Movie Review of Kung Fu Panda 3: Just as the first two were, the third time's a charm

As *Kung Fu Panda 2* ended, we saw a panda sitting on a mountain saying, "My son is alive."

Since then, my family and I—and maybe you too?—have been wondering how the main character Po would reconnect with his panda father and what that reunion would be like. I was especially curious how the film would delve further into the adoption theme. After all, the main character Po, a panda, has been raised by a goose, Mr. Ping, and we learned more about that in the second movie.

Then, finally, finally, *Kung Fu Panda 3* opened on Jan. 29. And even though we had an otherwise full day of no school for children (thank you, blizzard) but work for both parents, at the end of the day we headed straight to the theater.

If I had been able to find a *Kung Fu Panda* marathon leading up to the movie premiere, we might have gone. And I hardly ever see movies in the theater. But this is *Kung Fu Panda*.

If you haven't seen *Kung Fu Panda* or *Kung Fu Panda 2*, maybe you can't appreciate our excitement. You should stop reading now and go get your hands on the first one—or just skip to the second.

These are fantastic movies. They have riveting story lines, engaging characters, catchy soundtracks, and they are visually a delight. Our sons laugh hysterically and I laugh right along with them. We quote them all the time, they involve kung fu, and they take place in China. How can you top that?

Oh, and they always leave me hungry for Chinese dumplings—but that may not be a plus.

Anyway, we went into *Kung Fu Panda 3* with high expectations. I have to admit I also had a little trepidation. Adoption can be depicted in bizarre, confusing ways in children's movies, and sometimes I am scrambling to re-frame and re-explain that poor betrayals of adoption do not reflect the actual experience.

I had no need to worry. We absolutely loved this movie.

It is an action-packed film and we were easily swept up into the storyline. We laughed and laughed. Even the villain made us laugh a few times. Yes, I cried a few times. There were some beautifully touching moments. It's a movie full of heart—and I am a softie.

Overall, I felt the movie handled Po's adoption and the reunification of Po and his birth father in a positive way, while leaving room for the relationship between his two fathers—birth and adoptive—to grow.

Setting the adoption theme aside, I love the lessons of the film. Po has to consider what is the right path to take. He has to show forgiveness. He and his friends and family make mistakes, but they find strength by trying to become the best versions of themselves.

Kung Fu Panda 3 is full of life and love and a story of family and friendship and the war of good versus evil—where the future is in the hands of a humble and somewhat muddled but always lovable dragon warrior. You'll love it.

And, if you're like me, you'll walk out humming the theme song and longing for Chinese dumplings. If only they sold those in the theater.