

Boxtrolls - So dying of Anaphylaxis is funny?

We have an extra day off after half term - an inset day has been added onto half term. It's raining out there so hardly a great day for a bike ride in the park, so instead we went off to the movies. One of Molly's best friends came with us which was lovely - we loaded up with popcorn for us, sweets for Hannah and a large black coffee for me. We settled down to watch Boxtrolls.

If you've not seen the posters, it's a gothic animated film with a PG rating. To be honest I didn't know much about it, other than the few reviews I read said it was pretty good. Not suited for little ones as it's a bit scary, but fine for a couple of ten year olds.

As is always the case with kids' movies, there are heroes and villains, useless adults and ingenious children (hum). Can't say the story is that original - the 'monsters' are misunderstood and actually there heroes, the kids see the truth first, and there is a dastardly villain to overcome.

All fine so far, the odd bit of this movie is that cheese plays a central role. Adults appear obsessed with it, in all its' forms. Children are ignored while 'cheese tasting' takes centre stage. Our villain, the evil exterminator, is obsessed with being 'in the in crowd', gaining a 'white hat' and joining the cheese tasting elite. Only one problem (apart from the fact that he's the villain) - he's allergic to cheese. When he gets his gang to practice being part of the 'in crowd' they all cower because they 'know what cheese does to you'. Well...he swells up grotesquely and they throw a bucket of leeches on him to 'cure' the allergic reaction. The film ends with the villain eating too much cheese and exploding.

The whole thing made me very uncomfortable. Why? Well...I swell up with allergic reactions on my face and feel incredibly self-conscious about it. It's horrible really - you do feel that people stare, and that you look a sight. Equally anaphylaxis is no joke - dying from an allergic reaction shouldn't be portrayed as funny. It's a very real possibility for some people - and there are many children who have dangerous allergies to nuts. Can anyone think of another medical condition that is portrayed in this way? I had the same uncomfortable feeling when I watched an episode of Outnumbered, which mocked the allergic child with

mother and daughter laughing at the idea of giving the dairy allergic girl ice cream.

I really do think that the underlying attitude to allergies is part of the reason we struggle to get the support we need. What is it about allergies that makes it okay to laugh at sufferers? Can anyone think of another medical condition that is portrayed this way? I can't...

If you need information on Anaphylaxis here is the link to the UK Charity
<http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk/about-us>

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