



Written by [Eric Egan](#) on September 20, 2010

Alpha and Omega: Idaho Wolf Relocation Gets a Hollywood Nod

Alpha and Omega features the voices of Justin Long, Hayden Panettiere, Danny Glover, and Dennis Hopper (in one of his last performances) and tells the tale of two Canadian wolves, Kate and Humphrey, both of whom are relocated by Fish and Game officials from their home in Jasper National Park to Idaho.



The film takes its name from the two social classes amongst the Canadian wolf packs at the center of the film. There is the Alpha wolf, whose job is to bring home the caribou bacon, and there is the Omega wolf, whose job it is to keep the Alphas happy with their madcap antics. The Omegas are essentially the class clown to the Alphas' valedictorian. Kate, being the first-born daughter of the leader of the Western pack, is an Alpha, and Humphrey is an Omega in the same pack. Humphrey is obviously quite taken with Kate, but they can never be together according to pack custom — until the rangers serendipitously whisk them both away to Idaho.

Humphrey and Kate are then forced to work together to return to Canada and, of course, fall in love along the way. Kate must get back to marry an Alpha male from her pack's rival clan, the Eastern pack, before the Eastern pack and the Western pack rip each other to shreds. This overly simplistic device of pack politics adds some sense of urgency to the story, but not enough for the film to achieve any real sense of immediacy.

The premise of the film should be immediately intriguing to anyone who has followed the controversy surrounding the real-life relocation of breeding pairs of Canadian wolves into the northern states. William F. Jasper has been keeping tabs on the situation for *The New American* and his latest report can be read [here](#). Indeed, the most interesting aspect of *Alpha and Omega*'s story line is that the two protagonists do not want to remain in Idaho, and the bulk of the film is about their attempt to return home. One of the messages of the movie seems to be that, in spite of the best efforts of Fish and Game, Kate and Humphrey do not belong in Idaho.

While this is a worthy message to be sure, it must be remembered that this is, ultimately, a children's film. Don't expect a long, in-depth treatise on why the reallocation of Canadian wolves from Canada to Idaho could be the beginning of an eco-disaster caused by the very same people who claim to be the champions of ecosystems everywhere. This being your run-of-the-mill, second-rate Disneyesque sort of fare, the final message is, of course, that love conquers all.



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Unfortunately, what could have been an insightful piece of animated art of Pixar caliber, *Alpha and Omega* devolves into sentimental drivel and far too many “butt” jokes. This film is trying to walk that fine line between boring the adults and boring the kids. In the end, it will likely end up boring both. The movie is full of innuendos that are intended both to entertain the adults and deal tastefully with the idea of mating in a children’s film. Nearly all of them simply end up being cheesy. The film is rated PG as opposed to G, most likely owing to the numerous innuendos and rear-end jokes. One of the most ridiculous aspects of the film is the imagined courtship process of the young wolves. Essentially, they pair off and howl at the moon in a manner that could better be described as R&B crooning. Frankly, it’s just stupid. All the requisite trappings of a second-rate, computer-animated film are present. There is even a comedic duo consisting of a French wild turkey that loves to golf and his caddy, a British duck. The funniest moments are thanks to these two.

Another caveat with the film could be that, although the flick is, admirably, not an eco-freako film, it reinforces an idea that is, to some extent, one of the root causes of the impending ecological disaster in Idaho. In [one of his articles on wolf relocation](#), Jasper voices the concern that “for too long the wolves have been presented as the cute, cuddly, furry victims; their raw, dangerous, feral nature and their negative impacts on wildlife ecology have been airbrushed out of existence.” *Alpha and Omega* could definitely be accused of reinforcing this idea as the characters certainly look like stuffed animals, and the wolves are portrayed as sympathetic characters. All this may be worrisome and worth more analysis if the film were to be remembered in the slightest. My guess, however, is that it will have very little impact on anything as it is very likely to be forgotten by next week when *Legend of The Guardians: The Owls of Ga’hoole* is released and takes hold of the family audience.

In the meantime, however, this weekend sees the release of a spate of films geared toward teens and adults. This means that for now, if the kids insist on seeing a new release, *Alpha and Omega* is the only show in town. Instead, I suggest they stay home and watch *Finding Nemo* — again.



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