

Toy Story Film Summary

Toy Story by John Lasseter

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Context

Toy Story is the lovable 1995 animated drama directed by John Lasseter. The film tells the story of two walking, talking, living toys who belong to a young boy named Andy (although Andy is unaware of his toys' secret life). The toys begin as enemies, but end up as best friends. Woody, a cowboy doll, is Andy's favorite and the leader of the gang of toys. However, he is overshadowed by Andy's fancy new Buzz Lightyear "space ranger" doll just a week before Andy's family moves to a new home. Woody, who begins to feel threatened by Buzz's presence, accidentally knocks Buzz out of a window during a fight. During the ensuing confusion generated by their struggle, Woody and Buzz both end up in danger of being left behind when Andy moves. Together, they undertake an adventurous journey to return to Andy, passing through pizza parlors, an evil neighbor's house and the mean streets of the city. *Toy Story* is a touching and witty film about the growth of friendship and development of self-confidence; it can be enjoyed by young children and adults alike.

John Lasseter is the co-founder of Pixar Animation, a studio specializing in computer-animated films. Before forming Pixar, Lasseter worked as a traditional animator, although he had a keen eye and an interest in the possibilities of computer animation. Lasseter had previously directed several computer-animated films before joining with Walt Disney Studios to create *Toy Story*. Two of these films were *Tin Toy* (1988) and *Knick Knack* (1989). With the success of *Toy Story*, Lasseter, computer animation and Pixar all rose to prominence.

The addition of star-powered voice tracks helped the film find both critical and box office success. Tom Hanks performs the voice of Woody, Andy's favorite toy, while Tim Allen does the voice of Buzz Lightyear. Hanks had already become extremely well known from his appearances in comedies and dramas such as *A League of Their Own* (1992), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), *Forrest Gump* (1994) and *Apollo 13* (1995). His popularity, as well as his distinctive voice, helped bring Woody to life. Tim Allen had been the star of his own television show, *Home Improvement* and had also played Scott Calvin in Disney's 1994 *The Santa Clause*. Allen's wacky expressiveness made him an effective choice to deliver the voice of Buzz Lightyear.

As mentioned, one of the film's most notable achievements is that it succeeds in entertaining people of all ages. Children, teenagers and adults all made their way to the theater to experience the movie. While the film is most obviously directed at a youthful audience, the writers and directors made sure to incorporate more sophisticated adult comedy along the way to give parents and older viewers something to enjoy. Many previous Disney films had little to offer adults except safe viewing for their children, but the witty repartee of *Toy Story* satisfied audiences of all ages.

Toy Story was the first full length movie to be entirely computer animated and this unprecedented film became a hit. Although a few computer-animated short films had been created, they had attained neither the financing nor the success of *Toy Story*. At the Golden Globe Awards, the film was nominated for Best Motion Picture of the Year

and Best Original Song. In addition, *Toy Story* received Academy Award nominations for Best Music (Original Musical or Comedy Score); Best Music (Original Song) and Best Writing (Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen). John Lasseter won a Special Achievement Award at the Oscars for "the development and inspired application of techniques that have made possible the first feature-length, computer-animated film."



Summary and Analysis

Toy Story begins as we watch a young boy named Andy play with his favorite toy: a cowboy doll named Woody, who can say several phrases with the help of a pull string. Andy goes downstairs to talk to his mother before his birthday party. He then takes Woody back upstairs and drops him off in order to carry his little sister, Molly, down to the party. Once Andy is gone, Woody and the other toys come to life. Mr. Potato Head, Slinky Dog, Bo Peep, Rex (a dinosaur) and assorted others all begin a staff meeting called by Woody. We quickly learn that Woody and Bo Peep have a bit of a romance going on.

Woody leads the meeting and they begin to discuss the idea of "moving buddies." Woody explains that there is only one week left before Andy's family moves and that everyone needs to find a buddy so that nobody is accidentally left behind. He also announces that Andy's party has been rescheduled for today. The toys become concerned that they will be replaced by the new toys Andy will receive for his birthday. Woody reminds them that their role is to support Andy, no matter what. Hamm, a toy pig, spots the children arriving for the party and everyone begins to worry. Woody decides to send out the toy soldiers to keep an eye on the party.

