

Film

Melancholy surrounds cute animation film

A big heart and one googly eye in 'Marcel The Shell'

By Jake Coyle

It's boom times for googly eyes. Within months of "Everything Everywhere All at Once," the metaphysical sci-fi comedy whose panoply of metaverses memorably included one that made magic out of a pair of stones and some plastic eyeballs, arrives "Marcel The Shell With Shoes On."

Marcel is an inch-tale seashell with a single googly eye, a pair of Polly Pocket shoes and a very big heart. He introduces himself as a shell, "but I also have shoes and a face."

"I like that about myself," says Marcel.

"Marcel The Shell With Shoes On," which opens Friday in theaters, is a feature-length, stop-motion animation film based on the YouTube shorts made by Jenny Slate, who voices Marcel with a snuggly high pitch, and director Dean Fleischer Camp. It's a leap in scale that Marcel, who sleeps on a slice of bread and plays "Taps" through a macaroni, would probably appreciate, himself.

The experience of being small, and knee-weakeningly cute, is much at the heart of "Marcel The Shell," very possibly the sweetest movie ever made about a mollusk. To Marcel, there's great joy and pride in getting around as a little guy, and only occasional trepidation. The sight of the housecleaner — "the harbinger of the vacuum" — is one example of concern. But mostly Marcel does just fine. He uses a mixer

tied to a branch to shake fruit from a tree outside the window. When he wants to get around quicker, he uses his "rover," a tennis ball with a hole to climb into.

In the film, which takes the same sunny spirit and loose mockumentary style of the shorts, Marcel lives largely out of sight in a California home with his gardening grandmother, Connie (Isabella Rossellini, an all-time great bit of voice casting). They have passed unnoticed until a documentary filmmaker, Dean (Camp) moves in and begins filming Marcel. And, like an imaginative child, Marcel likes the attention, constantly showing Dean little tricks of being small and eagerly sharing a steady stream of non-sequitur thoughts and motivational slogans. One comes from the athlete Marcel calls "Whale Jetski": "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

Sensation

Marcel's unpredictable references and tastes are part of his charm. He and Connie, for example, are huge fans of Lesley Stahl on "60 Minutes," and watch regularly. "She blows cases wide open," explains Marcel. After Dean posts clips of Marcel on YouTube that garner millions of views, fame comes a little uncomfortably for Marcel. TikTokers turn up outside the house. Even Stahl comes calling.

How much sensation a shell can handle is part of the story of "Marcel The Shell." But it's more about preserving, in the face of

heartache and self-doubt, a childlike appreciation for the littlest things in life.

Melancholy surrounds the film. It takes place almost entirely within and around the house, giving it a homebody's loneliness. Something uncertain has happened that has uprooted Marcel's larger community, leaving only him and Connie, whose health is slipping. Dean, too, is nursing heartbreak. We don't learn much about his life, or even often see him, but we know he's just gone through a divorce. (Slate and Camp were themselves divorced in 2016. Their handmade movie is, in part, the tender product of a relationship that receded.)

"Marcel The Shell" may verge, or even tip, into cloying territory — such is the ever-present danger of googly eyes. But it may be the only movie that can pull off a line like, "Guess why I smile a lot? Uh, cause it's worth it." There's something unexpectedly tough about Marcel, a resilient soul who faces the ups and downs of life with pluck and playfulness. "Marcel The Shell With Shoes On" could be considered a kids movie or an art-house indie (A24 is releasing). But its proper audience might be anyone who's ever felt sanded down by life, and could use a roll in Marcel's rover.

"Marcel The Shell With Shoes On," an A24 release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for some suggestive material and thematic element. Running time: 90 minutes. Three stars out of four. (AP)

Variety



Mishael Morgan accepts the award for outstanding performance by a lead actress in a drama series for her role in 'The Young and the Restless' at the 49th annual Daytime Emmy Awards on Friday, June 24, in Pasadena, Calif. (AP)

Awards

Clarkson earns her third consecutive trophy

Morgan is lead winner at Daytime Emmys

PASADENA, Calif., June 25, (AP) — Mishael Morgan of "The Young and the Restless" won as lead drama actress, becoming the first Black actor to win in a lead category at the Daytime Emmys on Friday night.

