

Parents need to know that this enchanting fairy tale has some sad and scary scenes that might be disturbing for very young or sensitive kids. Maria loses her father early in the movie, though the audience never actually meets him. Also, one family is portrayed as villainous, and they wear dark clothes and masks, and there are some brief battle scenes with Maria being chased. A magical, protective black dog has red eyes and transforms into a fierce lion when the enemies appear. Maria -- who's selfless and generous -- is a great role model for kids, and the movie has strongly positive messages about achieving your goals.

What families can talk about

- Families can talk about the battle between the Merryweathers and the De Noirs. Is their disagreement only about a string of pearls? What do you think the pearls represent? How does your family handle disagreements?
- When looking at the role that men and women play in this film, what differences do you notice? Do males or females seem to be more villainous than the others? Does the film perpetuate any stereotypes?

Do you think that father De Noir lacks sincerity in the end, or does he truly learn a lesson? And who do you think is most responsible for Maria's kind-hearted nature?

Maria Merryweather (Dakota Blue Richards), a girl of great fortune and wealth, finds herself homeless and orphaned at the age of 13. The only inheritance Maria receives from her deceased father is a book that tells the legend of Moonacre's famous Moon Princess. Forced to leave her home in London, Maria moves to the countryside of Moonacre Manor to live with an uncle she has never met. Maria's uncle, Sir Benjamin (Ioan Gruffudd), is unfriendly and aloof until he notices Maria's uncanny relationship with the animals surrounding the

castle. The horses flock to her, and the dog becomes her immediate companion. When the walls surrounding her mysteriously come to life, Maria quickly learns that *she* is the last Moon Princess and must save Moonacre from an ancient curse. It's up to her to unite her family with its rivals, the De Noirs, before the 5,000th moon rises.

This is a beautiful and enchanting tale about a little princess whose selfless actions save an entire kingdom. When Maria takes it upon herself to unite her family with their centuries-old adversaries, the De Noir family, she's pleasantly surprised to find some unlikely characters coming to her aid. With the many magical creatures lurking throughout the castle, you start to wonder whether the castle itself might be magical: walls change form, trap doors appear, and white horses turn into unicorns.

The delightful film, directed by Gábor Csupó (*Bridge to Terabithia*), will appeal to tweens with an appreciation for magic and fantasy.