

Film Title and Release Date: *The Sand Castle* (1997)

Length of Film in Minutes: 14 minutes

Film Genre: Short film/ animated

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

Date Reviewed: May 20, 2021

The film starts with vivid animations of dunes and sand ripples by the breath of the wind. This seems to take place in the desert, or beach with a lot of sand and occurs during midday/afternoon judging from the shadows cast by the characters. However, there is not much information given about setting because it is not essential in the animation. A doll-like creature emerges from within a dune, looking around and sliding down the mounds of sand, disrupting its serene surroundings. With its 4-fingered hands, it molds another creature resembling a snake but with a round body. It then sculpts a starfish-like creature, then a creature with a pig snout and large, flapping ears. These creations play around in the dunes, while the original creature looks on with pride, as it seems to be the parental figure in this animation. These creatures form even more creations. All of them team together to build giant mounds of sand with passageways, doorways, as well as some heaps of sand resembling buildings. Some creatures make markings in sand while others continue to erect buildings from the once natural sand-scape. They work together in unison to create larger structures. Finally, their creation resembles a mound with a doorway and a slide surrounded by low walls and a tower: a sandcastle. They frolic in the surrounding dunes and their sand castle, making holes or sliding down mounds. The original creature looks on and claps, while joyous music plays in the background. Suddenly, the wind rises, blowing away the sand and destroying their creations. Shocked, the sand creatures take refuge in their castle, which eventually reduces to a pile of sand, with the creatures inside. Eventually, the wind dies down, forming the original dunes and ripples of sand at the beginning of the film. It is assumed that the original doll-like creature will resurface, repeating the process of creating new creatures who then build a sand castle, and so on, forming a never-ending cycle.

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. Because it had won quite a few awards, I thought it would be an interesting watch.

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

The plot was quite difficult to grasp due to lack of dialogue, but I thought it was interesting to figure everything out in the end.

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

I thought the pace of the film was able to enhance the beauty of the animation and music, making it just right.

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

This film is appropriate for all grade levels and all ages, although older viewers may be able to find more meaningful messages from the seemingly simple plot while younger viewers can just enjoy the beauty of the animation.

5 stars:

“The Sand Castle” was a worthwhile watch, largely due to the detailed animation of sand. It's evident that a lot of thought and effort was put into making the sand as realistic as possible. Each movement of sand was extremely realistic, almost as if it was a video taken straight from nature. In addition, the music contributed to the simplicity and fit the scenes extremely well.