

**Film Title and Release Date:** *Hunt For The Wilderpeople* (2016)

**Length of Film in Minutes:** 102 minutes

**Film Genre:** Adventure/Comedy

**Reviewer's Name and Grade:** Benjamin W. 9th Grade

**Date Reviewed:** July 20, 2020

This film takes place mainly in west Auckland's Waitakere Ranges which is a mountain range in New Zealand. The place is very big and everything looks the same so it is very easy to get lost unless you know the way around the forest.

Ricky Baker is a juvenile delinquent who after being abandoned by his mom, is taken into child welfare services. He is sent to live in the mountains with Bella Faulkner and her husband Hec. Ricky is given a dog for his 13th birthday, who he names Tupac, and begins to like the place. When Bella suddenly dies, news comes that child welfare is coming to take him back so he fakes his suicide and runs off into the mountains. He gets lost quickly and runs out of food. Hec is able to find him but the two of them get stranded in the mountains when Hec gets into a fight with Ricky and fractures his ankle. When child welfare comes to the empty farm, they come to the conclusion that Ricky was kidnapped by Hec and a national manhunt is started. Hec had a criminal history of manslaughter and Ricky's only path now was juvie so the two of them decided to go on the run. There, they survive, hoping that they don't get caught.

Ricky Baker is a bad kid who has a history of vandalism, stealing, and destroying. He is really fat and not very athletic. Ricky has no respect for adults and does whatever he wants to do. Bella Faulkner is kind and loving. She married Hec, a past criminal, and took in Ricky, a juvenile delinquent because she felt bad for them. Hec is remote and mentally unstable. He is illiterate but is an expert in surviving in the wild.

Now, I will answer some questions about the film:

*How did you find the film on Kanopy (by title search, subject search, casual browsing, etc.)?* - I found this film by subject search. I wanted to watch a comedy and *Hunt For The Wilderpeople* was in the most popular section.

*Did the plot keep you interested?* - This plot definitely kept me interested. There was a lot of action and plot twists that kept me interested the entire time. The movie was also really funny and makes you want to know how it ends

*Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?* - I think the pace of this film was just right. There was always some sort of action like fights or chases that kept the film moving forwards. There were also slower parts between all the action like camping or just walking that slowed the movie down so not too much stuff was happening.

*What grade level(s) is this film appropriate for?* - I think this film is appropriate for kids in grades 6-12. This film is rated PG-13 and contains some violence and language but not too much. Most of the violence and language are used for comedy purposes.

I would rate this film *5 stars*. This movie was really funny and kept me interested the entire time. The characters did an awesome job and the plot was really good. Everything was clear and well planned.

**Reviewer's Name and Grade: Prisha S. 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: July 29, 2020**

This film takes place in New Zealand in present-day. The movie is split into "chapters." Ricky Baker is a teenage delinquent who was left by his mother at a young age and became an orphan. Through many orphanages and Paula, the Minister of Child Welfare, he ends up at the rural home of Bella and Hector, an odd, middle-aged couple with no children. He enjoys his time at the home being taken care of well. But, "Auntie" Bella suddenly dies which puts off Hector and Ricky. Ricky learns that child services will take him back to an orphanage, so he decides to fake his suicide and runs away to the bush. Hector follows him, but the two have gone deep into the woods and get lost. Meanwhile, child services arrive at Hector's home and determine that he was mentally unstable after the death of his wife and kidnapped Ricky. This begins a national chase for Ricky and Hector with a reward of \$10,000 if they are found.

Ricky splits up with Hector at one point and runs into Kahu, another teenager with a home in the bush. Kahu and her father briefly take care of Ricky, then he resumes his adventure and finds Hector. Eventually, the police and search chase find and corner them. Hector is sent to jail and Kahu and her father take care of Ricky. When Hector is released from jail, he joins Ricky and his new foster family.

*How did you find the film on Kanopy?*

I found this film on Kanopy by casual browsing.

*Did the plot keep you interested?*

Yes, the plot had several surprises and twists to keep me interested, both before Ricky and Hector's adventure and during it.

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

The pace of the film was just right. I fully understood the plot while being hooked to the development of the story.

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

This film is appropriate for grades 10-12 because of profanity.

**Rating: 4 stars:**

I enjoyed this film and found it worthwhile to watch. This adventure film was different from the movies I usually watch, but I was still attached to the plot. The film was also humorous. It was light-hearted at times with a deep overall message.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A., 9<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: September 6, 2020**

Hunt for the Wilderpeople takes place in a New Zealand bush. Ricky Baker is a 12 year old foster child, who has a past of illegal activities, such as graffitiing and shoplifting. Due to his troubled past, he is sent to live in the mountains with Bella Faulkner and her surly husband Hec. Bella wins over Ricky, and they form a close bond. One day, Bella suddenly dies, and child services want to take Ricky back. However, Ricky does not want to go back because if he does, no family will take him and he will have to go to juvenile hall for his past crimes. Ricky fakes his suicide, and runs away to the bush with his dog. However, he is not suited for a life in the wilderness and immediately gets lost. Hec finds him, but badly sprains his ankle. They are forced to camp out in the wilderness for a couple weeks. When child services arrive at the empty barn,

they conclude that Ricky was kidnapped by Hec. A national manhunt is declared, with a reward for whoever can capture them. Hec reveals that he had previously spent time in prison for accidental manslaughter, and cannot go back to prison. The two decide to hide from the police, and live in the woods. One day, they find a ranger nearly dead from his diabetes. Hec sends Ricky to get help. Ricky meets a girl his age named Kahu, who helps him, but when they get back to the trailer, there are police everywhere. Ricky uses the tips Hec taught him, and eventually meets up with Hec. They keep running, but one day, the police find where they are and send helicopters and many cars to catch them. They end up getting caught, but Hec gets a short sentence, and Ricky lives with Kahu while Hec is in prison. After Hec gets out, Ricky and Hec go to find a supposedly extinct bird that they had seen during their travels.

