

TOM LE CANCRE *TOM THE TRUANT*

French with English subtitles



Directed by: Manuel Pradal
Genre: Family comedy, adventure
Country of origin: France
Runtime: 90 min.

North American premiere



SYNOPSIS

A kindergarten teacher faints on a field trip with her class after she eats some berries. The 5 year-old children are then lost in the forest. They meet Tom, a 14 year-old runaway who lives in a centennial oak tree. He promises to take them to their parents if they can forget all they have learned at school. The children accept. To fulfill his deal, Tom needs the wolf man to repair his old car....

An adventure starts full of fantasy with a mixture of familiar characters belonging to fairy tales with a twist. (the big bad wolf, the charming prince...)

REVIEWS

A field trip led by a “master Truant”, or how to re-enchant the world with fantasy and impertinence. A pleasantly brilliant and jovial tale, full of humor and charm for young and old alike

<http://mubi.com/films/tom-the-truant>

Festival organizers characterized *Tom Le Cancre* as a reinterpretation of the **Mark Twain**'s iconic *Huckleberry Finn* tale with a little *Peter Pan* thrown in.

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/rome-film-fest-announces-full-384720>

Translated from a blog by Cyril Delacour (expressing his point of view):

The opposite of a fairy tale in the style of Jacques Demy or Jean Cocteau, without re-inventing the Huckleberry Finn legend with a wink at Peter Pan. A group of lost children after their teacher has apparently passed away, aimlessly walks around the forest and meets strange characters. Bathed in surrealism, the film musical score is by Carlo Crivelli, a famous Italian composer for film. Tom The Truant portrays the poetical, visionary moment when one goes through the threshold separating adolescence from childhood.

Un anti-contes de fées au nom de Jacques Demy et Jean Cocteau, sans réinventer le mythe de Huckleberry Finn avec un clin d'œil à Peter Pan. Un groupe d'enfants perdus, après la mort apparente de l'enseignante, se promène dans une forêt où ils vivent et errent, rencontrent des personnages bizarres. Surréaliste, le film est accompagné de la musique produite par Carlo Crivelli, célèbre compositeur italien pour le cinéma. Tom le cancre offre un portrait de l'instant poétique et visionnaire du passage du seuil qui sépare l'adolescence et l'enfance.

<http://tom-le-cancres.blogspot.ca/2013/01/festival-de-rome.html>

DETAILS

◆ LANGUAGE

The film tells the story of 5 to 6 year old children lost in the forest. They speak like little children of their age. Very casual.

Tom the teenage runaway has a more familiar language without being coarse.

The language of the children translates some fear of being away from their parents. The word “die” comes when their teacher faints the children say: “she is dead”. When they are lost, they say: “we are going to die”.

The children are optimistic and they never lose faith about finding their way.

A very tame, neutral language

◆ VIOLENCE

Tom makes a deal with the wolf man: the latter repairs the car and he can eat Petit Paul. This idea is contested by the children who are going to trick the wolf man.

When the wolf man is trapped, he is caught in a net like a wild animal. Petit Paul saves him from his chains in spite of the fact that he wants to eat him. It shows Petit Paul’s courage and generosity.

There is no physical violence in the film.

◆ NUDITY

The children are wearing trunks and clothes at all times.

At one point for fun when they ride a train in the middle of nature they moon showing their bare behinds.

◆ SEXUAL ACTIVITY

None

◆ PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

⌘ It is important to understand that this film is a **pure fantasy** inspired by a number of **fairy tales**: the Red Riding Hood (the wolf), Tom Thumb (the ogre eating the children, the children lost in the forest), White Snow and the Seven Dwarfs (eating a fruit and going to sleep), etc.

⌘ When the teacher eats a fruit and faints, the children show a very brief moment of panic “she is dead”. Then they leave her to try to find their ways. What could have been a traumatic event is dealt with **nonchalance**.

⌘ The children represent common sense in the film:

- ✗ The children tell their found teacher what the rules are: no alcohol served to children
- ✗ They do not hide their feelings: when they smell Tom’s feet they tell it as it is: they stink
- ✗ Eating worms makes one of the little boys puke.

⌘ The **wolf man** is a man wearing the skin of a gentle black wolf with its head near his. It is not ferocious but **he wants to eat Petit Paul** once he repairs the car. This is a very similar situation as Red Riding Hood is threatened to be eaten by the big bad wolf. It also evokes the **ogre** ready to eat the children in Tom Thumb.

⌘ The wolf man has the **attributes of an animal**: he lives in a cave, he howls during a storm but he also has the **attribute of a man** since he can change into the prince charming.

⌘ Tom's lessons might be gross for the adults but will solicit funny reactions from children especially when they see

children eating worms
a plate of sizzling worms
children smelling Tom's feet
children eating their "boogers"
children eating the wax from their ears

⌘ When Petit Paul frees the wolf man, he enables him to become human thanks to the kiss and the ability of the wolf man to cry. This event makes him recover his human memory, which in turn, forces the wolf away from him into the wilderness of the forest. The ending becomes touching as tears transform the wolf man into a man. It reminds us of the kiss of a princess to the toad who changes into the prince charming.

PICTURE GALLERY FROM THE FILM



mostrageracao.blogspot.com

The children lost in the woods



<http://www.tomlecancer.com/portrait.html>

Portraits of characters in the film



<http://www.unifrance.org/film/33472/tom-le-cancer#photo-92308>

Tom & Petit Paul