

One Film One Federation Pedagogical Guide

As Happy As Possible (Rêves De Jeunesse)

Venue: Cannes Film Festival (ACID)

Production companies: Cinema Defacto, Terratre Films

Cast: Salome Richard, Yoann Zimmer, Estelle Meyer, Jacques Bonnaffe, Christine Citti

Director: Alain Raoust

Screenwriters: Alain Raoust, Cecile Vargaftig

Producer: Tom Dercourt

Director of photography: Lucie Baudinaud

Editor: Jean de Certeau

Composer: Dead Combo

Sales: Urban Distribution International

*In French
92 minutes*



Federation of Alliances Françaises USA

*With support from the Cultural
Services of the French Embassy
and the Institut français.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Storyline
- II. Character Analysis
- III. Questions and areas of thought



STORYLINE

- The film centers around Salomé (Salomé Richard), who has accepted a summer job in a remote backwater of Southern France. As she pulls on her backpack and leaves her sister and fellow housemates behind, she has a stoical air. She is returning to an area she left ten years earlier to work as the sole guard of a remote, seldom visited junkyard.

STORYLINE

- The region in August is hot and dusty. Salomé finds a discarded copy of 'Alice In Wonderland' and an abandoned toy rabbit hinting at parallels with the Lewis Carroll novel. She has dropped out of sight but also seems to be in a world without time. The camper van that she makes into a home has cassette tapes and a record player for old vinyl discs.

STORYLINE

- What initially seems like a story of retreat, isolation and introspection, gradually becomes something more expansive as Salomé attracts a group of lost souls, beginning with reality television celebrity Jess, played with a fierce energy by Estelle Meyer. Jess has literally lost her way and sacrificed her place in a television endurance show.

STORYLINE

- She seems to be everything that Salomé is not; outgoing, irrepressible, restless and reckless. When she is around, Salomé becomes a sidelines observer, swept along by events.
- Significant other characters in the mix include old acquaintance Clem (Yoann Zimmer,) who is coming to terms with the death of a family member, and suicidal cyclist Max (Jacques Bonnaffé,) who turns up at the junkyard.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- What type of person is Salomé?
- What is your impression of Jess?
- How do the two characters differ and how are they alike?

QUESTIONS AND AREAS OF THOUGHT

- *In “As Happy As Possible”, “possible” is the key word in a movie that reveals both the limits society places on its young, and the possibilities young people try to create for themselves in a world that doesn’t offer them many choices.*
- What does this film say about young people in France today?

QUESTIONS AND AREAS OF THOUGHT



- We don't know much about Salomé to begin with— only that she used to live in the area and is coming back for the first time in 10 years. But as the narrative progresses, and Salomé crosses paths with an old friend, Clément, (Yohann Zimmer), we learn the site used to be managed by her ex-boyfriend, Mathis, who became a radical left activist as part of France's *zadiste* movement and was recently killed during a protest.
- Explain how the characters are allowed to carry the themes of the film, and only occasionally feel the need to make explicit what is apparent from their experiences and yearning for a different way of living ?

NOTES

- This is the fifth year of One Film One Federation based on the generous support of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and the Institut français.

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