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Arctic Tale

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Entering the beautiful and treacherous kingdom known as the Arctic Circle gripped me with a sense of wonder as *Arctic Tale* opened. With glacial scenes so spectacular, and an extreme climate so ancient and enduring, I could hardly resist a moment of complete awe. The majesty of God and the glory of his creation are the stars of this production. Yet beneath the ever thinning surface of ice, a tale about rising temperatures simmers, and *Arctic Tale* eventually erodes into an unfortunate message about global warming.

Synopsis:

- Genre: **Nature; Adventure**
- Release: **August 17, 2007**
- Rated: **G**
- Distributed by: **Paramount Classics**
- Director: **Adam Ravetch and Sarah Robertson**
- Cast: **Polar Bear Cub (Nanu), Walrus Pup (Seela), Queen Latifah (Narrator), Polar Bears, Walruses, White Foxes, Ring Seals and other birds and animals (Arctic Wildlife)**
- Writers: **Linda Woolverton, Mose Richards and Kristen Gore**
- Producers: **Adam Leipzig and Keenan Smart**



Arctic Tale

Image Courtesy © Paramount Classics

Arctic Tale follows the journeys of a polar bear cub (Nanu) and a Walrus pup (Seela) during their first steps of life and throughout childhood as they learn to survive in a harsh and changing environment. There are playful moments, humor, family love, courage, sacrifice and serious drama as the developing animals venture into adulthood. Queen Latifah narrates their story of survival, as they face a threat of proportions never before encountered by their species—at least that's what we're told.

Valuable Elements:

Paramount Classics together with National Geographic spent more than 15 years and 800 hours of filming to put together this breathtaking and fascinating adventure into the mysterious world of arctic wildlife. Not your typical nature film, *Arctic Tale* is an intimate story created from the real life events captured during the filmmaker's many journeys into the Canadian Arctic. We see mothers nurturing, teaching and protecting their young. We see a close-knit community working in a coordinated team effort.

In the walrus family, Auntie Walrus devotes her life to protecting baby Seela. Eventually she makes the ultimate sacrifice, giving her life to save the pup. It's a picture of selfless love and a reminder of Christ's sacrifice for us. The narration emphasizes this truth: "A single death preserves the lives of many."

Negative Elements:

There is a strong appeal to children in *Arctic Tale*, yet its allure smells a bit like manipulation. Though the reality of death in this wild kingdom is treated with dignity and tenderness, be warned: it will pull on the heartstrings of sensitive children. After the film, I talked with one young girl who was crushed by the death of brother bear. She almost did not stay to finish the movie. The girl's mother was preparing herself to sit down and explain that death is a part of life. The problem with this type of emotional appeal is the message it conveys to our children: that we humans can save these animals from death if we determine to fight global warming. In other words, the survival of our future generations depends upon us. Now, before I get carried away in a spiritual and political debate, I'll drop the issue and come back to it a little later.

After experiencing a sense of regal majesty in Morgan Freeman's narration of *March of the Penguins*, Queen Latifah's often cutesy and casual approach

is a bit of a let down. But the silliness of *Arctic Tale* certainly tickles the funny bones of children. When the walrus family engages in a game of "pull my flipper," even the oldest of kids giggled with delight.

Sexual Content:

Queen Latifah discusses the natural process of reproduction in vague and slang (though always clean) terms. The talk is light and goes over the heads of most of the youngsters.

Violence:

Survival requires the animals to hunt and kill, and the highly sensitive may cringe in scenes, but bloody depictions are minimal and kept at a distance.

Language:

This film is completely free from bad language.

Conclusion:

So, does the film make a statement about global warming? You bet your iceberg it does! It's only the tip of the actual iceberg that viewers come face to face with at the very end of the movie, but the tip of that iceberg has quite a jagged edge meant to manipulate viewers, especially the young. Well, enough with the puns. I left a lovely hour and a half adventure of clean entertainment with a bad taste in my mouth.

I think what bothered me most about *Arctic Tale* was the subtle, intimidating nature of its message about global warming. One of the film's directors, Sarah Robertson admits in the production notes, "Underlying *Arctic Tale* is always this idea that the next generation, whether you are a polar bear, a walrus or a human being, will have to take the initiative and learn to live in new ways. Really, all of our fates hang in the balance." I'm not surprised to discover that one of the writers, Kristen Gore, is—you guessed it—Al Gore's daughter.

A sense of dread crept over me like a serious downer. I had to shake it off. The implication was that man is somehow responsible for global warming, and therefore, man can somehow turn this terrible trend around. Haven't the geological plates and the climates of the earth been shifting and changing throughout all time, since the beginning of creation? Haven't species had to adapt or die all along? Didn't animals get killed off during the ice ages? What could man have done to cause or correct those extreme shifts in temperature? And who's to say a major warming trend has never before happened in the history of Planet Earth?

The bottom line for me is that man is not in control of this universe. Yes, we should be good stewards of this land and the resources God has given us, but we shouldn't live under a weight of responsibility for the state of the universe. Man has never been in control of the wind, the waves, the temperatures and the climates. Those who encourage us to fight against global warming just don't get this fact.

So be warned Christian parents, you may have some reeducating to do after *Arctic Tale*.

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