

Rango

By Tom Sims, Executive Director, Cape May Film Festival

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Who doesn't love when all the elements are there--unbelievable animation, breath-taking cinematography, great performances, and compelling story? And I'm even going to strongly recommend you see Rango for all of these reasons (and maybe a little because there is so much junk in theaters as we head into spring). Stay with me, I'm not rambling on that much (am I?).

For all of its great qualities, there is something about the film Rango that isn't quite on the mark. Maybe because all of those elements are right there that you expect it to move you more. You want this movie to move you, to—oh, I don't know—stir something in you? Okay, okay, maybe I just compare every animation film to the Toy Story series—is that so bad? Yeah, maybe it is. Anybody have a support group for that? Or maybe a pill or elixir?

Rango is the story of a little pet lizard (masterfully played by Johnny Depp) that—very early in the film—is ripped from his safe, secure home and placed immediately in the unforgiving desert! I know that sounds incredibly sharp a transition but trust me it works. Once in the desert, he is confronted by many dangers: hawks, snakes, drought (it is a desert after all). But of all these dangers, the one that threatens this little nameless lizard the most is: himself.

In a town where water is the most precious commodity, self-realization seems to be the solution to all those dry woes! Through tall tales (where the little lizard gives himself the name Rango) and good fortune with an angry hawk, Rango finds himself the sheriff of the small town of Dirt. After thieves steal the town's water supply, Rango must form a posse to chase the bad guys. In the end, Rango must face his own fears and his own identity to get to the bottom of the town's trouble and make good on his promise to bring prosperity back to Dirt (the town of Dirt that is). In the end you'll leave the theater praising the film for its elements—one drop short of being stirred.

On another topic, the Film Festival has a fantastic matching grant opportunity that will truly place us in the black (somewhere we haven't been for years). We have a plan to stay in the black well into the future, but we need this boost to get us there. The potential grant is from New Jersey Cultural Trust, and it is being matched by local arts champions Mal & Dottie Knapp. Can you help? Call me at 609-884-6700 or email capemayfilm@hotmail.com to learn more.