

Recommending *NAUSICAA of the Valley of the Wind*

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One day, Todd Roe was forced by one of his friends to watch a Japanese film called *Okuribito*. It was a story about a young man who by accident became a “coffin man,” namely, a funeral director. Actually, it was a quite inspiring film. But what stuck with him most was its beautiful theme music, played on a cello. Since he plays the piano, not the cello, he even ordered the music from Japan and started to play it by himself.

Todd also learned that the music was composed by a musician called Joe Hisaishi and realized that Hisaishi is the Alan Menken of Japan. Of course, Menken is the composer for many popular Disney films. Likewise, Hisaishi is the music director of all the extremely successful animation films directed by Hayao Miyazaki.

So, Todd wanted to listen to all of Hisaishi's music in those films. Luckily, all the nine films made by the Miyazaki-Hisaishi combo were available at a local library. Todd was completely hooked. As expected, he enjoyed the music immensely. He got more music sheets and started to play them as well. This way, he was also introduced to Miyazaki's films. And, boy, he could not forget them. Many of Miyazaki's films feature young females in dominant roles. They are beautiful, courageous, and kind. When male characters dominate the film industry, Miyazaki's female characters must have sent a powerfully empowering message to women.

Among the films, Todd was especially drawn to the film *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. He thought that the film contains many extremely important messages to the leaders of the world. This film is set in some future time when humans are struggling to survive. They have to fend themselves off against the destructive force of the Sea of Decay filled with powerful and dangerous life forms. The main character of the film is Princess Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind, one of the three kingdoms. The valley was remotely located and had been sustaining themselves in a peaceful manner. However, this kingdom too got involved in a war among other kingdoms. Nausicaä is well trusted and loved by the people of the

valley. This is because she is genuine, honest, kind, and brave. To save the people of the valley, she wouldn't hesitate to sacrifice herself. So, Nausicaä leaves to save the valley. Still, she promised to come back to the valley. In fact, keeping a promise is a powerful motivation for her to accomplish her goal. Then, even when she has to fight the people from other kingdoms, she avoids hurting them. She even saves those who tried to kill her. In addition, she is kind to other animals and even to the destructive life forms.

During her interaction with the people of the other kingdoms, Nausicaä found the truth behind the Sea of Decay. It was actually the humans that were destroying the natural resources. The strange life forms were simply protecting the giant trees, hidden underground, whose role was to clean up the environment. In the end, Nausicaä saved the valley and told this finding to the people of the valley and the people of the other kingdoms. Nausicaä is a humanist and naturalist as well.

By all means, Nausicaä is a hero. She has all the qualifications necessary for a true leader. Todd couldn't stop comparing Nausicaä with the current political figures in his country. The majority of them are exactly the opposite of Nausicaä. I guess you don't need to hear any details about this point.

So, Todd wondered if these politicians might be moved by the story of Nausicaä. As the first step, he sent a copy of the DVD to the President of his country. As of this writing, he has not yet heard back from the President.