

The Night Listener Returns

Regular readers of my blog know that I thought [The Night Listener](#) was a terrible movie. It stars Robin Williams as a radio show host who... you know what, I don't even remember. For a plot synopsis, click on the link above. I was actually surprised that an A-list actor like Robin Williams would do such an awful movie as *The Night Listener*, but he did. After sitting through a movie like *The Night Listener*, my husband and I are weary of Robin Williams. However, 3 of our friends and fellow tangents.org authors all agreed that *August Rush* is a good movie, so we checked it out. And you'll notice that the title of this post is called, "The Night Listener Returns", so uh-oh. But that was more of a joke, and now I've explained it, so let's get on with my review of *August Rush*.

Not nearly as bad as *The Night Listener*; I wouldn't even call [August Rush](#) a bad movie. At the very least, it was really refreshing to see a movie whose target audience was over the age of 18 that was absent any filth whatsoever. *August Rush* is a cute story, but I think the movie could have been done a heck of a lot better in some ways. The tale follows the life of a young orphan, an almost magical boy, named Evan Taylor as he "follows the music" to find his real parents. There were a few circumstances and events in the movie that weren't believable in any shape or form, and even if you suspended your disbelief, the cheesiness of other aspects of the movie was annoying. The storyline is intriguing, and the acting is not bad, but there are a few things that would have to change about *August Rush* in order for me to consider it a great film. To name just a couple of those things, I couldn't get over the fact that this entire love story is based upon a one-night stand. Tactfully done – as I said, there isn't any filth in this PG rated movie, but still, knowing it's true love after just a one-night stand? Come on! And, I guess you'll have to see the movie to appreciate this, but would an

abandoned theater really still have its electricity working? Doubtful. Like I said, just a few examples of what I perceived to be holes in the plot, but there are other things about the movie that could have easily been changed, improving the film's quality. Doing so would add much enjoyment and just plain common sense to this movie. And Robin Williams was not the shining star in August Rush either; that was left for Freddie Highmore who played Evan – he was also wonderful playing twins in the great movie [The Spiderwick Chronicles](#) – another highly recommended flick. Williams seemed almost annoying in his role as a musical outlaw with his multiple piercings and goatee. I flip-flopped between deciding if his character “Wizard” was a good guy or a bad guy. Maybe that was the point, I'm not even sure.

The actor who played Buford Benjamin Blue (Bubba) in Forrest Gump played a preacher in August Rush, so I was wondering if the line, “Run August run!” was a reference to the extremely famous line, “Run Forrest run!” from the Oscar-winning film based upon the Winston Groom novel, one of my favorite movies (one that **I** highly recommend). Or maybe it was the filmmakers' way of laughing at us for even thinking of an awesome movie like [Forrest Gump](#) during August Rush. Ok, it wasn't that bad... I did appreciate the sentiment. But my lack of suspension of disbelief just got in the way of me getting swept into the magic of the movie, I guess.

Sorry for those who disagree with me, but I'm still glad you recommended the movie; it was definitely worth a screening – thanks!

Marley and Me

Reluctantly, I saw [Marley and Me](#) in the movie theater yesterday. It's not that it was a bad movie, but I didn't want to see it in the theater because I knew it would be a tear-jerker since I read the book by John Grogan. Unfortunately, I don't remember much about the book since I read it a long time ago, and I do all of my book reading while I'm dozing off just before bed, which sometimes makes it difficult to remember what I've read. But I know I really enjoyed the novel and recommended it to my family and friends. The story is about a family who gets a puppy named Marley, and the novel follows his journey through life as the 'world's worst dog'. But eventually, Marley charms his way into the hearts of his family, even helping them through life changes and tragedies.

From what I remember, I think the movie stays pretty close to the book, although I don't necessarily agree with the casting choices of Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson as Marley's masters. I was a big fan of the tv show Friends, but every movie I've seen Jennifer Aniston in since seems like she's still Rachel, her character from Friends. She's just not a very diverse actor in my book, which I also think she has in common with Owen Wilson. But characters in this heartwarming family film were not very deep, so in the end the poor casting did little to sink the movie. And you'll notice that I crossed out family film. Another thing that disappointed me was the PG rating Marley and Me received. There are about 3 too many adult-themed scenes that I wouldn't want my kids to see, and I'm really glad I previewed this film before I let them see it, which I usually do anyway. This movie should NOT have received a PG rating, and it will make me more careful about making sure I preview *everything* before the kids view it, regardless of rating.

But overall, cute movie. If you're an animal lover or have

ever owned a dog, prepare to cry. Sorry if you consider that a spoiler, but it's been all over the media and has dominated water cooler talk everywhere about how sad the movie and book are. I'm sure you can guess what happens and you think you can prepare yourself, but you can't. I was a total wreck in the theater and have had a bit of a cloud over me ever since. But don't let that scare you away from seeing Marley and Me. I think it just struck a chord in me because we own a dog who was once 'The World's Worst Dog' and is now an old lady who has been a huge part of our family for over 10 years. I probably would not watch this movie again, but only for lack of wanting to ride the emotional rollercoaster it provokes in its viewers. The big screen version of Marley and Me was entertaining, and it made me definitely want to read the book again... if only I had time for that.