

TV SHOW REVIEW

A Different Take on a Classic Sitcom Premise

RABITA SALEH

Netflix in Bangladesh really opens up a whole new expanse of shows to the general populace. Shows that would never make it to mainstream TV channels here are now available to those who want something different. And *Derry Girls* is one show that really hits that description. Premiering in January 2018, the sitcom follows a group of five teenagers as they stumble through life in Londonderry, more commonly termed Derry, in Northern Ireland during the late 20th century. However, this show is as far from your usual American high school drama as possible. Primarily, their school plays a much smaller role in the show than you would expect. Next we have the fact that 20th century Northern Ireland was right in the middle of The Troubles, i.e. an ethno-nationalist conflict between

unionists and nationalists over the constitutional rights of the nation. The conflict is used perfectly as a comedic tool, and it is fascinating to watch teenagers navigate such a glossed over time in recent history from a third party perspective. The family dynamics play a major role in this series, but again, in unexpected ways. Of the five teenagers the show most closely follows Erin and her family, which consists of her parents, who are perhaps the only sane characters in the series, and her maternal grandfather, who still inexplicably treats her father like his daughter's annoying new boyfriend even after decades of marriage. Their family also includes Erin's limelight-seeking aunt and her air-headed cousin, Orla, all of whom live in the same house. The interactions between the malicious grandfather and the innocent dad alone

had me doubling up in laughter within the first few minutes. Aside from Erin and Orla, the three other central characters are their friends Clare, Michelle, and Michelle's English cousin, James. I love how although Clare is definitely the stereotypical paranoid, overweight, smarter friend, the writers didn't give her the heart of gold which usually makes these characters one dimensional. Clare's mean streak where she ceaselessly rats out her friends in stress situations makes you want to face-palm yourself while you laugh out loud. Michelle being Erin's foolhardy friend while James is her antithesis was another interesting duo added to the story. James' nationality makes him stand out like a sore thumb and the show uses his innate fear of the Irish expertly, landing him in an otherwise all girls' school, which leads

to all the hilarity you would expect from such a circumstance. While the show has amazingly fleshed out multifaceted characters, the mode of comedy is what really got me because unlike most shows, the laughs are highly situational and rarely at the expense of any one character. The writers most definitely don't hold back when it comes to letting situations get out of hand. If you think you would be interested in a room with a dead ninety year old teacher, a blonde escaping with one leg out the window, and an English kid peeing in a potted plant while others devour sandwiches, take pictures or steal from said dead teacher, give this show a go. You won't regret it. *Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com*



ANIME REVIEW

Of Nostalgia and Childhood

MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

Devoid of any action, drama, mystery or a witty screenplay, *Mirai*, is an anime movie set with quite a plain storyline. However, it has one thing sprawling dexterously in every moment of the story and that is emotion. Kun is the only child of his parents who loves, like every kid, the undivided attention of his parents. But, one day, his parents return home with a white fluff of a baby and Kun learns that it is his baby sister Mirai. That is mainly, the ground plot of the story. Pretty basic, isn't it? But, what really sets this movie apart is the powerful way this simple story is shown. All elder siblings will nod their heads to all that Kun encounters. Personally, I was transported back to my own childhood. When my younger brother was born, I also reasoned that my parents didn't love me anymore and came to the most predictable conclusion: I must be an adopted child. Loving your siblings is pretty much a weird thing. You learn to love your parents because they always irrevocably shower



you with their care and love and most importantly, buy you things. But speaking from a child's mind, how to love a person that suddenly drops out of nowhere and doesn't buy you anything; rather, snatches all the affection you had been enjoying greedily all by yourself? You might say you don't. But deep down, amidst all the silly fights and endless bickering, we all do. But

how and when do we ever start to grow fond of the little brats we call our siblings, is what is perfectly showcased in *Mirai*. Director Mamoru Hosoda has deftly twiddled the script with such expertise that you can't but plummet down the path of Kun's feelings. Yet the movie doesn't just target the character development of Kun, rather it craftily constellates the

development of the whole family, ending with a sweet note about the importance of family roots. In the thick of all the anime that focus on young viewers and teenagers, *Mirai* stands out as it garners both children and adults' emotions with a childlike wonder equally matched by the subtle maturity behind each encounter Kun makes. Perhaps, that is the reason it was nominated for the Best Animated Film at the 91st Academy Awards. What I absolutely loved about the anime is that it pivots professionally between the fine lines of reality and imagination. Though sometimes, the events feel redundant which may curb the interest of its viewers. That said, everything about this movie has some deep metaphorical significance including the stunning backdrops and the artful cinematography and if you've got the eye for it, you definitely should give this movie a try to stumble back into the good old days of childhood.

Maisha Nazifa Kamal doesn't understand why all the black cats meow at everyone else except her. Send her ways to communicate with them at 01shreshtha7@gmail.com