



I can vividly remember when I first saw Disney's **Meet the Robinsons** back in 2007. My parents were on vacation, so my older brother took my younger sibling and me to the local movie theatre to see the film. I didn't know what to expect; I didn't even know it was based on a children's book, *A Day with Wilbur*. But as soon as the film ended and the credits rolled to Rob Thomas' "Little Wonders", I knew I was sold on the movie.



One unique feature of *Meet the Robinsons* is the explicit reminder that the main character, Lewis, is an orphan, alone and desperately wanting acceptance in a family. Almost all of Disney's animated movies feature orphaned children or kids whose parents are out of the picture, but most of the time, that little but important fact is swept under the rug while action, angst, humor, and a happy ending take center stage. With Lewis, we are constantly reminded that he has no parents and has no idea of who they were. The identity of his mom and dad are left to the viewers' imagination.

Yet Lewis doesn't let his parent situation or lack thereof stop him. A brilliant inventor, Lewis seeks to impress potential parents, visiting the orphanage, with various, strange contraptions—most of which end in failure. When his latest invention, a time-traveling machine, impressively fails during a science fair, Lewis angrily gives up his dreams, only to be later swept away by a mysterious, hyperactive boy who adamantly claims he's from the future. What follows is a time-traveling adventure where Lewis must confront his sad past and decided whether or not to embrace his future.



Some Disney fans have viewed *Meet the Robinsons* as a member of Disney's Revival Era, and while I love the film, I have to disagree. The movie is, in my opinion, a lot better than *Home on the Range* or *Chicken Little*, but it lacks that special "oomph" that would propel it to the Revival Era. However, I consider *Meet the Robinsons* as a turning point in the Post-Renaissance Era.

When the film was in production, John Lasseter came on the scene and became the chief creative officer for Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios. He quickly scrapped more than half of the movie, saying the villain wasn't scary or threatening enough, so director Steve Anderson added an evil sidekick and an over-sized dinosaur (complete with a thrilling dinosaur-chasing-the-protagonist scene) to the mix. Films after *Meet the Robinsons* got progressively better which is why I see the movie as a turning point.

Embracing the future is a key theme in *Meet the Robinsons*. The vibrant colors and upbeat soundtrack for the scenes in the future help back this idea. Moving forward to the future was a mantra for Walt Disney, an innovator and dreamer himself. He faced many obstacles in his life, but he never let those hardships stop him from chasing his dreams. And thanks to his perseverance, we have him to thank, for igniting our imaginations and inspiring us to follow our own dreams.

AROUND HERE, HOWEVER, WE DON'T
LOOK BACKWARDS FOR VERY LONG.

WE KEEP MOVING FORWARD, OPENING UP NEW DOORS AND
DOING NEW THINGS, BECAUSE WE'RE CURIOUS...
AND CURIOSITY KEEPS LEADING US DOWN NEW PATHS.

WALT DISNEY

On a personal level, I connected to the film because another key theme was adoption. As an adopted kid, I can relate to Lewis' struggles concerning questions about his birth parents, his search for acceptance in a family not biologically his own, and his what-ifs scenarios. Perhaps a reason why the film resonated with me is because director Steve Anderson had personally experienced several of the emotions and questions Lewis had as an adopted kid (from the director's DVD commentary).

Like Lewis, I was blessed to be adopted into a loving, accepting family, with parents who support and encourage me to follow my dreams. This film will always have a special place in my heart despite its flaws. It isn't stellar compared to some of Disney's finest. The mixed reviews and modest box office earnings has helped to obscure *Meet the Robinsons'* standing among other Disney movies, but that fact doesn't diminish, in my opinion, a heartfelt story that is wacky, funny, and genuine.