Downstairs Andy opens his presents as the toys listen in on Molly's baby monitor. Andy mostly receives things like clothes and board games and the toys rejoice that the presents do not seem to include anything impressive enough to replace them. However, at the last minute Andy's mom pulls out a surprise present. After Andy unwraps his final gift, everyone seems excited about it; in the commotion, the monitor falls to the floor and the toys do not hear what it is. Andy runs upstairs and the toys get back in place just before he enters. Shockingly, Woody gets tossed off the bed and replaced by a new toy. The children leave to eat birthday cake and all the toys finally climb up to meet Andy's newest toy.

Woody crawls out from under the bed and reassures the other toys that he is not being replaced. On the bed, he is stunned to see a Buzz Lightyear space ranger toy. Buzz tries to contact his commanders and becomes distressed when he discovers that his "ship," the box in which he is packaged, has been damaged. Buzz cannot decide if the air is breathable and he is scared when Woody walks up. Woody tries to welcome Buzz, but Buzz is nervous around the other toys. Buzz finally introduces himself by saying, "I am Buzz Lightyear. I come in peace." Buzz shows off his buttons and talking parts and the other toys compare his complex gadgets to Woody's simple pull string.

Buzz does not seem to understand that he is only a toy rather than an actual space ranger. When Woody tells everyone that Buzz does not fly, Buzz pushes a button and displays his wings. Woody tells Buzz that he cannot really fly with those wings. To prove Woody wrong, Buzz climbs to the edge of the bed and jumps off, yelling, "To infinity and beyond!" By accident, Buzz bounces on a ball, catches on the ceiling fan and "flies" around the room, landing gracefully on the bed. The toys are very impressed and Woody is jealous.



Andy plays with both Woody and Buzz, but he seems slightly more obsessed with Buzz. He replaces pictures of Woody with pictures of Buzz and Woody's prominent place on the bed is permanently taken over by Buzz, a change that Woody can hardly bear. One morning, Buzz shows the other toys that Andy has inscribed his name on Buzz's shoe, just as he once did to Woody. Bo Peep tries to reassure Woody, but he starts to threaten Buzz. Woody knocks off Buzz's helmet and Buzz acts like he is going to die of suffocation until he discovers that the air is not toxic. Woody laughs at Buzz for thinking that he is the "real" Buzz Lightyear. At that moment, the toys hear Sid, the neighbor boy, outside. They watch in horror as Sid straps explosives to one of the toy soldiers. Sid has a bad reputation for maliciously destroying toys just for fun. The toys cannot wait to move to get away from Sid.

A few days later Andy and his family plan to go to a restaurant called Pizza Planet and Andy is allowed to take only one toy with him. Woody is afraid that he will be left behind in favor of Buzz, so he tricks Buzz into trying to find a missing toy. While Buzz looks for the toy, Woody tries to run him over with a toy car. In the process, Buzz accidentally falls off the window sill and bounces into Sid's yard. The toy car admits to the others that Woody caused the accident. Woody tries to explain that he did not mean to hurt Buzz, but all the toys get mad at Woody. Andy comes in to find Buzz, but when he is unable to locate him, he grabs Woody.

In the yard, Buzz watches as Andy leaves with Woody. Buzz jumps onto the car to follow them. The other toys try to help Buzz, but of course they cannot find him. As Andy and his family drive to the restaurant, Buzz falls into the car and fights Woody. The two toys fall out of the car and they are left behind at a gas station where the family has stopped. Once again, Woody tries to explain to Buzz that he is just a toy and not a real space ranger who is saving the world. Suddenly, Woody excitedly spots a Pizza Planet truck with a spaceship on top of it; he convinces Buzz to hitch a ride on the truck. However, Buzz is mainly able to persuade Woody because Woody is scared to return to Andy's room without Buzz. The two toys climb into the truck and make their way to Pizza Planet to find Andy.

