Movie Review
Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga’Hoole

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This October, the James Scholar Media Team took a field trip to see the animated film Legend of the Guardians, a fantastical tale about owls that must fight to protect their kingdom from evil. The film is based on the book series Guardians of Ga’Hoole by Kathryn Lasky and centers around a young barn owl named Soren who is obsessed with the story of the mythical group of Guardian owls as told to him by his father. One night while their parents are hunting, Soren and his fledgling brother fall out of their tree and are kidnapped by mysterious and ruthless owls. Ultimately the brothers are torn apart, and Soren escapes, thus beginning his vast journey to find the Guardians and once more liberate the owl kingdom from evil with the help of the many colorful friends he meets along the way.

This fast-paced, action adventure truly offers something for everyone: a heartwarming story of family and friendship, beautifully crafted scenery, daring action sequences, and just the right amount of comedic relief. For the nature lover, there are a variety of owl species including barn owls, snowy owls, elf owls, and my favorite, the burrowing owl—just to name a few. The setting for the owls’ forest kingdom of Ga’Hoole is loosely based on the landscape of Southeastern Australia. Production of the film took place entirely in Sydney, the movie hub of Australia, and featured a largely Australian cast for the voices of the many owl characters.

What I enjoyed most about this film was the breathtaking scenery. As our generation has grown up with computer animated films, the ability to craft scenery has become so lifelike it can difficult to tell real images and computer generated ones apart. One of my favorite scenes is when the band of owls reaches the Great Australian Bight where the seemingly endless Nullarbor Plain suddenly drops off a cliff into the Southern Ocean. It looked so real you could almost taste the salt in the air and feel the wind in your face.
Pulling inspiration from classic fantasy stories like *The Lord of the Rings*, the story is multifaceted, while the action sequences were surprisingly realistic and reminiscent of director Zack Snyder’s previous film *300*. The names of the characters and places are a bit tough to keep straight at first, but once the film takes off, it is easy to sit back and enjoy the ride.

Overall, *Legend of the Guardians* is a beautifully animated film with a richly layered story that is enjoyable for people of all ages.