

Grave of the Fireflies

Grave of the Fireflies is a Japanese animated movie written and directed by Isao Takahata. Animated and released by Studio Ghibli, the movie stands in stark contrast to the studio's happy and family-friendly style while maintaining their realism and attention to detail. In its simple way of portraying the humanity of each character, Grave of the Fireflies redefines the emotional depth of animation.

The movie presents the story of a civilian family living in Japan during the height of the Second World War. As the army struggles and an economic crisis strikes the country, viewers are spared the heroic tales of soldiers fighting for their homeland and instead shown the tragic reality of the innocents caught in the crossfire.

★ Seita, the main character, is tasked with providing for his younger sister while he himself is still in childhood. Living under the constant threat of air raids from American forces, the thought of bomb shelters and personal loss always on their minds, the children are forced to live in inhumane conditions that are unfortunately a reality of many families in war zones.

The humanity and feeling of each character's experience is engaging and captivating, taking any person who watches into a deeper understanding of the true damage caused by conflicts that from their point of view might seem strictly political or even heroic. Focusing on the experience of the average Japanese citizen during the Second World War, it humanizes history and makes the spectator realize that these people were not simply 'the enemies of the Allied Forces'.

Overall, it is a great movie pick for people regardless of their personal taste in genres. It is not, however, something to pick on a date night or for a fun sleepover with friends. That is, unless your definition of 'fun sleepovers' involves tissues and tears.

Kimberly Ryan Mazzolli
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