



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 27, 2010

Tangled: Brothers Grimm Meet Disney

Tangled is a reasonably entertaining film, with humor that is mildly encumbered by bouts of darker tones. It takes a relatively popular classic story, Rapunzel, and adds some finer elements and plot changes for an overall enjoyable movie that is most definitely oriented for younger female audiences.

Rapunzel (Mandy Moore) is taken from her royal family as an infant by an evil old woman (Donna Murphy), who is aware that Rapunzel's hair has magical powers like that which helps the old woman retain her youth, as well as the ability to heal. The one glitch, however, is that the hair cannot be cut, lest it lose its mystique — hence the absurdly long hair.



The old woman, Mother Gothel, raises Rapunzel to believe that she is in fact Rapunzel's ersatz mother, and convinces Rapunzel that she is safer if she lives her entire life trapped in a tower. Convinced by her mother that the world harbors nothing but evil, selfishness, and horror, and that people would want nothing more from her than her hair, Rapunzel accepts the tower as her only world.

As Rapunzel nears her 18th birthday, however, she cannot help but wonder what she has been missing in all the years she spent in the tower. Her curiosity, however, is squashed by her "mother," and Rapunzel once again continues in her lonely routine with only the company of her pet chameleon, Pascal.

Things change unexpectedly for Rapunzel, however, at the accidental intrusion of Flynn Rider (Zachary Levi), who stumbled upon Rapunzel's tower when fleeing from angry guards after stealing a crown from the royal kingdom. Flynn's exploits helped him to generate quite a few enemies, ranging from those at the royal court to the sleaziest ruffians one can conjure, and it's only later that moviegoers learn that his poor choices stemmed from his poor upbringing.

Rapunzel elects to make the most of the bizarre encounter. She hides Rider's stolen crown and asks him to serve as her escort for the next three days while she explores the outside world. Upon their return to the tower, Rapunzel would reveal to Flynn where she had hidden the crown.

Flynn accepts Rapunzel's offer under duress, though he does not appear to be happy about the reality that escorting her could lead to unwanted rendezvous with his enemies — it does, by the way. Much to Rapunzel's and Flynn's surprise, however, Rapunzel has far more gumption than anyone could have expected, and slowly but surely, she manages to wear down the gruff exterior of Flynn's enemies, and eventually Flynn himself.

Of course, no good fairy tale is devoid of conflict, and who better to bring it than the evil old woman. Recognizing that she may lose the very person capable of bringing her immortality, Mother Gothel



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enlists the help of some shady characters and reveals her true colors.

Tangled is a fine example of what Disney can do to a tale of Brothers Grimm. Full of lovely music, scored by Alan Menken, *Tangled* manages to capture much of Rapunzel's original storyline, minus the overarching sadness, while adding energy and light. While much of the Brothers Grimm version of the story is melancholy with limited moments of happiness, *Tangled* is strewn with liveliness and optimism, as moviegoers witness both Rapunzel's and Flynn's maturation.

There are some dark overtones in the movie, however, that make it difficult to ascertain the proper audience for the film. When Flynn is captured and tried as a thief, for example, he is sentenced to be hanged and is dragged off toward his noose, before he is fortunately saved by newly-made friends. Similarly, when Rapunzel is confronted by a difficult decision — freedom or the death of the man she loves — parents may find such a plot element to be a bit too dreary for a children's movie.

At the same time, *Tangled* offers some important wisdom to its young moviegoers. It teaches the importance of sacrifice and friendship. It also encourages a tireless pursuit of one's dreams. Likewise, it highlights the importance of self-discovery and identity. And perhaps most importantly, in today's world where sadness runs rampant, a film that ends with justice, marriage, and "happily ever after" is always a welcome distraction.

Full of adventure, singing and dancing, and youthful humor, *Tangled* is a pleasant enough film, but geared mainly for female audiences, as much of it focuses on romance and a young girl's journey to discover all that she could be.

Rotator picture and above: Mandy Moore, left, and Zachary Levi read from the book "Tangled" at the Disney Store to promote their new movie "Tangled" in New York, Nov. 19, 2010: AP Images



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