



KinoFest

THE GERMAN FILM FESTIVAL



FILM REVIEW: The Amazing Maurice

By Princess Kinoc of Film Police Reviews

I was not prepared to enjoy anthropomorphic cats and rodents the way that this adapted Sir Terry Pratchett novel by Toby Genkel did. Though I admit that I have never read the book adaptation, I guess it's safe to say that the movie stands alone, although it is quite far from the highly sensational visuals one might be accustomed to with Pixar and Disney's animations. What makes this film quite appealing, besides the star-studded cast, is the way that this German-British animation seems to capture the late author's humor and sensibilities.

The titular character is an orange tabby cat named Maurice, voiced by the effervescent Hugh Laurie in his original British accent. He is charming and cunning, but he offers a sweet spot for the rodents that he has lived with early in the story. It seems as if he and his friendly rats are the only anthropomorphic animals in this Kingdom, and the film makes its way to explain how they can talk, albeit only quite briefly and vaguely. He travels from one village to another to sort of "save" them from an overwhelmingly large "rat" problem, but we see at the onset that this is a scam he, along with one human being that can understand them, Keith (Himesh Patel), and the rodents have devised so they can earn a living from town to town. I found the idea so hilarious, but I fear that it might be too good to be true, so I have some reservations going into the film, especially when we bump into Malicia (voiced by Emilia Clarke), a narrator who seems to know the plot of the film and we soon find out is the daughter of the Mayor of the next town the gang will visit.

Malicia breaks the fourth wall and tells us that this is a "framing device" to sort of take us out of what might be an incredulous storyline. However, she isn't the only one who is suited to do the same thing, which might kind of ruin the joke. But the film pushes there, and suddenly, Maurice breaks into the fourth wall as well... but it's kind of charming for the kids, still. I think as long as they wouldn't care, then maybe that works? I don't know. The way that Laurie executed it in his voice was demeaning, and yet he manages to charm us in a way to believe that he does have a point.

When the gang realizes that someone else has plagued the town in an alternative version than theirs, they're off to catch who it might be and if ever there's any cheese left for them to steal. We then hear brilliant voices coming from the A-lister cast from the likes of David Tennant, David Thewlis, and Gemma Arterton, and while they seem to be having fun with the characters they're off to play with, the plot is as thin as that slice of bread that's gone missing. There is a thing about the Pied Piper, and I'm afraid that as it's not a popular folk character to use as a

reference in a comedy film.

Strangely, I still enjoyed *The Amazing Maurice* as much as I thought I would. For some reason, all I thought of was that this might bring some laughs in the theater and that perhaps this is the kind of British humor everyone's been talking about. Whatever that means. I found some of the bits funny; however, there are some parts of the plot that don't make sense to me, and yet I kept fighting myself saying that maybe that's part of the joke. One might compare *The Amazing Maurice* to other orange tabby cats in film, but it did make me want to read the book, so I guess that's the takeaway I gathered after seeing this.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Princess Kinoc](#) is a freelance writer, and the current Editor-in-Chief for [Film Police](#) Reviews. She is also a member of the Society of Filipino Film Reviewers (SFFR) and the Society of Filipino Archivists for Film (SoFIA). Outside FPR, she has also written reviews and essays for *New Durian Cinema* and *Pelikula Journal*, and she co-hosts the Filipino film podcast, *Third World Cinema Club*. She is a black coffee drinker, and she's not so sure if that matters.

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