

# Entertainment

## The 'Perfect' Holiday Movie

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Not all Christmas movies require an out-cast reindeer, a talking snowman or good ol' Saint Nick.

"Joyeux Noel" (French for "Merry Christmas") is inspirational and the perfect holiday film.

Released in 2005, this historical movie is based on true events that occurred during World War I in December 1914. It tells the story of how soldiers from France, England and Germany decided to stop fighting on Christmas Eve.

The movie's theme is in its tagline: "there can be no war without enemies." The so-called enemy soldiers ultimately relate to one another and question the war's purpose.

The German commander, Horstmayer, realizes he frequently visits French Lieutenant Audebert's neighborhood, and promises to visit again once the war is over. It's unusual for officers to talk to the other side in such a friendly manner, but this exchange only adds to the flick's charm.

As dialogue jumps among German, French and English, the viewer realizes each soldier has much in common. They want to defend their country, but after months of trench warfare, they start to regret their service. Watching friends die on the battlefield, many simply wished they could return home to their families.

Though this movie is quite serious, questioning the morality of war, it is also lighthearted. An argument over ownership of a stray tabby cat is comical. In that scene, a Frenchman swears the cat is "Nester" while the German believes he is "Felix."

In real life, the cat in question was actually accused of spying and treason before it was executed. Not even a cat was safe during World War I, one of the bloodiest wars in history.

The most memorable scene in "Joyeux Noel" occurs when everyone sings Christmas carols. It's beautiful to realize the power that music holds in unifying different people.

When the informal armistice occurs, soldiers exchange stories, drinks and play cards. The men engage in a soccer match. They laugh, brag about their wives, and completely forget they are supposed to hate the other side.

A soldier returns a wallet that had been lost in battle to its rightful owner, who happens to be his enemy. In an emotional mo-

ment, we realize how much the soldier missed his family and his only picture of them.

They honor the dead by giving them proper burials. After a day of friendship, none of them want to resume fighting.

After word of this illegal truce gets to authorities, many are removed from the military and regarded as traitors. It was difficult for the leadership to understand what the soldiers had gone through on the front lines.

They viewed their heroic actions as childish.

Rarely is there humanity in war. The so-called Christmas Truce in World War I is an event often ignored by history teachers and society, though it deserves more recognition. It shows everyone has more in common than we acknowledge. "Joyeux Noel" contains a powerful message, and it is up to the viewer to appreciate its beauty.

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