

Cats on Film Pod

Transcript

Cats on Film Pod Episode 18 April and the Extraordinary World (2015)



INTRO JINGLE

INTRO SHOW

RAY

Hi everybody! Welcome to *Cats on Film Pod*. I'm your host, Ray Ilyn, here with my co-host, Skipper.

SKIPPER

Meows

RAY

Thanks for joining us every Tuesday as we review cats in film. There will be spoilers.

SKIPPER

Meows

RAY

On today's episode, we're talking about the animated film *April and the Extraordinary World*, which came out in 2015. We watched the English language dub, which they did a good job on.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

It was originally released in French – a co-production of studios from France, Belgium, and Canada.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Let's recap!

In steampunk Paris, the Franklin family keeps cages of cats in a dark basement to experiment on!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

I know! And the first Franklin we see was doing "Dr. Moreau" -type experiments on all sorts of animals several decades before.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Ugh. Yeah.

Back to the basement of caged cats, unfortunately – the Franklins are testing a serum on them, trying to make immortal super soldiers. One cat, Darwin – a black and white tuxedo cat – is allowed to roam free, because they already completed their experiment on him.

CLIP FROM *APRIL AND THE EXTRAORDINARY WORLD*

DARWIN

Stop making such a sad face. Come play! It'll be more fun than this chemistry goo.

APRIL

Darwin, it's thanks to that chemistry you can talk!

DARWIN

And you're proud of your parents? It was a failed experiment. I was supposed to be invulnerable, but I'm not!

RAY

These humans do know that a cat speaks a human language, but they have to hide his speaking ability from all the humans outside the Franklin family. And Darwin must really dig his human language abilities, cuz despite their continued animal experimentation, he goes all in on protecting the Franklins.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Yeah, April is genuinely devoted to him. Darwin is such a loyal hero. He helps April escape institutionalization when her human family is presumed dead. Darwin helps raise her, reading her bedtime stories like “Puss in Boots”, and even advising her on scientific experiments.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Such a smart kitty! All he needed was human language to read all those books and he understands them perfectly.
Unfortunately, living in such a smoggy city really wears on Darwin – as it does many people in Paris, judging by all the gas masks – even on little pet dogs!
We’ve started seeing regular mask-wearing here due to the coronavirus pandemic and wildfire season, but not on kitties, despite those big cats in New York coming down with Covid.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY
Yeah, you can just stay inside, Skipper.

Anyways, back to Darwin, who’s very realistic, other than the human language. He’s an independent thinker and loyal to his family. But when they find a rat that seems to be useful in April’s quest, Darwin instinctually attacks it.

CLIP FROM *APRIL AND THE EXTRAORDINARY WORLD*

PAUL VIA SPY RAT

Go to the big oak tree as fast as you can--

DARWIN

Hisses

APRIL

Darwin!

DARWIN

Sorry! Feline instinct; I can’t control it.

RAY
Cat’s gonna cat!
And for 2D cell animation, he’s portrayed realistically – so much so that we can tell he hasn’t been neutered. Even when he dies in that statue, he looks so much like a genuinely ill and bedraggled kitty.

SKIPPER
meows

RAY

I was in tears, Skipper. He's such a good cat, and to lose him so soon! But when he comes back to life—!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Fabulous! Seeing him hop around with youthful vigor – a highlight of the movie!

And he can go back to physically defending April. Darwin even figures out how to turn Pops's house into a robotic "moving castle"-type contraption! Then he adapts well to the secret dinosaur garden compound and really does a number on a dinosaur guard!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Oh? What *would* you do in that robotic suit?

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Laughs Oh, Skipper – I believe you would!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Laughs –Ahh, anyways, Darwin demonstrates his immortality again when he has to survive a laser blast to the chest.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Well, yes, he does technically die, but comes back to life (two of his nine lives down).

Then he completely saves the day! The humans contribute, but without Darwin, this would be a tragedy. And after the rocket is launched, and Darwin seems to die yet again—that's a tragedy on its own.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Yes, but I doubt even an immortal cat can come back from being vaporized in a nuclear blast! He is *veeery* lucky to get to the moon in one piece. Heroes *do* tend to have extraordinary luck! And the ability to make the most of it.

CLIP FROM *APRIL AND THE EXTRAORDINARY WORLD*

ASTRONAUT

Wait! Something's moving up ahead. I'm not alone!

DARWIN

Laughs What took you so long? April, I'm coming!

RAY

Sixty years, alone on the moon.

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Hmmm, maybe he was floating through space, trying to get to the moon for some of that time. Once we see Darwin there, it is so fun to see him bounding across the green lunar hills – curious and loyal to the end!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

You're right, you're right – not his end, just the movie's end. And just before the closing credits, we do get to see family photos up in April's house. There's one of a ginger cat surrounded by dangerous chemicals – presumably in a lab – maybe another scientist cat?

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Well, Skipper, what's your review of how cats are represented in *April and the Extraordinary World*?

SKIPPER

Meow, meow, meow

RAY

Only three out of four paws? But Darwin's the best – an absolute hero!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Oh, yes, the animal experimentation. *And* the serum only working on cats, rats, and plants (as far as we know) is a good reminder that testing products for humans on animals may not even be useful for the humans!

SKIPPER

meows

RAY

Absolutely – not at all worth it.

END STING

RAY

Thank you for listening to *Cats on Film Pod*. Know someone who loves science? Share this episode with them!

OUTRO JINGLE

END CREDITS

RAY

Cats on Film Pod is voiced and produced by Ray Ilyn, with music by The DōsMan, and additional sounds from FreeSound.org.

Follow us online @CatsOnFilmPod on Instagram, Twitter, and PodFan.

Cats on Film Pod !

SKIPPER

meows