After arriving at Pizza Planet, the toys sneak inside to look for Andy. Woody tries to get Buzz to jump into Molly's baby basket, but Buzz sees a spaceship and runs in its direction. In reality, what Buzz sees is a game called The Claw, in which players attempt to guide a claw-shaped device to retrieve a toy from a pile. Buzz ends up trapped inside the game; Woody tries to free him, getting stuck himself in the process. Suddenly, Buzz and Woody spot Sid coming to play the game. They try to hide, but Sid says he wants to get the Buzz Lightyear toy out of the pile. Sid captures both Buzz and Woody and takes them home.

In Sid's house, they see both Sid's and Sid's sister's toys: they have all been destroyed or grotesquely mutilated by Sid. Woody and Buzz shudder to see how Sid treats toys and they can only imagine their uncertain futures. Later that night, they try to communicate with the mangled toys, but the toys seem just as violent as Sid himself. Next door Andy's toys are continuing to look for Buzz when Andy finally returns home.



They hear Andy say that he cannot find Woody in the car. The toys assume that Woody ran away because of what he did to Buzz.

Although Sid has left the door of his room open, Buzz and Woody are surrounded by his other toys. They try other ways to get back to Andy's house, but find there is no way around Sid's vicious dog. Buzz sees a commercial for himself on television and he becomes depressed by the revelation that he is just another toy instead of a real space ranger. Buzz states that he cannot believe he is available all over town at Al's Toy Barn. He tries to fly again, but this time falls to the floor and breaks. Sid's sister picks him up and makes him have a tea party with her. Woody tries to talk to Buzz, but Buzz is inconsolable.

Woody finally realizes that he and Bud can signal to Andy's toys through the window. Once Woody gets their attention, Buzz refuses to help. He simply stands around playing with his arm, which has fallen off. Mr. Potato Head says that he does not want to let Woody come back after what happened to Buzz. Since Buzz will not come to the window, Woody tries to wave Buzz's broken arm at the toys to prove that Buzz is there. Once the toys finally realize what he is holding, they think he has hurt Buzz even more. The toys call him a murderer and tell him that he can stay there with Sid.

Sid's mutant toys surround Buzz and Woody fears that they are going to harm Buzz. Woody tries to save him, but then discovers that the toys are actually putting Buzz back together. That night, Sid runs in with his new rocket ship. Sid tries to decide which of his toys to blow up and he finally settles on Buzz, so that he "can put a spaceman into orbit." Thankfully, it starts to rain, so Sid cannot carry out his plan immediately.

Next door Andy is very sad that both of his favorite toys are missing, since he will be moving the next day. Woody tries to talk Buzz into helping him escape that night so that Buzz will not be destroyed the next day. Buzz is still in the state of depression he has entered since realizing that he is "just a stupid, little, insignificant toy." Woody explains that being a toy is great, because Andy loves him. Woody admits that Buzz is a very cool toy and that Woody does not stand a chance against him. Woody's advice prompts Buzz to recover and he returns to his former self. After looking at the mark Andy made on his shoe, Buzz decides to work with Woody so they can escape.

Outside, they hear the moving van coming to pack up Andy's house. Just as Woody gets free, the alarm clock goes off and Sid gets up to send Buzz blasting "to infinity and beyond!" Woody tries to follow, but Sid's dog blocks his way. As Andy's house is being emptied by the moving crew, Woody convinces Sid's other toys to help him save Buzz. Woody develops a master plan to escape and rescue Buzz; however, once Woody gets outside, Sid finds him.

Woody begins talking to Sid just as Sid is about to light Buzz's rocket. Talking directly to Sid, Woody tells him that he and the other toys do not like to be mistreated. All the toys surround Sid and Sid is terrified. Sid runs inside and Woody frees Buzz. The two hurry to join Andy's departing family and moving crew. When they miss Andy's car because Buzz's wings get stuck, they race after the moving truck. Sid's dog sees them running



down the road and he chases them. Buzz barely makes it onto the edge of the truck before Woody is attacked by the dog. Buzz fights off the dog and saves Woody; however, in the process, he falls off and is left behind.

