

Frozen (2013)

3-D. Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 40 min .

Our Advisories Violence 3; Language -0; Sex/Nudity -1.

Our star ratings (1-5): 4

Note: the last paragraph definitely contains a spoiler, so beware!

*Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them round your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.*

Proverbs 3.3

*For they do not speak peace,
but they conceive deceitful words
against those who are quiet in the land.*

Psalms 35.20

Once again, the Disney studio has attained the high level of *Beauty and the Beast* in this tuneful adventure tale that directors Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (she also wrote the screenplay) based very loosely on Hans Christian Anderson's "The Snow Queen." Parents and grandparents will love this new film as much as children because it adds one more strong female character for girls to look up to—think of Katniss in *Hunger Games*; of astronaut Ryan Stone in *Gravity*; and—among Disney films—Tiana in *The Princess and the Frog*; Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; Mulan and Pocahontas from the films named after them; and, of course, Belle in the above mentioned *B&B*.

In the mythical Scandinavian kingdom of Arendelle live two royal sisters, Elsa and Anna, who love playing together. Elsa

(voiced by Idina Menzel), the older one, possesses a mysterious magical power to create ice and snow through her hands. One day while playing together, her power gets out of control, and a strong icy blast knocks Anna (Kristen Bell) senseless. Their parents take Anna to the rock trolls known to have healing powers, and the leader Pabbie (Ciarán Hinds) is able to restore Anna and alter her memory so that she will not recall the accident, only the good memories. He also warns them that Elsa must learn to control her power, as it will grow stronger, especially when she is emotionally upset.

Fearful of the harm Elsa can inflict, the parents lock Elsa in her room and sheath her hands in gloves. Thus they keep the two sisters apart. They also forbid them from leaving the castle. Unable to recall the injury, the heartbroken Anna continually comes to her sister's door to plead with her to come and play, but is always turned away. The king and queen perish during a sea voyage, and three years later Elsa, when she has come of age, is brought out to be crowned queen. Visitors from all over flock to the royal city for the coronation. Elsa is the only one not enthusiastic about the celebration, so fearful of unleashing her powers that she tries to keep them in check by wearing her gloves at all times.

Anna, glad that her sister has come out from isolation and that she can go into the village, is happy, especially when she has a "cute" meeting with Prince Hans (Santino Fontana), up from an island kingdom to attend the coronation. The two enjoy their first moments together and at the coronation ball meet and find that they have so much in common that the Prince proposes to her. Anna without hesitation accepts. However, when she tells Elsa, the new queen, objecting that she and Hans have known each other for just a day, refuses to grant her blessing. Anna argues, and Elsa orders everyone to leave, growing so upset that with a sweep of her arm she creates a barrier of icy spikes between the two of them. Shocked by what

she has done, Elsa runs from the palace, into the city, and then across the fjord, her feet freezing the water as she goes. The freezing spreads, the summer weather replaced by winter, ice and snow everywhere.

One of the visiting dignitaries, the Duke of Weselton (Alan Tudyk), whose name is usually mispronounced as "Weazleton," calls the queen a sorceress and suggests that they chase after and kill her. Anna persuades them to wait so that she can first try to go after her sister and get her to stop the snow and ice. Leaving Prince Hans in charge of the kingdom, she sets off on her mission, and there begins the adventure and fun.

Elsa has built a large ice palace high up in the mountains, and so Anna seeks out for her guide mountain man Kristoff (Jonathan Groff), his sleigh drawn by a sensitive reindeer named Sven. They also pick up the character who provides even more humor than Sven, a snowman named Olaf (Josh Gad), who has trouble keeping his head and abdomen atop his base or his nose from sticking out of the wrong place in his face. He foolishly dreams of summer, as he informs us in his delightful song "In Summer." Anna and Kristoff do not get along at first, this becoming the first hint that Hans back in the city might not be Anna's true love all, despite the slightly sweet love song "Love Is An Open Door" that Anna and Hans sing when they first meet.

While we are on the subject of the film's songs (by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez), I felt at times that I was attending a Broadway musical, blessed with the same magical feeling induced years ago by the wonderful *Beauty and the Beast*. "For the First Time in Forever" rousingly expresses Anna's joy, after being confined in the castle during her growing up years, of discovering anew the outside world. "Let It Go" is Elsa's big showstopper, revealing her inner turmoil over her destructive powers and her decision to live alone in cold isolation. Sung by the trolls who mistakenly think that

their friend Kristoff is in love with Anna, “Fixer Upper” provides plenty of comic relief, suggesting to Anna that the imperfect Kristoff can be “fixed up” with love. The opening song [Vuelie](#)* beautifully sets the mood. I suspect at least one of these will be mentioned come Oscar season.

Thus there is something for young and old in this exciting Disney tale. Left way behind is the old Disney heroine wishing on a star for her prince to come and rescue her. Indeed, the prince in this tale turns out to be anything but charming. And what about the ambiguous ending that celebrates more the bonds of sisterhood than of romance? Now this is a real departure from the usual musical comedy genre. I almost forgot, the 3-D effects are enjoyable, but if you enjoy more keeping some of your money in purse or wallet, then the flat version will do fine—the story IS what matters here.

* This opening [song](#) originally included the hymn “Beautiful Savior,” but was cut out by the filmmaker because the hymn did not fit in with the rest of the story. Treat yourself by clicking on to the link and listening to it.

The full review with discussion questions will be included in the January 2014 issue of Visual Parables, scheduled for posting early that month. To subscribe to the publication go to the Store. A year’s subscription will gain you access not just to this issue (which has far more features in it than just film reviews and guides), but also to issues as far back as Summer 2006.