

EDITORIAL

People have innate skills which often come in handy because there is only so much you want to actively put in the effort to learn. Instant reflexes are an innate skill. For this I'm truly grateful since having grown up with siblings and learning to be constantly vigilant to defend myself from their attacks, I would have been in deep trouble otherwise.

People have innate skills such as empathy, which I find curious because this is something I genuinely didn't develop until much later (I was a really mean child). Recent studies show even procrastination might have a strong genetic component to it.

People have innate skills but, as our cover story this week is about to tell you, parenting is not one of them. I should have figured this out when a classmate would frequently show up to school with bruise marks in different parts of their body, but meaningful observation is another skill which didn't kick in for me until much later.

-- Mrittika Anan Rahman, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

MOVIE REVIEW



A Unique Story of Life, Death, and Everything In Between

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contains mild spoilers

Pixar's latest movie *Soul* (2020) is one not only worth watching, but worth remembering. The movie, directed by Pete Docter, follows the story of a middle school band teacher named Joe Gardner (Jamie Foxx), who lives and breathes jazz, but sadly has never had much luck on landing a big break – until he finally does, and the movie takes an incredible turn.

Just after landing the gig of his dreams, playing for one of the most famous jazz musicians in the world, Dorothea Williams (Angela Bassett), Joe hilariously and almost anticlimactically falls into a manhole. Oscillating between life and death, he finds himself in a different dimension. With his sheer will to make it home for his big performance, his soul somehow escapes the afterlife. But instead he gets transported to "before-life", where unborn souls are mentored and prepared for Earth – the most crucial aspect of which involves beings finding their "spark".

Unfortunately for Joe, he gets assigned as a mentor to the one soul so unwaveringly impossible, that she has had over a thousand mentors, all of whom have failed. 22 (Tina Fey) hates the idea of living, and has never found her spark. Joe quickly realizes that he can trade places with her and they make a deal that's mutually beneficial – 22 can skip her life, and Joe can get back to his. But of course, keeping true to the movie's

pattern, this great plan doesn't work out quite the way they wanted it to, and 22 ends up getting stuck in Joe's body while he gets stuck in a... cat's.

The best part of the movie starts when 22 has to live as Joe and experiences all the human, mundane parts of life and he gets to watch her fall in love with it all. She walks the same roads he did, takes the subway to the places he used to, and enjoys it all with a heart full of curiosity. As she explores Joe's life, we get to see topics like passion and purpose being explored and what they really mean. However, the absolute highlight for me in this movie was when Joe finally succeeds in getting back to his body, and gives the performance he has always dreamed of but, he still does not feel complete. In a twist that is unfamiliar to Disney movies, he gets the happy ending, but he is not happy. And then we see him realising why.

It took what seemed like a predictable story about a struggling middle school teacher finally achieving his dreams to a beautiful journey about realising the meaning of life, passion, and purpose. A simple message coupled with brilliant animation, this movie is 1 hour and 47 minutes of pure magic. In a time of uncertainty and growing pressure for young adults to find a purpose, and "make it", *Soul* serves as the reassuring hand of a friend on your shoulder reminding you that it's okay to just be. What's most important is that you don't get so caught up in chasing an ideal life that you miss out on experiencing the life you already have.



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