As the truck stops at a light, Woody manages to open it, free the other toys and use the toy race car to save Buzz. The other toys think Woody is trying to kill the car, so they throw him out on the street. However, Buzz and the car pick him up and they all catch up to the moving van. The toys lower the ramp for Buzz, Woody and the toy car. Although Slinky Dog tries to pull the toy car onto the truck after the car's batteries go out, he cannot hold on. Buzz and Woody are left in the middle of the road, but then they remember Buzz's rocket. They light the rocket using the sun and after flying through the air with the help of Buzz's wings, the toys finally fall through the sunroof of Andy's car.

The final scene shows Andy's new home at Christmas. As before, the toys watch and listen to see what presents he will receive. They are excited for Mr. Potato Head upon finding out that Molly's first toy is a Mrs. Potato Head. Buzz listens to the reports, concerned that he might be replaced. Woody says, "Now Buzz, what could Andy possibly get that's worse than you?" Then, suddenly, we hear Andy yell, "A puppy!" The two friends turn to one another and exchange concerned looks.



Characters

Woody, played by Tom Hanks

Description

Woody is a small cowboy doll with a pull string in his back. When his string is pulled, Woody can say a few simple phrases. Woody has been Andy's favorite toy for years and Andy has covered his room with Woody pictures, Woody posters and other Woody paraphernalia. Woody enjoys his status as the favorite, a position represented by the fact that he is the only toy that stays on Andy's bed. In addition Andy has emblazoned his name on the bottom of Woody's shoe.

As Andy's favorite, Woody claims the role of the head toy in Andy's room. Woody is in charge of all toy meetings and major decisions. As the film begins Andy's family is getting ready to move and Woody is making sure that all the toys have moving buddies for protection during the trip. Woody is also romantically involved with Bo Peep. Woody has many friends in Andy's room and he enjoys his life.

Analysis

Woody's situation becomes precarious when Buzz Lightyear Andy's newest toy, arrives on the scene. In the beginning of the film, we see how confident Woody is with his status as the head toy of Andy's room. However, when his position is threatened by Buzz, Woody does not react well. Despite all the friends he has, Woody cannot bear the thought of becoming second in Andy's life.

Woody demonstrates his character flaws after Buzz arrives. From anger to jealousy and from manipulation to meanness, Buzz's presence brings out the worst in Woody. When it turns out that Buzz gets along well with the other toys, Woody is further threatened by this competition. Finally, he succumbs to envy and insecurity and attacks Buzz. Later, as the two struggle to find their way back home to Andy, Woody comes to understand and like Buzz. Eventually, the two become friends and Woody becomes a happier, healthier, more loving toy.

Buzz Lightyear, played by Tim Allen

Description

Buzz Lightyear is the newest, hottest toy on the market at the time of Andy's birthday. Buzz is a very cool, modern and flashy toy, with many gadgets, lights and sayings. In theory, Buzz is a space ranger sent to protect the world from evil aliens and lords. However, Buzz does not initially realize that he is just a toy and not the "real" Buzz Lightyear.



As soon as he arrives, Buzz's status as "the latest thing" allows him to take over Woody's role as the favorite toy in Andy's life. For instance Andy's walls are suddenly covered with pictures of Buzz instead of Woody. Eventually, Buzz even gets Woody's place of honor on Andy's bed. However, Buzz does not realize the problems he is causing for Woody. Buzz does not deliberately set out to achieve "top toy" status; he is merely awarded it by Andy, who finds him exciting. In fact, Buzz is completely oblivious of anything other than his imaginary role of saving the world. Because he is innocent and good-natured, the other toys begin to enjoy Buzz just as much as they enjoyed Woody.

Analysis

Buzz's major downfall is that he is a somewhat clueless character. As a newly-manufactured, naïve and innocent toy, he has not yet realized that he is, in fact, just a toy: he believes he is a real superhero whose role is to fight aliens. From the beginning, Buzz consistently overestimates his abilities as a supposedly-powerful space ranger. However, the charming Buzz also makes friends easily in Andy's room by just being himself and helping everyone out. The only person he is unable to win over is Woody, who feels threatened by Buzz's presence.

