

Deadpool 2 (2018)

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 46 min.

Our content ratings (0-5): Violence 8; Language 7; Sex/Nudity 3.

Our star rating (1-5): 4

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



*Deadpool befriends the angry mutant boy who was abused by the head of his orphanage. (c)
20th Century Fox*

This second film about the Marvel Comics superhero with self-healing powers is just as funny as the first film—and unfortunately just as violent and foul-mouthed. If you can put up with heaps of the latter, you will laugh just as much as you do as when a certain President says he is speaking the truth about Russia. (Sorry, that was the first extreme example

that came to mind!) The film borrows its plot line from the *Terminator*, with Josh Brolin's muscular Cable replacing Arnold Schwarzenegger's character from the future.

Despite all its displeasing ultra-violent trappings, director David Leitch's film affirms the need for human relationships. At the beginning Wade Wilson/Deadpool (Ryan Reynolds) is cozily cuddling with girlfriend Vanessa (Morena Baccarin) as they contemplate a future of domestic bliss. "I need you to pump a baby into me," she tells him. However, their serenity and dream of the future ends when the door bursts in and a small army of goons start blasting away. Deadpool, of course dispatches many of them, forcing the survivors to flee, but not before one of their bullets hits his ladylove and she dies in his arms.

Her gentle love persists, causing Deadpool to champion a somewhat overweight orphan boy named Russell (Julian Dennison), whose life is sought by the time-traveling Cable (Josh Brolin). It seems that Russell's heart and mind were twisted by the little weaselly orphanage headmaster (Eddie Marsan). The sexually abused boy will grow up to be the supervillain Firefist, gifted with the ability to heat up his hands and hurl fireballs at his opponents. He will kill Cable's wife and family unless he can destroy the boy first. Deadpool, having just lost his own lover, can understand Cable, but he feels obligated to protect the boy, even though the unlikable lad does not want it—and eventually, understanding the boy, comes to sympathize with and like him.

There are lots of fights and flights, even a visit to the mansion of the X-Men, and an attempt by Deadpool to create his own team of mutants. How most of these perish in their first mission together is almost as funny as it is grisly. Fortunately, one of the survivors is Domino, (Zazie Beetz), her superpower being luck. She proves to be as delightfully sassy as Wade/Deadpool. Throughout the film the humor co-exists with scenes the of gore resulting from Deadpool's

expert use of his two swords. There is a so-called prolonged death scene that seems to spoof every screen death ever filled. Inserted into this, the dying person says, "Can you see it? Do you see that beautiful bright light? There it is." A dramatic pause. "Oh, that's the sun. Don't stare directly into that." And after a ten or twelve-minute prologue the fake screen credits are hilarious, concluding with "Directed by one of the guys who killed the dog in John Wick." The end credits are fun, too, the major ones accompanied by funny sayings and drawings. Even Martin Luther King, Jr. is brought into the act, with Wade saying, "Cable, you get back to your family and you tell them Wade says hi. And promise me, promise me one thing: that you'll start judging people not by the color of the skin but by the content of their character." To which Wade can only say, "Jesus..."

There's a running joke in which Wade/Deadpool refers incorrectly to himself as an X-Man, and he is corrected "Trainee." At one point when he says, "As a former X-Man..." Bedlam interjects, "Trainee," and Wade replies, "Thank you, Bedlam. I was always appalled by the blatant sexism in the group's name. X-Men? 'Men'? The point is, our group will be forward-thinking. Gender neutral. From now on, we'll be known as... X-Force."

Occasionally a little insight works its way into the repartee, as when Blind Al tells his friend Wade, "Listen to the pain. It's both history teacher and fortune teller. Pain teaches us who we are, Wade. Sometimes it's so bad we feel like we're dying, but we can't really live until we die a little, can we?"

Many a time Deadpool breaks the "fourth wall" by addressing the audience, such as his words near the end of the film, "What do you get when you take 8-feet of chrome, one pinch of courage, a cup of good luck, a dab of racism, a splash of diabetes, and a wheelbarrow of stage 4 cancer? Answer: A family. See? I didn't lie what kind of film this was. If

there's anything you take away today – other than the need to google 'what the f**k is 'dubstep' – it's that we all need to belong to someone.”

Of course, no one goes to a Deadpool film for insights into family or morals, and it can be argued that all the extreme violence and language drowns out such insights—but the latter does not drown out the humor. You might also want to catch the film to keep current with friends and co-workers—thus far IMDB reports that the film has taken in over a quarter of a billion dollars at the box office, so you can be assured many people whom you know have seen the film. (And I haven't even mentioned the incredible, eye-popping CGI effects!) Escapism can really pay off, but then anyone following the Marvel Comics films already knew this.

This review with a set of discussion questions is in the June issue of Visual Parables.