

Film Title and Release Date: *Eleanor's Secret* (2009)

Length of Film in Minutes: 78 minutes

Film Genre: Animation/Family

Reviewer Name and Grade: Yaseen V., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: August 7, 2020

Eleanor's Secret is a film about a young boy named Nathaniel who must save fairy tale characters that have magically come to life. The movie begins with the protagonist, Nathaniel, and his older sister Angelica moving into their eccentric Aunt Eleanor's home because she had recently passed away. Nathaniel discovers a secret door, and much to Angelica's dismay, has been given the key to said door as stated in their Aunt's will. Angelica is left with a porcelain doll. When Nathaniel goes to open the door, it is revealed to be a room full of books, specifically classic fairy tales. This horrifies Nathaniel because he is unable to read on his own. Later in the film, a thunderstorm hits, leaving the house in damage. To repair the house, Nathaniel offers to sell the books since he cannot read. However, when he goes to the secret door to retrieve the books, he is astonished to see characters like Little Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, and Pinocchio alive! Nathaniel's surprise continues when the characters have declared him as their new guardian. As guardian, Nathaniel must read the magic spell to keep them alive. In a series of obstacles and adventures, Nathaniel works together with the characters to learn how to read the spell in order to save the beloved characters before it is too late. In the end, Nathaniel is able to recite the spell and convinces his parents to keep the books instead of selling them. Angelica finds a collection of valuable jewelry inside her porcelain doll and uses it to repair the house. The film ends with both siblings making amends, and reading together in the attic.

How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?

I found this film by casually browsing on Kanopy in its kids section.

Did the plot (for a fictional movie) keep you interested?

Yes, the plot of this movie was incredibly interesting and unlike anything I have seen before.

Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?

I believe the pace of this film was at a perfect pace.

What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?

I think this movie is perfect for ages 5 and up because it gives an interesting take on the fairy tales we are already familiar with.

5 stars: I'm really glad I watched this film; it was awesome!

I would give this film 5 stars because its plot was incredibly original and shows how Nathaniel overcame his weakness and learned how to read. It also builds on sibling love and relationships. I would definitely recommend this film because it features well known classics and builds on their stories in a way that is very unique.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Lijia L., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: May 25, 2021

The film follows the story of seven year old Nathaniel, a young boy who is unable to read. We start with Nathaniel and his family moving into the house of their Aunt Eleanor, who recently passed away. Looking through the rooms, Nathaniel is overcome with memories of his aunt and the stories she used to read to him. He comes across the forbidden room, and tries to peek in, but gets confronted by his sister, Angelica. Angelica constantly teases Nathaniel for being unable to read, and scoffs at Nathaniel's interest in fairytales. Later that day, he finds that he has inherited the key to the room while Angelica has inherited a porcelain doll. Inside the room, he is disappointed to find that it is filled with the books that his aunt read to him, and because he can't read, he leaves in frustration. That night, a thunderstorm destroyed part of their house, and to fund the repairs for it, Nathaniel offers to sell the books to an antique seller. When he goes back to the room, he finds that the storybook characters had come to life, declaring him as their new guardian. It was his duty to read a magical spell that kept them alive before five hours were up. After finding out that he is unable to read, one of the storybook characters, Carabosse the evil witch, shrinks him down to their size. While they are panicking, the antique seller arrives, forcing the characters to return to their books, dragging the now thumb-sized Nathaniel with them. The seller is delighted to find that the books are all first-editions, and devises a plan to buy them at less than what they're worth. He quickly transports the books to his warehouse that is a long way away from Nathaniel's house. On top of figuring out how to read the spell, Nathaniel has to find a way to return to his house. Alice, the ogre, and the white rabbit accompany him, and together they encounter countless obstacles. They get back just in time, and with Alice's encouraging words, Nathaniel is finally able to read the magical spell. He convinces his dad to not sell the priceless books and with the jewelry Angelica finds in her doll, they can pay for the repairs. The movie ends with Angelica and Nathaniel reading together in the secret room.

How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?

I found this film from casual browsing in the kid's section. It was one of the first that appeared in the movie section and the title interested me.

Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested?

The movie had a clear plot that was easy to grasp, but the idea of bringing fictional characters to life seems a bit cliché.

Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?

I thought the pace of the film was just right. It didn't drag on for too long but it was long enough to be fulfilling.

What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?

This film is appropriate for all grade levels and all ages, although younger viewers may like the concept more than older ones.

4 stars:

"Eleanor's secret" was fun to watch, especially because of the pretty animations. The ending was especially heartwarming because it shows how the two siblings made up. However, the concept wasn't very original, and the "fictional characters being brought to life" thing is a bit overused.