Buzz endures a period of profound sadness after discovering at Sid's that he is just a toy. He becomes uninterested in trying to save his own life once he knows that he is not really a space ranger. Woody finally helps Buzz realize how important his existence as a toy is to Andy. Eventually, Buzz snaps out of his depression and he helps Woody escape. In so doing, Buzz demonstrates his bravery and strength of character, but also shows that he has learned some humility. In the end, he and Woody become best friends.

Andy, played by John Morris

Description

Andy is the young owner of Woody, Buzz and the other toys. Like many children Andy gets very excited about new toys. Of course, he does not know that his own toys are really alive. Therefore, he never considers their feelings, causing problems between Woody and Buzz.

Analysis

Andy is an impetuous, but good and well-behaved little boy who is innocently unaware of how his feelings and actions impact his toys.



Sid, played by Erik von Detten

Description

Sid Andy's next door neighbor, is a slightly older child who treats toys terribly. He has fun by blowing up his own toys, his little sister's and those lost by Andy. When Buzz and Woody get caught by Sid, they almost lose their lives.

Analysis

Sid is a mean boy who hurts toys for fun. However, he gets what he deserves when Woody and the other toys start talking to him. After being confronted by the toys, he believes he is losing his mind and he runs, terrified, from his backyard.

Mr. Potato Head, played by Don Rickles

Description

Mr. Potato Head is a powerful presence in Andy's room. He is older and has earned a good reputation for himself over time. When he comes to believe that Woody has killed Buzz, he is the first to pass judgment on Woody. In so doing, he influences the other toys' opinions of Woody. After Woody leaves, Mr. Potato Head assumes a leadership role among the toys.

Analysis

Mr. Potato Head is a very outspoken character who is staunchly unwilling to help Woody after he believes Woody has gone bad. However, Mr. Potato Head is also an effective leader and he helps the other toys make a successful, safe move even after Buzz and Woody both disappear.

Bo Peep, played by Annie Potts

Description

Bo Peep is a doll version of the nursery rhyme character; she is also Woody's girlfriend.

Analysis

Bo Peep believes in Woody even when she does not understand his motives. She is terribly disappointed by his attitude and actions against Buzz, but she remains faithful to Woody nonetheless.



Hamm, played by John Ratzenberger

Description

Like Mr. Potato Head, Hamm the pig is an assertive and vocal character. He helps to run Andy's room and lead the toys after Woody disappears.

Analysis

Like Mr. Potato Head, Hamm helps convince the other toys that Woody has gone bad. However, this is not out of malice. Hamm is disappointed in Woody, but he is unwilling to help someone that would kill another toy.

Rex, played by Wallace Shawn

Description

Rex is Andy's neurotic dinosaur toy. He relies heavily on Woody until Buzz's arrival in the room.

Analysis

Even though he is supposed to represent a fierce and carnivorous creature, Rex is actually timid and nervous. He is easily intimidated and afraid that he will someday be replaced by a brave dinosaur. However, under Buzz's influence, Rex learns to roar and begins to gain a sense of self-esteem.

Slinky Dog, played by Jim Varney

Description

Slinky Dog is also an important toy in Andy's room. He is quiet most of the time, but he cares for Andy.

Analysis

Slinky Dog is a brave toy who tries to save Buzz and Woody at the end of the film, when they are trying to board the moving truck. Slinky Dog is always ready to help everyone, but he is deeply saddened by Woody's behavior.



Themes

Friends Equal Life

Throughout *Toy Story*, we see how friendships work to keep the toys happy and healthy. In the beginning, Woody occupies a position of leadership among his peers and all the toys support one another. Woody is secure and content until Buzz Lightyear arrives on the scene. When Woody begins to doubt his place in Andy's and his toy friends' hearts, he becomes the worst version of himself. Woody tries to regain his importance in Andy's life by attacking Buzz. His plan fails miserably when he pushes Buzz out of the window, causing his toy friends to believe him a murderer.

