

AS YOU WISH

FANTASTY FILMS OF THE
1980S



CUFA FILM CLUB WEEK 5



FLIGHTS OF FANCY

When seeking escapism, fun, and a return to nostalgia, there is no better place to go than to a fantasy film, and there are arguably no better or more prolific fantasy films than those made in the 1980s.

Prior to the 1980s, the fantasy genre was not particularly prominent, even when it came to children's media. However, during the 80s there was a burst in these types of films, most of which adhered closely to the conventions of the fairy tale, epic fantasy, or heroic quest yet nonetheless were able to put their own spin on the genre.

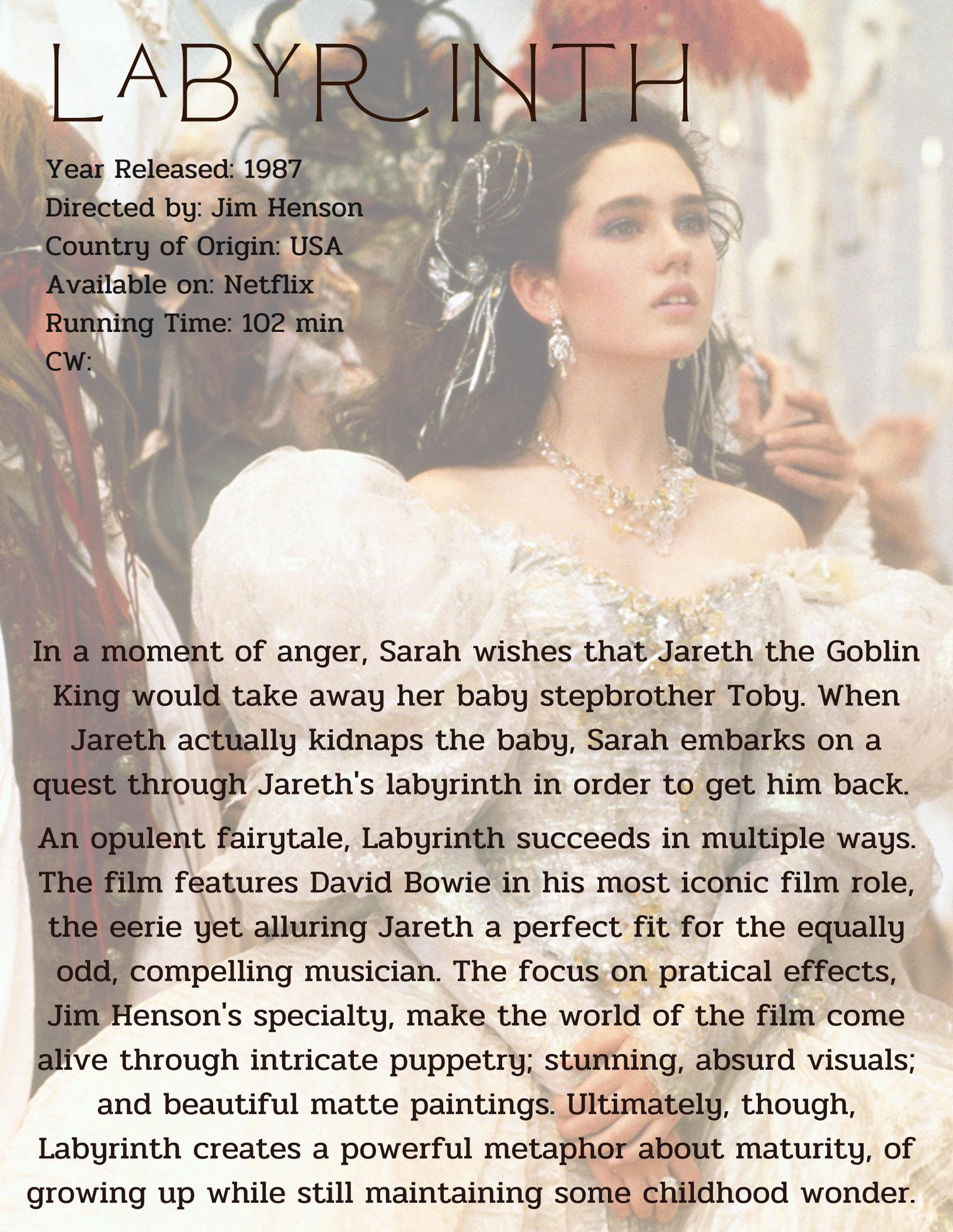
Most of these movies share similar characteristics: they follow the simplistic storytelling style of fairy tales. They feature a protagonist who is drawn into a grand quest. And stylistically they are dominated by incredible practical effects and stunning matte paintings, creating a tangibility that makes the magic all the more wonderful and real. Ultimately, these are films that are lighthearted, joyous, and bring out the inner child in audiences.

