American Cousin. The theme, however, does manage to produce a few choice lines such as “I know a place down by the river, there’s nothing but Americans down there, we could do whatever we want.” If only.

To name but a few lost opportunities: the effects of limiting horizons on masculinity, how the nuke plant supplants traditional labour, father-lover; evangelism and psychosis, a collection.

It is willing, however, does rise above the hackneyed cliches. The theme, however, does manage to produce a few choice lines such as “I know a place down by the river, there’s nothing but Americans down there, we could do whatever we want.” If only.

The team spirit is willing, but the film’s content is weak.

Jean-Claude Lord’s Tadpole and the Whale

Tadpole and The Whale is the sixth film in producer Rock Demers’ Tales for All collection of “family” films. The story is stocked: a young, idealistic girl named Daphne (Fanny Lauzier), who can communicate with whales and dolphins, saves a humpback whale. Her Heros bring together two stubborn brothers, “Grandpa” Hector and “Grandpa” Thomas, who haven’t spoken to one another in years. Dubbed “Tadpole” for her amphibian pursuits, Daphne befriends a young couple who have come to holiday at the coastal inn where her parents work and where she has spent most of her life. The universe unfolds as it should until Daphne discovers that “Grandpa” Hector, the man who owns the inn, is planning to sell the inn, it is clear that he is ruined their nets. All these things are presented for though adults may find that Tadpole and the Whale is predictable to a plot complication and often borders on the saccharine world of Disney films of their youth, children will be entertained. This is not to condense to children, but judging from their response on the day I saw the movie, children love a man and find slapstick, even the most obvious kind, funny. What saves the film, what preserves its spontaneity (for adults) and dignity (for children) is the documentary footage of the humpback whales and the graceful, awe-inspiring antics of Elvar the dolphin.

We are introduced to Daphne through the eyes of Marcel and Julie (Denis Forest and Marina Orsini) who have come to stay at the coastal resort where Daphne’s parents work. In the opening scene, the couple is speeding down a highway in their open jeep when they spot a child lying face down in the water, apparently drowned. The audience shares Marcel’s relief when, looking for the child, he discovers that this child is very much alive and is only keeping her ears below the water’s surface in order to hear the whales which are some 15 kilometres away.

Both Julie and Marcel are taken with Daphne, who not only introduces them to the mysterious musical magic of the whales, but also teaches them how to play with their dolphin friend. This child-adult relationship, developed so spontaneously between a couple and a 12-year-old girl, is interesting in several respects. It feeds on children’s desire to be noticed and admired by people other than their parents, the makers of this film were careful to make sure that there is no misinterpreting Marcel’s interest in Daphne. She is merely a delightful addition to their first child. The film also represents children as powerful mediators between nature and the man.

If Lord set out to make an audience-pleaser, he has succeeded: for though adults may find that Tadpole and The Whale is predictable to a plot complication and often borders on the saccharine world of Disney films of their youth, children will be entertained. This is not to condense to children, but judging from their response on the day I saw the movie, children love a man and find slapstick, even the most obvious kind, funny. What saves the film, what preserves its spontaneity (for adults) and dignity (for children) is the documentary footage of the humpback whales and the graceful, awe-inspiring antics of Elvar the dolphin.

In other words, aside from Daphne’s inexplicable ability to hear sounds emitted at 40 kilohertz when the rest of us mortals hear them at 15, there is wishful thinking but no magic in this film. Daphne is the agent of goodwill and good sense and her magic is that of a child who refuses to give up on the place she most loves. At a time when we are all threatened with environmental destruction and nuclear annihilation, the message that children are powerful, that they can be responsible for their habitat and teach adults something about communication, as simplistic as it is, is still a necessary one.}

Naomi Gutman

Tadpole and the Whale

The film’s content rarely rises above the hackneyed. Peter Shatalow

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