

# Habib: Ghost in the Basement

**Habib: Ghost in the Basement** was produced by Jarowskij based in Sweden. What is the meaning of life? To chase girls? To believe in God? To play soccer? Or is it just to hang out and eat pizza? These are the kind of things Habib is thinking about. He is eleven years old and lives in the suburbs of Stockholm with his dad who works all the time, his mother who never takes anything seriously, his little sister Lucia who has strange eating habits and his older brother Tony, who is so stupid that he thinks Europe is a country and that Belgium is the capital. Tony also thinks Paris is a city in Spain. Paris is eleven years old, just like Habib, and lives in the same building. Sometimes Habib takes an extra ride in the elevator just to run into her but he never does. The problem is, school is out in two weeks and he might not see her all summer. Unless he works up the courage to ask her to be his girlfriend ...

**Habib: Ghost in the Basement** was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2010 Finalists in the 7-11 Fiction category.

## International experts' opinions

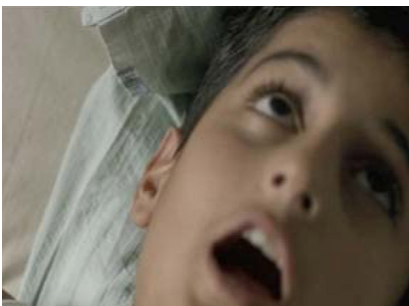


Figure 1: Habib wakes up by a nightmare about a ghost in the basement.

Almost all the international experts liked the program a lot, and for various reasons. One of the many reasons was that they found the program funny. “I thought it was really funny. It surprised me, and I loved how the whole vampire thing seemed so real to him” (female expert, USA).

They also admired the character of Habib. They found him to be very natural. “And he was afraid of things that children are afraid of and afraid of things that teenagers are afraid of at the same time. It was really nice” (male expert, USA). They appreciated the humor shown by Habib. “It was special humor, very clearly to the point and also humour about himself – he made fun of himself” (female expert, Germany). They liked the way in which the dilemma that Habib was facing was shown in the program. “It was fun. It was sort of like *Everybody Hates Chris* – no one listens to Habib. He is a child, so the girl’s father doesn’t listen to him, or all sorts of things happen to this poor kid. He cannot express himself. He cannot quite express what he is feeling inside. The grown-ups don’t have time to really delve into it. They are a bit busy. He gets into situations with parents not going to see him, and the other kids making fun of him. Now he has to go down in his basement. It was enjoyable” (female expert, Jamaica).



Figure 1: Habib tries to clear a misunderstanding between him and Paris, the girl who he loves.

The experts also liked the way the relationship between him and God



Figure 3: Habib and his friends are scared by the “ghost” in the basement and run away.



Figure 4: Habib asks his grandpa for the meaning of life.



Figure 5: Habib prays to God to protect him from the ghost and make up with Paris.



Figure 6: Habib borrows a flashlight for the “adventure” in the basement.

is shown in the program. “I also thought that it was interesting: he was talking about what is important in life is his belief in God. There was quite a discussion about God with Habib and his grandmother. I thought it was so interesting, because we had seen a few other programs earlier in the festival that dealt with God. I thought this was done in a very subtle, yet effective, way. To me, it was more effective than some of the really head-on didactic approaches” (female expert, USA). They liked the connection between him and God. “I just liked the way I had written down a line where he says: ‘You God, I know you are not big into lying.’ It was funny. It was just one more way of: he has got this connection, but it is very much this childlike connection with God” (female expert, Canada).

They also commented positively on the presentation of the process of growing up Habib was going through. “What I really liked about Habib, is that the growing up was very layered in the sense that he was asking himself philosophical questions: the meaning of life. I really liked that. Meanwhile, he gets caught up with his own life, and the boy is challenging him. I thought that was growing up in several ways at the same time” (female expert, Netherlands). They admired the diversity that was shown in the program. “Also, the place where they made it, it was made up of different ethnic groups” (female expert, Jamaica). “Another thing was that the community wasn’t the most important; it was a diverse community, but it wasn’t a bad thing, they were just kids” (female expert, UK).

The experts also appreciated the production aspect of the program. “I thought it was a good script also. I think that the dialogue was good” (female expert, Sweden). “It was just beautiful story-telling. It is nice to see the film language: the kind of cinematic language coming in but in a way that doesn’t feel forced; it just feels very natural, very beautiful film-making. I thought it was really well done” (male expert, USA).

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Figure 7: Habib and his friend are scared in the basement.



Figure 8: Finally, Habib comes to terms with his fears of ghosts and multiple meanings of one’s life.