

Horse Glue

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Horse Glue

Format: Internet streaming

Website: [Animate Projects](#)

Director: Stephen Irwin

UK 2010

'You can't hide anymore,' says a haggard-looking guy, poking around in the sand with a whip. 'They'll find you even underground.'

What's he talking about? It's not clear but it doesn't bode well.

This is the opening of [Come and See](#), a 1985 film looking at the bloody Nazi invasion of Belarus from a child's perspective. I've just been watching the opening scene on YouTube. It's gripping and portentous.

I was sent back to this classic by a new animated film, *Horse Glue*, from a British director, Stephen Irwin. The film began life as two separate films, *Horse* and *Glue*, although watching the narratives together it's easy to see how they complement and reflect each other. Put simply, one half is a fairy story concerning a little boy lost in the woods, and the other is something less personal, hinting at international rather than individual conflict. The unifying element is violence.

This might sound like an unrelentingly grim experience but I can't overemphasise the visual and aural flair deployed to create the film's haunting, disconcerting atmosphere. It really is a beautiful film to watch and the twin narratives are nicely poised to capture the ambiguous and disconcerting (rather than literal or reductive) cruelty of a fairy tale. Irwin pulled similar narrative tricks and

achieved similarly affecting results in his 2007 animation, ***The Black Dog's Progress***, which, like *Horse Glue*, featured an excellent soundtrack by Sorenius Bonk.

Going back to the guy and the sand and his statement, 'You can't hide anymore'. Maybe he is talking about the end of childhood, of innocence. Maybe he means there is a time when the dirtiest truths of the adult world must pop out from behind the glorious balloons and parades. Have a look at *Horse Glue*, maybe you'll see what I mean.

CJ Magnet

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