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Spirited Away

Anime has been an important part of many people's culture. From shows like Pokemon and Naruto, to movies like Your Name and A Silent Voice. Personally, I do not watch a lot of anime in my time, but one of my favorite movies of all time is called Spirited Away, which is by the world famous director, Hayao Miyazaki, who owns the company Studio Ghibli. If i were to compare Miyazaki to somebody else, I would compare him to Walt Disney, since if you think about it, with his ratings and reviews, Miyazaki is basically the Walt Disney of Japan. His movies are filled with beautiful sceneries, music scores that will give you chills, and a story that will impact the viewer in every way, shape, and form. Every single one of the movies that this company brings out to the public is loved and cherished by many. Some, like the movie Totoro and Ponyo, are funny and light-hearted. Other movies by Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli, like Princess Mononoke and Howl's Moving Castle, are more serious, and are better watched by an older audience so they can understand the main point and plot of the movie. One of my favorite movies by this company and director is called Spirited Away.

Spirited Away was the first ever Studio Ghibli film I watched when I was a kid, and after watching it, I was hooked. The colors, sounds, and scenery were something at which I have never seen before in my life, and it drew me into the story and message it tries to obtain the viewer to have. This movie starts out with a young girl named Chihiro in the family car with her parents. Chihiro seems to be looking upset, and the viewer can notice with subtle hints that her and her family are moving to a new house before the characters even talk about moving. During this scene, Chihiro is clutching onto a bouquet of flowers that I am assuming a friend had given her before she left their old house. After driving for a bit, the family decides to go down this dirt road, in hopes of a shortcut to get to their new place of residence. Right before they head down this road, Chihiro's parents point out their new house, so they are not that far from their destination. The dirt road turns into a tree tunnel, in which the father is driving way too fast in. At the end of this road is some sort of temple, accompanied with a large stone that looks somewhat like a frog. Chihiro's dad comes to a quick stop, and gets out to look around and inspect the area.

Chihiro's mother shows a want for going out of the car with the dad, but Chihiro does not want to go out, since she is still mad about the fact that they are moving and also shows that she is scared of the place they are at. Eventually, the whole family gets out of the car and inspects the temple. In this scene, the stained glass windows from the top of the temple glow through the glass and shine down into the temple, giving it some extra light. The family keeps exploring and

finds a town up a hill. The dad suggests getting lunch in the town, but Chihiro wants nothing of it. The whole family walks over to this town anyway, but when they get there, they find that there is nobody walking around. They are confused, and Chihiro shows that she is worried and wants to go back to the car, but the smells of fresh food that this town had was already dragging the parents into the essence of it more and more with every step they stepped and every smell they smelled.

The whole family ends up going to what looks like an outdoor market where you can sit and eat after finding where all the good smells are coming from. Chihiro's parents sit down and start to grab the food they see, but with nobody around, Chihiro finds herself feeling unsafe about the situation. She starts complaining to her parents that they should not take the food they see and her dad responds back with the famous line, "Don't worry, you've got Daddy here. He's got credit cards and cash." This does not get Chihiro to start eating, and she looks away from her parents at this time to inspect the rest of the town in hopes to see somebody else walking around. After finding nobody in her view, she turns back to see her parents eating the food very fast. She tells them not to eat as fast as they are eating, but they do not listen, since they are too enthralled by the food they are consuming. Throughout this scene, she watches them turn into pigs, which she eventually figures out is a spell that was made for gluttonous people.

After seeing her parents change into pigs right in front of her eyes, she gets scared and runs away from them. Throughout her time running away from her pig-turned parents, she looks

around for somebody to help her out. She again sees nobody. Eventually, she comes to a bridge which connects to the place where the main character development in the movie happens, which is the Bath House. In Japan, bath houses are very common to see. Many people have been going to these places for thousands of years, so when Chihiro saw the bath house, it was not unusual for her to see. Upon getting into the bath house, there was a bridge leading up to it. Chihiro did not know that she was not allowed to look at or explore the surroundings of the bath house, but she did anyway. While looking over the bridge, she sees a train coming from the underground part of the bath house. She then looks around and sees a boy about her age or maybe a little older in looks coming up to her. This boy is named Haku, and when the two first meet, he tells her that she has to leave.

