

THE SONGBIRDS' SECRET

Original version: French/ English subtitles



Director : *Antoine Lanciaux*
Release date (France): *October 22, 2025*
Genre : *Animation/Adventure/Family*
Country of origin: *France*
Runtime: *77 min.*

CLASSIFICATION

[Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée \(CNC\)](#)

Distribution visa and classification

“Le Secret des mésanges”, directed by Antoine Lanciaux and Pierre-Luc Granjon, has obtained distribution visa number 152 175. This visa is generally associated with a “general audience” classification or with a classification for children from a certain age (often 6 years old).

The distribution visa 152 175 is a registration number issued by the French National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (CNC), which manages the classification of cinematographic works. The number on its own does not directly indicate the details of the classification, but the film itself is designed for a young audience.

A film suitable from age 6 on the themes of roots and living things

“Le Secret des Mésanges” is aimed at children from 6 years old, with a narrative approach that is simple yet rich in symbols. The film may appeal to families who are sensitive to issues of family memory, transmission between generations, and self-discovery. Its atmosphere is reminiscent of films such as “Ernest & Celestine” or “The Painting”, with particular attention paid to natural elements, to animals as friendly companions, and to gentle yet profound emotions. [Translation] *Sortir à Paris*

SYNOPSIS

Caroline, archaeologist, is participating in excavations in the countryside, in the very area where she grew up. Lucie, her daughter, joins her for a few days during her holidays. Caroline always dodged the questions about her family history. However, Lucie learns that her mother is from here and that she is hiding a secret. Also, when she realizes that a couple of tits wants to help her in her quest, the young girl decides to follow them without hesitation. Thanks to the birds, Lucie goes from discovery to discovery...

Unifrance

REVIEWS

For the targeted youth, *The Songbirds' Secret* is an inspiring story about following your instincts and enjoying your childhood. It can inspire them to speak their minds and if it hits them right, remind them that family is more complicated than they may believe. For the adults in the audience, it becomes a calm watch. *The Songbirds' Secret* whisks you away from the darkness of reality into a world of magic and wonder. You become lost both in the story and in the art form as well. There is something quite magical about Lucie as she knows what she wants and goes for it. While some children's films have a rambunctious child who does not listen to parents and ignores rules and instructions given to her, Lucie can speak her mind while remaining polite and caring to her elders.

BFI London Film Festival 2025 Review

The Songbirds' Secret proves to be a work of great sensitivity, full of the softness of childhood and typical experiences of holidays in the countryside (woodland and farmland creatures, tractors, old mopeds, casual adventures, etc.). Imbuing the film with a spirit which seems half-way between *The Famous Five* and *Scooby-Doo* and which is highly

accessible to younger audiences, the director (...) spins a delicate yarn touching upon family ties (and wounds) which have been undone by the vagaries of life, while slowly and suggestively drawing the most out of the story's natural setting. It results in a luminous and visually beautiful film which is both humble and technically subtle (...), a movie which will win over the youngest viewers, stir up good summer memories for older audiences and which skilfully follows in the realistic-poetic footsteps of French animation by masters such as Michel Ocelot and Jean-François Laguionie.

Cineuropa

DETAILS

LANGUAGE

The dialogue fits within everyday language spoken by children and adults, with no swear words or vulgar expressions.

Yann's grandparents seem to speak a more rural French, more because of their accent than their vocabulary; his grandmother calls someone "ce cornichon-là" (rascal).

Exclamations such as "La vache!" or "Oh! La vache!", used mainly by Yann, are not translated in the subtitles, but another exclamation, "Paf", also spoken by Yann, was translated as "Holy cow!", which is a bit over the top.

