

FILM REVIEW: Suburban Nerds Masquerade as Hardened Gangstas in ‘Keanu’

‘One-trick kitty’ of a film attempts to stretch a sketch’s worth of material to a feature-length comedy



Movie still from ‘Keanu,’ with Jordan Peele as Rell holding Keanu the kitten and Keegan-Michael Key as his cousin Clarence

Rell (Jordan Peele) was so inconsolable after being dumped by his girlfriend that getting high didn’t help ease the pain. But then, while crying on the shoulder of his cousin Clarence (Keegan-Michael Key), a cute, little kitten appeared on his doorstep.

Seeing this as a sign of divine intervention, Rell adopted the adorable stray, which he proceeded to feed, bathe and name Keanu, Hawaiian for “cool breeze.” But after bonding for the next couple of weeks, his newfound state of bliss ended abruptly with the kidnapping of Keanu during a break in by members of the 17th Street Blips.

The Blips are a ruthless drug gang from the wrong side of the proverbial tracks. Rell realizes that to rescue his pet, he’s going to have to venture into the heart of the ghetto.

This is a tall order for a nerd from the ‘burbs totally unfamiliar with the ways of the ‘hood. For some reason, he enlists the assistance of his equally-geeky cousin, whose wife (Nia Long) and daughter (Jordyn A. Davis) very conveniently just happen to be going away for the weekend.

Rell and Clarence adopt gangsta aliases — Tec-tonic and Shark Tank, respectively — before confronting Cheddar (Method Man), the Blips’ bloodthirsty kingpin. They also deliberately abandoned their bourgie black accents for gram-mar-butcherer Ebonics laced with profanity, the N-word and lots of double negatives.

Of course, retrieving Keanu proves to be quite complicated, as not only Cheddar but a Latino crime boss (Luis Guzman) has staked a claim to the cat (which he refers to as Iglesias). And it is very important that the cousins never admit their middle-class roots lest they risk being exposed as lacking street

cred.

Thus unfolds “Keanu,” a one-trick pony — or, should I say, a one-trick kitty — directed by Peter Atencio, director of 54 episodes of the Key and Peele TV show. This fish-out-of-water comedy repeatedly relies on the theme that these guys have no idea how to survive in the slums on the run from myriad maladroitness morons. That running joke gets tired after about 10 minutes, but the stretch-o-matic skit format insists on beating the dead horse for another hour and a half.

That’s irritainment!

Fair ★

Rated R for violence, sexuality, nudity, drug use, incessant ethnic slurs and pervasive profanity

Running time: 98 minutes

Distributor: New Line Cinema / Warner Brothers

Full Bloom: Poisonous Ornamentals

“April showers bring May flowers” never held much significance in my life until I moved to the Pacific Northwest. When the Rose City blooms, it does so in vibrant fashion. Delicate petals grace porches, parks and pedestrian crosswalks. Colorful tendrils of various types flow up mailbox posts, trees, and the occasional storefront trellis. Portland greenery brings out the inner gardener in all of us — though personally, I’m more of the Venus Flytrap type, since my green thumb is frostbitten.

Flowers, though beautiful, are not created equally. Some common ornamental flowers can be poisonous to pets if ingested.

Fatal plant poisonings are rare. Many animals live harmoniously in areas or houses with poisonous plants because they choose not to ingest them. Predisposing factors for eating plants include boredom, young animals, colder seasons, and being indiscriminate eaters (that is, a history of eating other non-food items). While pets may nibble on greenery, they generally prefer grass over poisonous plants.

Depending on the plant ingested, clinical signs will vary. Lily-of-the-Valley, Oleander, azalea, laurel, and fox-glove contain potent glycosides (chemicals which affect the heart), leading to coma and sudden death. Tiger lily causes acute kidney failure in cats. Bleeding heart and sago palm affect the central nervous system, causing hyperexcitability, paralysis, coma, or death. Aloe vera, English ivy, and the bulbs of tulips, daffodils, iris, and amaryllis cause



Dr. Jasmine Shanelle Streeter
Veterinarian

irritation of the mucous membranes and gastrointestinal tract if ingested.

Plant ingestion is difficult to diagnose unless you witness the animal eating the plant or see the plant in its vomitus. Excessive salivation (drooling), vomiting, and diarrhea are the most common signs of poisonous plant ingestion. Many cases resolve themselves before the owner has the chance to take the pet to a veterinarian. Severe cases may result in death.

If you suspect or have watched your pet ingest a poisonous plant, take them to a veterinarian as soon as possible. Treatment for these animals involves removing the plant contents from the stomach and supportive care. The sooner the treatment is attempted the better.

To prevent poisonous plant ingestion, remove plants from your house and keep a watchful eye on your pet where poisonous plants may be present. If you choose to keep poisonous plants in your home, make sure animals can’t gain access to them. Consider plastic or silk flowers for a safe but authentic look.

If all else fails, roses are always a classic win — unless of course your pet likes thorns.

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