Morgan was previously nominated in the supporting category. The 35-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago plays Amanda Sinclair on the CBS soap.

"I am being honored regardless of the color of my skin, regardless of my passport, for being the best at what I do," Morgan said. "Now there are little girls all around the world and they're seeing another step forward and they know that no matter their industry, no matter their vocation, no matter what, they can strive to be the best at what they do. Not only can they achieve it, but they will be celebrated."

John McCook earned lead actor honors for his role as Eric Forrester on CBS' "The Bold and the Beautiful." It was the 78-year-old's first win in four nominations.

"I am so glad to get this Emmy, any Emmy actually," he said.

"General Hospital" won daytime drama honors, the ABC show's 15th triumph in the category. It was the fifth trophy earned by the show Friday.

Morgan is in her second stint on "Y&R." She first joined the soap in 2013 and stayed until 2018. She returned in 2019 as a different character.

"I am so immensely proud of our generation. We are breaking glass ceilings left, right and center, and I am so honored to be a vessel and experience this moment," she said. "It's because of everybody who is out there today who is proving to the world that we can and we will do this thing called equality and unity together."

Three "General Hospital" stars won honors and the soap's directing team won for the third consecutive year.

Kelly Thiebaud was chosen supporting actress for playing Dr. Britt Westbourne and Jeff Kober scored as supporting actor for his role as Cyrus Renault. Nicholas Chavez won as younger performer in the soap.

"Wow!" Chavez said. "Just a little over a year ago

I was selling cars in a little beach town in Florida. I always had the love and support of my family, but none of us had ever dreamed I'd be up on this stage."

A gleeful Thiebaud won on her first nomination.

"I cannot believe this. I am so shocked," she said. "My brother, when I first started acting, he followed my work and he's like, 'You're not that good.'" So thank you for giving me something to rub in his face."

Kober is known for his extensive film and primetime work on such shows as "Sons of Anarchy" and "The Walking Dead."

"Wow, thank you for making me feel so welcome in daytime. What a trip," he said. "I love what we get to do for a living, it's play."

NBC's "Days of Our Lives" won for writing team.

Entertainment

Kelly Clarkson earned her third consecutive trophy as entertainment talk show host. Her eponymous show also won its second straight trophy for entertainment talk show. The singer is spending the summer with her children and didn't attend.

Tamron Hall picked up her second straight trophy as informative talk show host.

Steve Harvey of "Family Feud" won as game show host.

"Jeopardy!" won game show honors.

"Jeopardy!" is a show about facts," executive producer Michael Davies said. "Facts, with everything going on in the world, are more important than ever. 'Jeopardy!' is the last place where everyone agrees about facts."

Daytime doyenne Susan Lucci, who starred on "All My Children" during the show's entire 41-year network run, received a standing ovation. She introduced the In Memoriam segment, which included a photo of her husband, Helmet Huber, who died in March. Michael Bolton crooned his hit "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You."

John Aniston of "Days of Our Lives" was honored with a lifetime achievement award for his 37-year role as Victor Kiriakis. The 88-year-old actor wasn't present.

He was introduced via video by his daughter, Jennifer Aniston, who said, "His career is literally the definition of lifetime achievement." She noted he began acting in 1962 in primetime and also appeared in such defunct soaps as "Love of Life" and "Search For Tomorrow" before joining "Days" in 1985.

After two years of pre-taped presentations because of the coronavirus pandemic, daytime returned to honoring its own at nighttime with an in-person ceremony. In 2020, the show went virtual for the first time and last year the audience was limited.

Still, the specter of COVID-19 was felt.

Two nominees from "The Young and the Restless" were forced to bow out. Lead actor nominee Jason Thompson, who plays Billy Abbott, and supporting actress nominee Melissa Ordway, who plays Abby Newman, both said on social media they had tested positive for COVID-19 and would miss the show.