As the story unfolds, Woody begins to learn that loving others, rather than being worshipped by others, is what really makes life meaningful. Woody's initial alienation from his friends causes him to become depressed, lonely and even mean. Because of his jealousy, Woody hurts all those around him, including his girlfriend, Bo Peep. He learns, however, that his friends are the most valuable thing in his life.

To some extent, Buzz also lacks friends at first, as he denies that he is "only" a toy. His mildly snobbish insistence on his own uniqueness causes him to be isolated. Through their trials, the two characters gradually find their way into friendship with each other and, eventually, the rest of the toys. As they try to get home to Andy's house, they gain a sense of partnership and realize that there is no good reason to compete with one another. In the final scene, they sit companionably together like two old pals, enjoying a life filled with friendship and love.

Lose The Pride

Woody's biggest problem is pride. For many years, Woody has been the dominant toy in Andy's room. When Andy receives Buzz Lightyear as a gift, Woody has no sense of how to react to the new member of the room. Since Buzz is new and cool, Woody secretly fears that he is not as good as Buzz. Along with Woody's feelings of inferiority come many problems. Jealous of Buzz's nifty gadgets and other modern attributes, Woody tries to demean Buzz and make himself seem superior. He cannot seem to forgive the idea that Buzz has stolen his rightful place in the room and in Andy's heart. His behavior, attitude and overall character suffer accordingly. As a result, his toy friends also begin to view him differently.

In order for Woody to put the past behind him and embrace his future in Andy's room, he must overcome his pride. Woody's pride haunts him at every turn as he sees Buzz making new friends. Since Woody has grown accustomed to being the top toy, he struggles to deal with his changed role. Setting aside his pride, however, is easier said than done.



During the film, Woody progresses from a leader, to a jealous toy, to a confident, caring friend. We see Woody make this transformation as he tries to save Buzz and return the two of them to Andy's room. Woody's need to be the best is eventually overshadowed by his love for his owner Andy. He then shares this revelation with Buzz, who also comes to understand that his role as a toy (and not a space ranger) is important. Once Woody comes to terms with his new status and finds acceptance of Buzz, he is able to become a better friend to everyone. In the end, Woody saves both himself and Buzz by ditching his pride and helping them escape.

Everyone Is Important

A main theme running through *Toy Story* is that everyone is important. As a film created primarily for children, *Toy Story* deals with feelings that young people commonly experience at some time or another. Childhood is often difficult and many children feel inferior to friends and family at some point. In addition, children often feel that they are in constant competition with friends and other family members. *Toy Story* tries to support the idea that there is no need to compete for attention and status. We learn in the film that everyone has a valuable role and is important in a unique and essential way.

Although Woody and Buzz are very different toys, each is special in his own way. Buzz is smart and has interesting and useful gadgets; Woody, when he is himself, is able to lead the toys very effectively. At one point, each of the toys feels that he is not good enough. Woody feels threatened by Buzz's exciting new presence in the room, while Buzz is discouraged to discover that he is a toy rather than a real space ranger. Although they have different strengths, the two toys eventually work together to overcome their differences and put the needs of Andy and the other toys first. After both Woody and Buzz realize they have a lot to contribute, they are able to feel good about themselves. In *Toy Story*, nobody is more or less important; everyone has something to offer to others.

Style and Cinematography

Toy Story was the first feature length, computer-animated film in history. With the combined talents of both Walt Disney Studios and Pixar Animation, Lasseter and Disney created a film that would change the world of animation forever. Today, many more movies have been created entirely by computer animation. However, few eclipse the pioneering *Toy Story*, which used computers to build an imaginative world in which toys are the main characters and have complex feelings and lives, just like humans.

As mentioned, one of the great secrets to the success of *Toy Story* was its focus on pleasing an age-diverse audience. The film's writers knew that parents would bring their children to the film and they decided that adults deserved to enjoy the film just as much as young people. Many animated films before *Toy Story* were focused primarily on the children, containing little humor or amusement complex enough to address adults' needs. However, *Toy Story* contains witty sentiments, sophisticated wordplay and comedic expressions capable of entertaining a whole family.