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

I found the film by going to the comedy section of Kanopy.

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

The plot definitely kept me interested, as it was very funny, and there was a lot of suspense.

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

The pace of the film was just right, as it gave you enough time to process everything, but there was still a lot of action to keep it interesting.

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

This film is appropriate for grades 7 and up, as there is some violence and language.

*Rating:*

I would rate Hunt for the Wilderpeople 5 stars, as it was very funny and had a lot of action. The actors portray their characters very well, and you could really relate to the characters. I really enjoyed watching this movie, and would definitely recommend watching it.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Riley B., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: July 5, 2021**

This story takes place in New Zealand. Ricky Baker is a 13 year old boy who is in foster care. Many families rejected him because of his reckless behavior. "Auntie and Uncle" Bella and Hector agree to house him and Ricky finally has a home. One day, Bella passes away suddenly. Hector shuts down and Ricky feels alone again. Ricky runs away and Hector follows him. The child welfare services want Ricky back so they can place him in juvenile detention. They have to learn to survive in the woods from now on because they are fugitives now. It turned into a national chase. They must have traveled over 50 miles the first week. During the end of the first week, they ran out of food quickly and toilet paper. They found an abandoned cabin with toilet paper and canned food. They took that and whatever clothes and warm things they could find. They also found some dog food for their two dogs, Zag and Tupac. At the end of the 3rd or 4th week, they found another cabin. To their surprise, it was not abandoned but had a dying ranger in it. Ricky went to find help and ran into Kahu and her father. They called the cops and fed him. He accidentally fell asleep and when he woke, he ran back to the cabin. The cops were there looking for him and his uncle. He ran back into the woods, found his uncle, and the chase resumed. Soon they ran into psycho Sam who helped them escape with his truck, Crumpy. Ricky and Hector drive it and run into a junkyard. That is where they are captured. Hector is sent back

to jail but Ricky is sent to live with his friend Kahu and her dad. Ricky sneaks out and visits his uncle whom he breaks out and have one last adventure together.

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

I found this by just casual browsing. This is my first film review so I wanted to start off with a film I was interested in.

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

The plot kept me held on because it had a lot of cliffhangers like Hector hurt his ankle and could not walk so you didn't know if he would have to give up or keep going on.

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

The pace of the film was just right. It was actually spaced out in chapters.

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

I think that it would be appropriate for 7th graders and up because it had some gory scenes.

*4 stars: I enjoyed this film and found it worthwhile to watch.*

I enjoyed this film because it was upbeat and adventurous and thrilling. It was not my favorite since there was some curse words but otherwise it was great.

**Reviewer Name and Grade: Nicholas P., 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Date Reviewed: March 20, 2022**

Hunt for the Wilderpeople is a Comedy-Drama set in New Zealand. It is about a 13-year-old named Ricky. The film is directed by Taika Waititi and stars Sam Neil as Hec and Julian Dennison as Ricky. Ricky is a parentless trouble maker. He has graffitied, littered, stolen, and more. The police send Ricky to a new home in the woods, in hopes that the change in scenery will help him change his ways. His new "Auntie" Bella tries to make the home comfortable for Ricky, but "Uncle" Hec does not. Hec is not very accepting of Ricky. His new Auntie Bella dies just days after he arrives, and the government tries to take custody of Ricky away from Hec. Ricky believes that the government will send him to juvie. Ricky runs away in the woods and Hec goes to find him. The government thinks Hec might have kidnapped Ricky so they launch a manhunt to find him. The film is about Hec and Ricky bonding and learning to accept each other. During the film Hec and Ricky meet new allies like Kahu and Psycho Sam, but they also meet new enemies like Paula and Hugh. The film is an adventure throughout the New Zealand wilds. They eventually get caught and Ricky is given a new family and Hec is put in a re-education home. The film ends with Ricky and Hec leaving their homes and going on a new adventure in the woods.

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

I discovered the movie while scrolling through the Kanopy homepage. Once I had found out that Taika Waititi who directed Thor 3 and JoJo Rabbit had directed the movie, I wanted to watch it.

2. *Did the plot (for fictional movie) or presentation of information (for documentary) keep you interested? Was the pace of the film too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The plot kept me interested throughout the whole movie. It was an adventure in the New Zealand woods, so it was unpredictable. It was just the right speed.

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

The film is appropriate for grades 4 and up. There were lots of scenes of the crew hunting animals and some bad language.

*I rate the film 4 stars.* Watching the film was an enjoyable experience. The movie was similar to the animated film *Up* and the film *Stand By Me*. The cinematography in the New Zealand woods and mountains was a standout in the film. The film balances its comedy aspects and its drama aspects perfectly. The dynamic between Hec and Ricky was also nicely done. At the beginning of the movie Hec and Ricky were almost opposites of each other, but as the film went on they started to bond and grow together. Another thing the film does great is distinguish its characters. No two characters felt similar. They all had different traits and personalities. The film was just the right length at one hour and forty-one minutes. One critique of the film I have is about the antagonist, Paula. At the beginning of the film she is nice to Ricky, but by the end of the movie she is an over the top villain. Overall, the film is charming, witty, and funny. This film is really great and I would recommend it to others.