An American Tail

Fievel Mouskewitz comes from a family of four: his papa, his mama, his sister Tanya and himself. They live in Russia, where they spend time telling tales of the wondrous ‘America’, land of opportunity, land of oodles of cheese and (most important of all) land of No Cats. So they have heard. When tragedy strikes and their home is destroyed, they make their way to America by boat. During the journey a storm strikes, and Fievel is thrown overboard... and presumed dead. The Mousekewitzes’ arrival in America is not as cheerful as they had hoped.

But luck shines on Fievel, and he miraculously manages to arrive in America. Cold, hungry and way too trusting (but what can we expect of one so young and naive?) he begins his search for his family, and the journey includes him being (1) helped by the Henri the French Statue-of-Liberty-building pigeon (2) conned by the conniving Warren T. Rat (3) rescued by streetwise Tony Topponi and (4) getting a star role in a movement by the mice to rid all the cats in America (or in New York, at least). Quite an adventure for the little guy, but all he really wants is just to find his family again.

The story is about family, friendship and overcoming the odds, and it also centres on Fievel. Young, innocent, unknowing about the hardships of the world, he has to learn the hard way what real life is all about. I can’t quite figure him out, though. Sometimes he’s endlessly optimistic, sometimes he gives up way to easily. He comes up with great ideas, but he also makes pretty daft decisions. And he doesn’t seem to mature much by the end of the movie, but that just may be a guise... Are they saying that you should still retain your child-like optimism and enthusiasm even when the world hurls its challenges at you?

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