With its deeper messages about friendship, pride and love, *Toy Story* also offers valuable moral lessons to young people. While the style is such that a small child is able to understand the plot line, the overarching themes hold true for viewers of all ages and from diverse walks of life. Overall, the simple style, amusing visuals and profound themes and values in *Toy Story* all help unite our everyday world with the magical world of toys and play.



Motifs

Journey

In *Toy Story*, Buzz and Woody take many emotional and relational journeys during the course of an actual physical journey. Physically, the two toys make a journey after Woody accidentally knocks Buzz out of the window. Both toys end up traveling in Andy's family's car and are left behind at a gas station. Working together, they finally catch up with Andy's family, but then they are captured by Sid. At Sid's house, they face many scary challenges and both become terribly distressed at their potential fate. Finally, they escape from Sid's house just in time to join Andy and his family as they move to a new house and a fresh start. After their dangerous adventure on the road, Buzz and Woody finally return safely home to their owner and their friends.

Emotionally and relationally, the characters make a more significant journey. Upon Buzz's arrival, Woody becomes extremely jealous of Buzz's new place in Andy's and the toys' affections. Woody cannot bear to become just another member of the toy gang, so he seeks to retain his privileged position by fighting Buzz. Buzz simply ignores Woody's resistance and also seems ignorant of the fact that he is causing problems in the room. Instead, he simply enjoys his status as a novelty and a star. Throughout their physical journey, Buzz and Woody begin to appreciate and understand one another. They finally save their own lives by working together to achieve a shared objective: returning to Andy's life and ensuring his happiness. In the end, they return to Andy having accomplished some additional goals: friendship, appreciation and belonging.

Intruder

In the plots of both films and literary works, an intruder often arrives and usurps another's longstanding position. Often, the protagonist is the one threatened by the new character who shows up on the scene. Generally, both characters have strong personalities and different ways of doing things, which causes major conflicts; this is the case in *Toy Story*. Buzz intrudes into Woody's life and the conflicts between the two move the plot forward, creating opportunities for character development and, eventually, resolution.

As soon as Buzz enters Andy's room, Woody feels that his own place of honor has been usurped. The two strong-willed characters experience conflict right from the start. Buzz's intrusion reveals the worst parts of both Buzz's and Woody's characters; they childishly seek to outdo one another and win the affection of both Andy and the other toys. However, many themes emerge from this intrusion, including the need for friendship and the requirement that pride must be discarded to form such friendships. Through the toys' interaction, the audience is shown that everyone is important and that people often have to work through profound differences in order to become friends.



Jealousy

Jealousy is often an important motif in any story in which two main characters come head-to-head with each other. Jealousy is one of the most powerful forces that can come between two characters and it can be almost insurmountable at times. Woody becomes insanely jealous when his place is taken by the new toy on the block, Buzz Lightyear. Unlike the other toys, Woody has experienced special status as Andy's favorite toy, a privilege that he is unwilling to give up without a fight. Although Woody has been the most important toy for years, he must eventually overcome his jealousy of Buzz or risk losing everything.

At first, Woody risks both his life and his friends to try to get rid of Buzz. However, since he cannot seem to make Buzz go away, he is forced to learn to work with him. During the course of their collaboration, Buzz becomes very disappointed upon discovering that he is only a toy and Woody must explain to him the true and honorable meaning of being a toy. This experience helps Woody see that Buzz has his own share of problems despite his unmistakable coolness. Woody finds it more difficult to be jealous when he realizes that he and Buzz share similar characteristics and feelings. As Woody notices Buzz's better or more "human" qualities, his envy of Buzz gradually dissipates and the two finally become friends. Together, they return to Andy and their friends with a new perspective on each other and on life.



Symbols

Andy's Mark

Andy inscribes his name on both Buzz's and Woody's feet, an act that is symbolic of everything a toy could want out of life. Andy uses his inscription to ensure that no one else will take his favorite toys. Andy only marks his most special and beloved toys, a group to which Woody alone belongs until Buzz comes along. For a long time, Woody's exclusive possession of Andy's inscription has represented Andy's adoration of Woody; therefore, Woody feels betrayed when Buzz also receives Andy's mark of ownership and love. Woody feels abandoned by Andy as Buzz becomes a more important part of Andy's life; he also feels abandoned by the toys as Buzz takes center stage in Andy's room.

