

Sprockets

Toronto International FILM
Festival for children
April 14-18, 2008

A great deal of thanks and appreciation goes out to our teacher committees who volunteer their time to assist in the development of Sprockets lesson plans.

- TITLE:** Svein and the Rat and the UFO-Mystery
- COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** *Norway*
- RELEASE YEAR:** *2007*
- ORIGINAL LANGUAGE:** *Norwegian* (with English subtitles)
- DIRECTOR:** *Vibeke Ringen*
- RUNTIME:** *90 min.*
- CURRICULUM LINKS:** Language Arts – Media Studies, critical viewing and creative writing skills. Understanding media forms, conventions and techniques.
- THEMES ADDRESSED:** Mystery, Teamwork, Friendship

EDUCATOR'S ENDORSEMENT:

"Although this film is a fantastic mystery and tremendous fun to watch, the film also addresses a tougher issue about growing up and learning to deal with the death of a grandparent. The storyline is presented in a respectful and dignified manner by acknowledging the loss and celebrating the life of someone who has passed away."

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

SVEIN AND THE RAT AND THE UFO-MYSTERY (2007)
MARIAS MENN (2006)

SYNOPSIS:

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Recommended for Grades 2 to 4

Svein and his trusty pet rat Halvorsen have returned in the delightful and fun follow up to *Svein and the Rat* (a favourite at last year's Sprockets). It is summer vacation and Svein is excited that he and Halvorsen will spend it with his grandmother in the country. Svein can't wait to look at the night sky through her telescope in order to see the stars and, if he's lucky, perhaps a spacecraft! Even better, he is being joined by his best friends Dan and Melissa, and their own pet rats James Bond and Pippi. But Svein's perfect summer is derailed when his grandmother becomes ill and is placed in a nursing home.

Visiting her there, Svein feels something isn't quite right and, after some investigation, deduces that aliens questing for knowledge are stealing the souls of the patients. It is now up to Svein, his friends and their talented pets to engineer Grandma's escape before it is too late.

Filled with humour and adventure, *Svein and the Rat and the UFO-Mystery* explores the importance of friendship and the need to appreciate difference while gently and sensitively handling the loss of a grandparent.

ACTIVITY: CRITICAL VIEWING SKILLS

This activity focuses on posing questions to students to help them develop critical viewing skills.

Though the old saying "everyone's a critic" may have some truth to it, the term critical viewing does not refer to criticizing or critiquing what is viewed in this sense. Rather, the term refers to the process of viewing to attain a greater and more detailed awareness beyond that which is literally presented to the viewer. Through the act of consciously analyzing compositional elements in any given media text, the critical viewer attempts to gain insight into any deeper (or perhaps hidden) meaning and intention introduced by the author(s). Identifying compositional

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elements and knowing how they can be used to provoke response in viewers benefits students by providing an increased ability to deconstruct the meanings and intentions behind the ever-present streams of information directed at them in advertising, television shows, films, videos and websites.

TIME: 20 – 30 mins

Pre-Screening: Following are some examples of critical viewing questions that can be posed to students before the screening to promote a more active viewing experience:

- Did you notice any brand names in the film? List reasons a filmmaker might decide to include brand names or logos within a film.
- Did the main characters in the film have to overcome a problem or obstacle to achieve their goal(s)? Would you have tried to solve their problem differently? Why?
- Did the actors use facial expressions or gestures to convey any messages?
- Did this film have an intended audience? Do you feel you might be included in its intended audience? Why?
- Briefly describe the key scenes of the film.
- Were music or sound effects used? How did this change the dramatic mood of the film or add to what was happening in a given scene?
- Did you make any observations regarding the lighting? Did the use of lighting, shadows or graphics enhance the mood or add to any scene?
- Did all the speaking roles make sense to you? Did any of the actors or characters say anything in the film that you didn't expect, or that surprised you?
- Were there any lines in the script that you would have written differently?
- Did you learn anything new from this film? Try to remember and write down five interesting visual elements or ideas that were presented in this film.

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- What interested you most about this film? This does not have to be central to the film or intentionally presented to you by the film; rather this could be anything that you in particular found interesting or stimulating.
- Where and when does the film's story take place? Were there any elements of this story which could have taken place in any other time or place?
- Is there anything that could have been added or taken away from this film that would have made it better?

POST-SCREENING

Using the chart below, have students outline an alternate ending to the film. The chart is a guide only, if students feel their alternate ending requires more or less than four plot developments, they may change the chart to suit their story ideas.

Compositional Elements	Plot and Event Sequence			
<p>Scenes / Events List the 2-4 events or plot developments which comprise the new ending</p> <p><i>Example: Svein decides to ask Dora about her special bath instead of assuming she isn't from</i></p>	1	2	3	Ending

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<p><i>Earth...</i></p>				
<p>Setting</p> <p>Describe the setting each event or development takes place in.</p> <p><i>Where and when does this event occur. Are there any weather conditions or special factors in the setting?</i></p>				
<p>Lighting</p> <p>Describe how the lighting should be set-up to best realize the scene or event.</p> <p><i>Is it dark? Is the scene shot in bright</i></p>				

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<p><i>yellow or blue lights?</i></p>				
<p>Music</p> <p>Describe the music most appropriate to the scene or event.</p> <p><i>Is it slow and moody or light and upbeat?</i></p>				
<p>Facial Expressions</p> <p>Describe how each character in the scene should act to best convey the situation.</p> <p><i>Svein makes a grossed-out face at the sight of the medicine going on the jam.</i></p>				

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<p>Visual Effects</p> <p>Will the scene require any sort of special effects such as computer graphics or pyrotechnics?</p> <p><i>A giant spaceship swoops down and lands in the forest.</i></p>				
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit these websites for more information concerning critical viewing and media literacy.

Center for Media Literacy
www.medialit.org

Article: What is "Critical Viewing?"
http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article340.html

A pioneer in its field, the Center for Media Literacy (CML) is an educational organization that provides leadership, public education, professional development and educational resources nationally. Dedicated to promoting and supporting media literacy education as a framework for accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating media content, CML works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the twenty-first century media culture. The ultimate goal is to make wise choices possible.

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The Association for Media Literacy Website (AML)
www.aml.ca

The AML website hosts details on the group's many interesting publications, articles, and upcoming media literacy events. The AML played a key role in bringing about the introduction of media literacy into the Ontario Curriculum.

"The Association for Media Literacy is made up of teachers, librarians, consultants, parents, cultural workers, and media professionals concerned about the impact of the mass media on contemporary culture."