

MOVIE REVIEW

COCO: The movie that made me go loco

RASHEED KHAN

With its 19th feature film "Coco" and with the soon-to-be release of the long-awaited "Incredibles 2", it's clear that Pixar Studios has no intentions of slowing down. Assuming you (somehow) have yet to join this accelerating bandwagon, "Coco" would be a very good place to start.

Music is a focal point of this movie, so the first thing I'd like to comment on is the incredible soundtrack. It's catchy as hell, well-composed, and meshes in with the movie beautifully. It even assists with the story progression both subtly and openly. In fact, it's so good that "Remember Me", which is a song that is played frequently in various different scenarios in the movie, actually won an Academy Award. That achievement should speak for itself. Even then, this isn't the end of all that's great about this movie.

The visuals are insane. I would love to elaborate on this, but it's very difficult to do so. Simply put, prepare to have your jaws drop. With its smooth animation and stunning artwork, you'll be easily swept away and drawn into the world of "Coco". Word to the wise: definitely watch it in HD.

Having been drawn in now, the plot-lines and themes will immerse you effortlessly. Without saying much about the full story itself, the movie is set in Mexico, and is about a boy named Miguel who dreams of pursuing music in his life like



his idol, the greatest musician of all time, Ernesto de la Cruz. What complicates this is his family, who despise music with a fierce passion. Pretty simple, right? Well, fasten whatever seatbelts your couch might have. As the movie picks up speed, you're introduced to seemingly measly plot-points, subplots, and plot-twists and turns that actually

make you pause the movie to ask the burning question: "WHAT DID I JUST SEE?" It also contains a large, well-built cast of characters. All the while, it is paced carefully so that your brain is given enough time to digest all the info and keep track of the central theme. What starts off as a simple story becomes larger than life.

This movie makes you feel various different emotions, even if you claim you've been dead inside for years. There is a huge selection of moments where you'll be laughing, grinning, relating to the character, screaming internally, etc. To top it all off, it comes with a final scene so emotionally powerful, if you were to watch it with twenty people, you would need twenty separate tissue boxes. Simply put, it's a Pixar movie in the usual Pixar fashion.

However, in more usual Pixar fashion, this movie does contain some flaws and small instances that make absolutely no sense out of the movie. On the other hand, complaining about those would be nit-picking, so do yourself a favour and gloss over them. Otherwise, this is masterpiece everyone needs to treat themselves to.

Rasheed Khan is a hug monster making good music but terrible puns and jokes where he's probably the only one laughing. Ask him how to pronounce his name at aarcvard@gmail.com

NOVEL REVIEW

"Sugar Candy Bullets Can't Pierce Anything" other than maybe your heart

MASHIYAT IQBAL

A looming sense of apprehension fills the pages of Kazuki Sakuraba's celebrated work – *Sugar Candy Bullets Can't Pierce Anything*.

A light novel published in 2004, it leads the story through the young mind of Nagisa Yamada, a bored middle-schooler who lives in a non-descript rural town with her future planned out and set in stone in the Japanese Self Defence Force. When Mokuzu Umino transfers to her school, bringing with her a set of candy bullets of lies, Nagisa's routine days take a nosedive into a sea of peculiarity. It's a dark, character-driven tale of two contrasting personalities who fall down the rabbit hole into a world of cruelty.

The story begins with the ending, and thus immediately sets the tone for the introspective narration that follows. Even though Nagisa portrays herself as a stern realist with a blasé attitude, her bafflement at Mokuzu's eccentricity and persistent friendliness is almost tangible. The simplicity and innocence in the



interaction between the two protagonists helps to lighten the uneasiness that keeps pace with the storytelling, but only just. The storytelling is grip-

ping, even with the weak plot development, taking time to familiarise the characters and add layers to their depth. Even the side characters with limited

screen-time add an element of enigmatic perceptiveness to the story, the author managing to reflect significant social messages through their roles. The dialogue, especially, is a brilliant collection of insight, depth, and ingenuity.

The ending is the highlight of the novel. Near the end, the pace picks up, and the plot is swiftly wrapped in a flurry of events. Even so, the impact that each event leaves not only intensifies the feeling of apprehension that had stayed with the reader from the very beginning, but also sets off alarm bells for the inevitable. It is heart-rending to face that alongside the characters that the readers got to bond with so closely through the expressive, detailed writing.

This novel contains elements that may not be for the faint of heart. But it is an emotionally engaging read that leaves the mind wondering after it's over. It's an honest, gritty novel that reflects a piece of the dark reality that we live in and I would highly recommend it to anyone willing to take on a tear-jerker.