

MEMOIR OF A SNAIL

Australia (2024) 90 minutes

Director/Scriptwriter: Adam Elliot

Cast: Sarah Snook, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Eric Bana, Magda Szubanski, Dominique Pinon, Tony Armstrong, Paul Capsis, Nick Cave and Jacki Weaver

Screening 10th December 2025 at Swindon Arts Centre

Synopsis

When their parents die, twins Grace and Gilbert are separated – Gilbert joins a religious but cruel family, while intensely lonely Grace withdraws into her shell, just like her pet snails. But despite a series of upsets and mishaps, hope begins to emerge when Grace befriends the elderly eccentric Pinky.

Reviews



Gilbert's foster family are an oppressively cultish religious group who insist on worshipping the "baby Jesus" as opposed to the adult version. Grace is billeted with an upbeat Canberra couple addicted to self-help books and swinging who leave her alone in the evenings while they go off to "key parties". Sad little Grace's only friend is an eccentric but indomitable old lady called Pinky, who "smells of ginger and second-hand shops" and favours colourful clothes and giant glasses, like a combination of Iris Apfel and The Incredibles' Edna Mode. And it is Pinky who is to be the central figure in Grace's life as she makes a dramatic reckoning with her destiny and with her lifelong fetish for snails.

There's an ingenuousness and innocence to *Memoir of a Snail*, a family-entertainment approachability that belies a strange intensity. There are some candid hints being hidden in plain sight – or, actually, not at all hidden, although the surprising narrative pivot in the ending is something that only adds to how poignant it is. It's a thoroughly enjoyable watch, and it's great to see a reference to the BBC TV comedy classic *The Two Ronnies*, which turns out to have been huge in Australia.

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

There is much to be impressed with here – not least the central metaphor of snails but also in the narrative tactic that life can only be understood backwards but has to be lived forwards. *Memoir of a Snail* isn't just a triumph of animation. It's a reminder that some stories need to be told slowly, carefully, with attention to texture and detail – sometimes the most meaningful journeys happen at a snail's pace.

Katie Colombus, The Arts Desk

Elliot has a remarkable ability to portray life in a sombre way while still maintaining a sense of optimism. In *Memoir of a Snail*, he tackles tough topics like alcoholism, loneliness, grief and hoarding, but his message is clear: Life can be awful at times, but it's important to keep on going—even if it's at a snail's pace.

Stefan Pape, Common Sense Media

Film Facts

- *Memoir of a Snail* won Best Film Award at the BFI London Film Festival.
- The script took Adam Elliot three years to write (he wrote 16 drafts).
- The film took eight years to produce.

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