Kevin Frazier and Nischelle Turner of "Entertainment Tonight" co-hosted the 49th annual awards held at the Pasadena Convention Center, where many of the nominees sat at socially distanced cocktail tables and others sat in rows next to each other.

Frazier and Turner found themselves accepting a Daytime Emmy when "ET" won for entertainment news series.

Turner opened the show with a reference to the Supreme Court overturning women's constitutional protections for abortions earlier Friday. She emphatically told Frazier it was "her choice" to wear her blue gown. The crowd cheered and some women stood up.

Supporting actress nominee Nancy Lee Grahn of "General Hospital" walked the indoor red carpet wearing references to the day's news. She had a temporary tattoo reading "reproductive freedom" on her chest, the word "choice" on her disc earrings and she carried a black purse with "ban off our bodies" spelled out in rhinestones.

"I dare not go through this process without speaking out about the devastation that I have for what happened today and what a dark day it is for women in this country," the 66-year-old actor said. "We're not going to allow this, we're not going to stand for it."

MADRID: Japanese architect **Shigeru Ban** was named the winner of a prestigious Spanish prize for his pioneering work on designing temporary shelters for people affected by natural disasters and armed conflict.

The jury that decides the Princess of Asturias Awards gave Ban its Concord Prize for "providing shelters that offer dignity" to those needing emergency help.

Ban is known for his innovative use of cardboard tubes in construction. This durable and environmentally-friendly material was used for Rwandan refugees in the 1990s, and Ban became a consultant to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

"His work, constantly guided by humanitarian values and with the help of volunteers, is an example of sustainable architecture using recycled materials, earning international recognition," the Princess of Asturias jury said in its citation.

The 50,000-euro (\$52,560) Concord Prize is one of eight awards, including for the arts, social sciences and sports, handed out annually by a foundation named for Spanish Crown Princess Leonor. (AP)

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HAVANA: Two members of a loose-knit group of dissident artists have been sentenced to prison in **Cuba**, the country's prosecutor's office said Friday.

Maikel Castillo was sentenced to nine years for attacks and defamation against the country's institutions and **Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara**, 34, to five years for insulting national symbols.

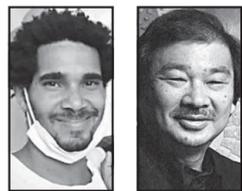
Both were involved with the so-called San Isidro Movement — named for the neighborhood where Otero Alcántara lives — that had attracted unusually wide support among prominent Cuban artists and musicians in 2020.

Their arrests had been denounced by international human rights organizations as well as the **US** government, which considered them political persecution. The government said it was merely applying the law as it would to anyone.

Prosecutors had sought 10 years for Castillo, better by the performance name "**Oso**," and seven for Alcántara, according to their friends. The same court also imposed a five year sentence on

Félix Roque Delgado and three years on two women who were convicted to hitting police in an effort to halt the arrest of Castillo, a 39-year-old rapper.

He was among the composers of the song "Patria y Vida" — "Fatherland and Life" — whose twist on the Communist government's "Fatherland or Death!" slogan made it a sort of anthem for



Alcántara

Ban

opposition figures. It won a Latin Grammy award this year.

Otero Alcántara's art works featuring the Cuban flag were considered disrespectful. (AP)

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SANTA FE, NM: A man convicted of fatally shooting a Santa Fe High School star basketball player after a fight at a house party nearly

two years ago has been sentenced to life in prison.

A New Mexico district court judge gave 18-year-old **Estevan Montoya** the maximum sentence Wednesday for the August 2020 killing of **Fedonta "JB" White**.

The judge said Montoya will be eligible for parole in 30 years.

Montoya was 16 at the time of the fatal shooting.

A jury found him guilty of first-degree murder, tampering with evidence, unlawful possession of a handgun by an underage person and negligent use of a deadly weapon.

White graduated from high school a year early and was recruited by multiple Division I college basketball programs. He was set to play for the New Mexico Lobos in the 2020-21 season. (AP)