Haku tells her to leave because it was almost nighttime, and it was going to get dark soon. When the lamps of the bath house are beginning to be lit, Haku pushes Chihiro to go across the river before it gets too dark. The reasoning for this is because if she does not leave and go back to her car, she could be stuck in this odd town forever. Chihiro starts running towards the river, which is right near the original temple where her family parked her car. There was no river when her family and her came into the town, but by the time she got to where she could see the temple, the river started forming and getting deeper and deeper. The steps in which she initially walked up to get to this town turns into a kind of a pier, where she then sees a boat pull up to dock and different looking creatures start to come off of the boat and walk towards the

temple. She gets scared by these, as she has no idea what is going on, and she runs away to hide by some buildings in the town. Haku goes out looking to see if she made it safely across the river, and finds her in her hiding spot. He runs up to her and notices that she is crying and her body is changing from human-like to spirit-like. The reason her body is doing this is because during her time in this town, what she did not know is that it was a different world.

The rules of this world are that if you are a human and you enter, you have to eat food from the world or else your body will disappear. She fights to eat a berry he gives her, but eventually takes it when she realizes just how much of her body is disappearing when she tries to fight him away from her and her arm goes through his head. The reason she was scared to eat in the first place was because of how she thought she might turn into a pig like her parents if she had eaten the food, but Haku reassures her that she will not do that if she just eats the small berry. Right after eating the berry, her body turns back to normal, and she knows this because of how she could touch Haku without going through his body in a spirit-like fashion. Haku tells Chihiro to come with him, and Chihiro asks him if she could see her parents. He tells her that she cannot see them right then and there, and then notices what looks like a bird with a human face in the sky patrolling the city. He hides her from the bird so she is not spotted, and when it turns around and goes off to a new place, Haku tells Chihiro that the bird is looking for her, so after it leaves the area, he runs and takes her to a new place where she can be kept hidden. Before they start running though, Chihiro realized that she could not stand up, so Haku performs

a spell on her so she can walk again, because he has obviously seen this before. After she can stand again, Haku takes Chihiro across the bridge that he found her on in the first place, and tells her to hold her breath across the bridge as they walk, or else someone would suspect her to be a human. She makes it most of the way, but before she crosses the bridge, Haku is stopped with her on his arm, and she runs out of breath. She gives in and takes a breath, which shows the others around her that she is a human.

After freezing the worker he was talking to, he grabs her hand and quickly flies down near the floor. He takes her to a door where she is eventually led into a boiler room, where Haku tells her she has to insist on getting a job there with the man in charge, even if he refuses. The reasoning for this is because if she does not get a job at the bath house, she will be turned into an animal like her parents by the owner of the bath house, named Yubaba. Eventually throughout the story, the viewer learns that those birds I mentioned prior to this were minions of hers who fly around and patrol the bath house, looking for any danger and humans who could have come onto the property so she can turn them into pigs and other animals. The viewer can also tell that the others at the bath house are afraid of her, and call her a witch. She is also the main antagonist of the story, and the viewer eventually figures out that she has a nicer sister who lives farther away. When Haku leaves, Chihiro tells him her name. He responds with “I’ve known you for a long time.” This gives the viewer that there is a backstory with both Haku and

Chihiro's lives, and the viewer will eventually know their backstory in full by the end of the movie.

The movie goes on with Chihiro trying to get a job and eventually, she is brought to Yubaba. Yubaba allows her to work for her as long as she is cooperative and respectful, but in the process of signing her name on the working papers, she somehow steals certain characters of her name and changes it to "Sen." For the rest of this movie, she goes by the name of Sen in regards to working there, and even Haku calls her this. She is only able to talk about her real name when she meets with Yubaba's sister, who asks her what her real name is. Yubaba's sister calls her Chihiro from then on. During this time she also finds out her backstory with Haku, who is actually a river spirit who saved her life when she was younger. The river where he saved her was the river connected to the temple in the beginning of the film, and all of the plot lines finally came together. Haku also had his name taken away from him, just like Sen did. At the end of the scene, she realizes his full name, which is Nigihayami Kohaku Nushi, but he calls himself Kohaku for short. His name is the river's actual name.

After working with the Bath House for some time, and doing all the things she had to do to get her parents back from the pens where they were kept and changing them back into humans, Chihiro was able to leave the bath house and save herself from the world she was in. She meets up with her parents, who have seemed to not remember the entire story and events that just happened to them. In the real world, they were just looking around the temple for her the

entire time, and it had seemed like the whole couple of days that she had been in the other world were just a couple of minutes in the real world.

This movie has a lot of different parables involved with the story line. One of the parables it includes is being able to trust in herself, which is what Chihiro has to learn to do in order to get her parents back. In the beginning she has no confidence and is scared of the situations that are going on, but she learns that she has to trust in herself and be confident in order for things to pan out the right way. Another parable would be gluttony. The parents in this film and others are portrayed as gluttonous because of how they want to eat the food, but they get turned into pigs because of it. This shows the viewer that they need to not be like that, or else something similar might happen to them (not on the same level, obviously).