The main themes of the film guide the vocabulary register. For example:

- **The fire** experienced by Caroline, Lucie's mother, has left traumatic memories: she explains that there was a short circuit, flames, and that her eyes were stinging. One of the characters remarks that she is afraid of fire.
- Because **Caroline is an archaeologist**, the vocabulary turns around excavations, an 11th-century crypt, buildings (the castle, the chapel) and a cave that resembles those of Lascaux and Chauvet. The gallery leading to the cave is "a real labyrinth". Because of the excavations and the potential for discovery, words such as legend and treasure appear.
- **The vehicles:** the tractor, the moped, the car.
- **The animals** that Lucie loves, play a key role on the farm and in the story, in the imagery and in the characters' concerns: the little badger needs a **vet** because it has a **fever** ("its **nose** is all hot"). Yann's grandmother gives it a **painkiller**. Yann forgets to give the **medicine** to the little calf.
- **Star animals:** the blue tits are present. "People say that the blue tit 'titines', 'zinzinules' or 'zinzibules'. More musical than the great tit, its song starts with a tinkling, airy 'tsi-tsi-tsih' and culminates in a soft, metallic trill."
- A clear attachment to the farm animals shows through the horse, the goose (which Yann has tenderly named ZebINETTE) and the cows. Even the comment about the badgers' gallery - "It stinks in there!" - is funny.
- **Caring for the animals** goes hand in hand with the presence of the wizard who lives in a caravan surrounded by wooden animals. Yann and Lucie imagine a story of dark magic: "Have you seen him looking after the animals? Maybe he uses the animals for his spells and puts bits of them in his potions. Maybe he turns them into monsters."

Yann has given the animals rather **odd names** that all end with the letter and sound “o” (Pepito, Boulo, Dodo...), which makes Lucie say that these are boys’ names and that cows should have girls’ names. This idea comes back when Yann decides to give the calf a girl’s name ending in “i”, like Julie, Sissi, or even Lucie.

VIOLENCE

In this animation aimed at children from 6 years old, up, violence is almost non-existent. The moped accident may come as a surprise, but there are no graphic details. It illustrates the importance of the helmet protection.

When Caroline hits the wall with the tractor, it creates shock and fear because of the appearance of flames. No graphic details.

When Lucie climbs the wall of the ruined castle to find a key, the falling stones foreshadow that she may fall, which creates suspense.

The children crawling through the underground passages after discovering the cave, the risk of falling are action scenes that spice up the film.

When Lucie uses vines to climb to the exit of the cave, she is saved in extremis by the wizard’s arm.

NUDITY

Nothing to report.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Nothing to report.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT/ MESSAGES

MESSAGES THAT COULD WORRY / DISTRESS CHILDREN

- The badger’s suffering which little Lucie is unable to relieve because there is no veterinarian.
- The suspense scenes: climbing the wall of the ruined castle, and the narrow underground passages leading to an unknown destination.
- The loneliness of the “wizard” and his wooden animals, whereas one would expect live animals in a forest. “Maybe he turns them into monsters.”
- Lucie’s frustration at her father’s absence and her mother’s all-consuming job: “Your

POSITIVE MESSAGES

- **Mutual support and family love:**
Yann’s grandparents are always there to help him and help his friends. They lend their tractor to their neighbour Caro and give a souvenir photo to Lucie.
Lucie’s mother is very affectionate and present when Lucie needs her.
- **Passing on values and family memories:**
The “wizard” praises Lucie’s bravery (“You were very brave”) – knowing where you come from creates lasting bonds.
- **Valuing women:** Caroline is a brilliant archaeologist, and her daughter is curious, perceptive, and independent.

- **The beauty of nature:** a ladybird making its way along, little creatures wandering about, and landscapes vibrating with bright or dark colours (storm and rain) give the film a strikingly picturesque quality.
- **Love of animals:** Lucie loves her big dog Mandrin; Caroline, her mother and her grandfather love the horse, and Lucie becomes attached to the badger. The animals return this love to the humans.

SOCIAL NORMS

- Positive female role models (Lucie and her mother are active, intelligent, and committed).
- Emphasis on intergenerational dialogue (grandparents, the lonely old man) and a gentle critique of the burden of unspoken things.



PHOTOS DU FILM

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION SITE



Crumbling castle and excavation site



Pierrot, Caroline's assistant, caresses Mandrin, the dog, Lucie holds the box containing the little badger and Caroline supervises the work.

THE FRIENDS



Lucie hops in the tractor driven by Yann with the animals they love: Zebinette the goose and Mandrin the dog



The caring blue tits

THE FAMILY PHOTO AT THE CENTRE OF THE FAMILY SECRET