Read more about the 80s fantasy films here:
<https://www.cbr.com/the-1980s-were-a-golden-era-for-fantasy-cinema/>

NOW ONWARD TO THE FEATURED MOVIES!



LABYRINTH



Year Released: 1987

Directed by: Jim Henson

Country of Origin: USA

Available on: Netflix

Running Time: 102 min

CW:

In a moment of anger, Sarah wishes that Jareth the Goblin King would take away her baby stepbrother Toby. When Jareth actually kidnaps the baby, Sarah embarks on a quest through Jareth's labyrinth in order to get him back. An opulent fairytale, *Labyrinth* succeeds in multiple ways. The film features David Bowie in his most iconic film role, the eerie yet alluring Jareth a perfect fit for the equally odd, compelling musician. The focus on practical effects, Jim Henson's specialty, make the world of the film come alive through intricate puppetry; stunning, absurd visuals; and beautiful matte paintings. Ultimately, though, *Labyrinth* creates a powerful metaphor about maturity, of growing up while still maintaining some childhood wonder.

THE PRINCESS BRIDE

Year Released: 1987

Directed by: Rob Reiner

Country of Origin: USA

Available on: Prime Video

Running Time: 99 min

CW: some violence

A story within a story, a grandpa tells his sick grandson about the tale of Princess Buttercup and her lover Westley.

When Buttercup is betrothed to the villainous Prince Humperdink, Westley joins a band of outlaws in order to find and rescue her.

A satire on the conventions of the fairy tale and the fantasy films of the time, The Princess Bride is now regarded as a classic. However, upon initial release it was not a hit, only achieving its cult status once released on home media. The film's quirky humour, zany characters, and romantic subplot make it a comedic gem. However, within this comedy are moments of pain, tragedy, and suffering, a balance that makes the film all the more rewarding and emotionally investing.

THE NEVER ENDING STORY

Year Released: 1984

Directed by: Wolfgang Petersen

Country of Origin: Germany

Available on: Amazon, YouTube (Rent £3.79)

Running Time: 102 min

CW: death of an animal

Fleeing from bullies by hiding in a bookstore, Bastian Bux discovers a magical book, *The Neverending Story*. As he reads the book, the story and real life begin to blur, and Bastian gets drawn into the battle to save the kingdom of Fantasia from the Nothingness.

Director Wolfgang Petersen's first English-language movie, *The Neverending Story* is, like the other films in this series, notable for its sense of tangibility and sense of a grand scale. The story also emulates the tendency for fairy tales to be both lighthearted and whimsical as well as dark and intense, not shying away from the violence, sadness, and death one encounters throughout their lives.

MORE STUFF!

OTHER FILMS TO CHECK OUT:

THE DARK CRYSTAL (UK, USA, 1982)

THE SECRET OF NIMH (USA, 1982)

E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL (USA, 1982)

WILLOW (USA, 1988)

TIME BANDITS (UK, 1981)

OTHER ARTICLES TO READ:

THE 1980S WERE A GOLDEN ERA FOR FANTASY CINEMA:

[HTTPS://WWW.CBR.COM/THE-1980S-WERE-A-GOLDEN-ERA-FOR-FANTASY-CINEMA/](https://www.cbr.com/the-1980s-were-a-golden-era-for-fantasy-cinema/)

THE RISE OF FANTASY FILMS IN THE '80S:

[HTTPS://THEFRIDACINEMA.ORG/THE-RISE-OF-FANTASY-FILMS-IN-THE-80S/](https://thefridacinema.org/the-rise-of-fantasy-films-in-the-80s/)

LABYRINTH AND THE DARK HEART OF CHILDHOOD:

[HTTPS://WWW.THEATLANTIC.COM/ENTERTAINMENT/ARCHIVE/2016/06/LABYRINTH-CAPTURED-THE-DARK-HEART-OF-CHILDHOOD/489146/](https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/06/labyrinth-captured-the-dark-heart-of-childhood/489146/)

THE PRINCESS BRIDE' TURNS 30:

[HTTPS://VARIETY.COM/2017/FILM/FEATURES/THE-PRINCESS-BRIDE-TURNS-30-1202565060/](https://variety.com/2017/film/features/the-princess-bride-turns-30-1202565060/)