the time came to be chosen for the dragon warrior, Tai Lung was denied. He felt he was slighted by Shifu because he was convinced that it was his destiny. Tai Lung turned on his master and village and went on a rampage. While this backstory does not forgive his actions, it does give the audience reason to feel sympathy for him. The more a character can connect with an audience the more that audience will like that character. Many people feel that they have been spurned by the world and they can connect with the villain Tai Lung, this is one of the many reasons that people like the movie so much.

Both motivational messages and in-depth backstories only take a backseat to *Kung Fu Panda's* greatest selling point, its comedy. The comedy in *Kung Fu Panda* is without a doubt the

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most enticing part of it and a big part why is because people of various age ranges connect with the movie through its amusing dialogue and quips. Throughout the movie Po and other characters combine the use of what some consider “dark” humor to poke fun at Po's weight. Many times throughout the movie Po is disrespected because he is fat, and nobody thinks he could be worth anything in the Kung Fu world simply because of how heavy he is. Side characters like Tigress and Master Shifu constantly belittle Po and call him fat to his face. The movie makes it funny through music and Po’s reactions. While not all people find this funny, it does appeal to people who might not find the rest of the movie’s humor as funny. In a particular scene where Po is hanging out and cooking for some of his new Kung Fu buddies. Po uses some of his bowls and noodles to replicate Master Shifu’s appearance, it is startling how accurate it is and Po uses a funny voice to poke fun at Master Shifu. This appeals to a younger audience who find this type of humor quite funny. Combine this funny dialogue with the great cast of voice actors and you get a film series that people of all ranges can enjoy.

All in all, *Kung Fu Panda* is one of the greatest films of all time. The main character Po makes the movie so enjoyable that a ton of different people can enjoy it. Combining the movie's motivational messages, its in depth backstories for the villains, and the comedy that appeals to all ages, *Kung Fu Panda* becomes one of, if not the greatest movie of all time!

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### Works Cited

Osborne, M. & Stevenson, J. (2008). *Kung Fu Panda*. DreamWorks Animation.