

# Waffle Heart

*Waffle Heart* (NRK, Norway) is a short drama series. Trille and Lena (cf. screenshot 1) live on a small and remote island (cf. screenshot 2). In their local area (cf. screenshot 3) they are the only children of their age. Trille wants to be Lena's best friend, but Lena thinks it's enough to be good neighbors. Lena sets out to find a best friend for Trille (cf. screenshot 4) and invites the boys in her class to her birthday party (cf. screenshot 5).

Trille's grandfather drives the two around the island to drop off birthday invitations, and they stop to visit aunt-grandma (cf. screenshot 6) and enjoy her waffle hearts. Unfortunately, on the day of her birthday, Lena becomes ill and none of the guests turn up at the party, as they are afraid to catch whatever she's got. Everyone, except Lena's mom (cf. screenshot 7) and Trille, as well as a local home doctor, and they celebrate her birthday (cf. screenshot 8) with cake and presents.

*Waffle Heart* was the recipient of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL award in the Up to 6 Fiction category.

## International experts' opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *Waffle Heart* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. Many of the international experts liked *Waffle Heart* very much, pointing out especially the story and characters.

One of the experts said she liked the program because "the characters and themes are very common and universal. It can happen in any place in the world, in any society." She thought children, but also adults, "will have some connection with it." (female expert, Hong Kong)

Other experts also said they liked the dialogue, pacing, humor, and that the program was part of a series.

One of the most discussed points among the experts was the setting. One of the experts described it as "just so beautiful to look at." (female expert, USA)

Another expert said she "thought it was so lovely to see kids with that freedom and open spaces." (female expert, UK)

"It just brought you to a different place," another expert said, "and I wish there were more of those... I think we've gotten to the point where we're sort of homogenizing culture so much... but I'd like to believe that kids want to see other parts of the world," and that this was a good example of using the camera to "bring you into a world that you wouldn't normally see." (female expert, USA)

Some of the experts wondered about the age category, thinking the program was for older children. One of the experts said she thought the program should address children up to 8 or 9 years old (female expert, UK), while others wondered whether 3 and 4 year-olds would be able to comprehend the story.



Ill. 1: Lena and Trille



Ill. 2: The setting I



Ill. 3: The setting II



III. 4: In search for a best friend for Trille

The question was also raised about the kind of learning that younger children would have from this program. “I felt that the main story in that was more subtext and more subtle,” one of the experts said, “and so, I didn’t know whether a preschool child would totally understand the true story.” He said “they would perhaps enjoy it,” but whether “they would actually see the real story, I’m not quite sure.” (male expert, UK)



III. 5: Preparations for Lena’s birthday party

Another expert said that children can learn from fiction even if they do not fully understand the story: “if you can talk to children about what they’ve seen in a story and about the characters”, then there’s potential for “wider learning there.” (female expert, UK)

Many of the experts mentioned that they liked the parents and grandparents in *Waffle Heart*. One of the experts said she liked the range of characters, with the girl’s single mom, the grandparents, and the boy’s parents who are arguing. “You had a range of positive and negative,” she said, “they’re all fairly one-dimensional, but there was a range.” (female expert, UK)



III. 6: Aunt-Grandma

Another expert said he liked that they were supporting characters within the bigger picture (male expert, UK).

Several of the experts thought the Grandma-Auntie character was funny, and one of the experts mentioned that she liked the girl’s mom “because she had a sense of humor and she seemed relatable... she didn’t seem stereotypical.” (female expert, USA)

Another point was that the program seemed real. “It was just a situation that was there,” one of the experts said, and that you felt that “it was normal.” (male expert, Germany)



III. 7: Lena’s mom

The experts also pointed out the attention to details, including the stuffing of the waffle, the wrapping of the bicycle, and the soccer-jersey present the girl receives. One of the experts said she liked that “they didn’t make a big deal” about the girl and the soccer-jersey, “it was just like one beat, moving on... super subtle.” (female expert, USA)

*Erga Lemish (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)*



III. 8: Trille comes to celebrate with Lena

Screenshots from *Waffle Heart* © NRK, Norway

Target Audience 6.76

Idea 7.92

Script 8.30

Realization 8.41

Average Score per Category by experts’ voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012

**Winner of PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012**