After Woody notices that Andy has written his name on Buzz's foot, Woody begins to lose patience with the situation. The mark confirms that he and Buzz now share the same status. Woody, feeling inferior, does not believe he can compete with Buzz's appealing new features; he fails to understand that Andy can love them both equally, yet differently. Eventually, Woody ends up having to explain to Buzz that the most meaningful purpose of being a toy is making Andy happy. Andy's inscription initially deepens the chasm between the two toys; however, in the end, they are able to come together as friends, united under Andy's mark.

Gadgets

Buzz's futuristic, technological gadgets symbolize the entrance of the new and the exit of the old. When Woody was created, his own pull string was a newfangled gadget. Over time, Woody has become outdated in comparison to toys with flashy buttons and lights, like Buzz. We witness how Woody's world changes upon the entrance of a new, festive toy. Woody feels like a worthless, poor competitor because he cannot offer the impressive gadgets that Buzz is able to show off to Andy and the other toys.

As it turns out, gadgets are only part of the problem. Since Buzz also has a strong, charismatic personality, he makes friends with the other toys easily. Woody grows even more jealous when he notices how much the other toys enjoy Buzz's company. Eventually, this jealousy compels Woody to try to hurt Buzz and then Woody begins to lose his friends. Although Woody comes to terms with his changed situation in the end, the coming together of two different worlds (the old and the new) causes strife in Andy's room for a while, just as it often does in life. Woody finally learns that gadgets are not the most important things and this realization helps prevent him from sacrificing his friendships over pride.



Signs and Posters

When signs and posters of Woody begin disappearing from Andy's room, Woody undergoes a realization that his place in Andy's universe is changing. For as long as he can remember, Woody has been Andy's favorite, so Woody has not developed the skills or resources to cope with his altered circumstances.

As the Woody symbols are quickly replaced by Buzz symbols and as Buzz takes over Woody's prominent spot on Andy's bed, Woody goes to great lengths to regain his standing in Andy's life. Woody spends the whole movie attempting to cope with the challenges to both his status and his worldview. Although Woody ends up having to share his life with Buzz, he finally realizes that friendship and love are more important than position and power.

Flying

Because of his state-of-the-art features, especially his ability to fly, Buzz arrives on the scene with very strong feelings of self-confidence. Buzz flies three different times during the course of *Toy Story*. The first time, he is trying to prove to Woody that his wings actually work. Buzz is convinced that he is invincible and when he succeeds in "flying" by bouncing off a ball and onto the ceiling fan, he reaffirms his own delusions and impresses the other toys.

After seeing himself on a television commercial, Buzz realizes that he is just like any other toy. Since he has spent his whole life believing that he is a special space ranger, he is terrified to discover his misperceptions. In his denial, he tries to fly again, but this time he fails miserably and breaks his arm. Buzz becomes depressed after this trial and we see a drastic change in his personality.

At the end of the film, Buzz flies again when he and Woody use the rocket to catch up with the other toys and Andy as they depart for their new home. This time, Buzz humbly acknowledges that he is not so much flying as "falling with style." However, he knows he has helped Woody and Andy and he is able to be proud of this accomplishment. He has saved the day; he has a good friend in Woody; and he understands his own important place in the world as a toy.



Essay Questions

Both physically and emotionally, what is Woody's place in the room at the beginning of the film?

What are some of the common concerns shared by the toys in the film?

Describe how the toys react when humans are nearby.

What is Buzz's impact on the toys in Andy's room?

How does Buzz react when he discovers that he is only a toy? Why does he react this way?

Why is Sid so frightening to the toys?

How does the relationship between Buzz and Woody change throughout the course of the film?

What can we learn from *Toy Story* about the true value of friends?

How is the journey motif an important part of *Toy Story*?

What is symbolic about Andy's mark on both Woody and Buzz?

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