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*Pitney
1985*



Tail of a Tiger

1984 Color 84 mins.

Director: Rolf de Heer

Producer: James M. Vernon

Screenplay: Rolf de Heer

Cinematography: Richard Michalak

Music: Steve Arnold, Graham Tardif

Editing: Suresh Ayyar

Principal Cast: Grant Navin, Gordon Poole, Caz Lederman

Production Company: Producer's Circle

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Tail of a Tiger is a quiet, amiable children's film about an intelligent Sydney 10-year-old, Orville, who (as his name suggests) is obsessed with vintage airplanes. The local kids won't let him join their gang and fly model airplanes, but he stumbles upon an old man, Harry, who has a wrecked Tiger Moth in a shed near the docks. Orville spends his summer vacation helping Harry (who's at first suspicious of the boy) to repair and eventually fly the vintage aircraft.

The film's slight narrative works thanks to the relaxed performances director-screenwriter Rolf de Heer gets from the children. Toothy Grant Navin is solid as the young hero, while the film is practically stolen by the even younger Dylan Lyle, playing Orville's annoying little brother. *Tail of a Tiger's* one major flaw is the injection of some awkward and unnecessary fantasy via three ghostly old pilots who pop up from time to time to encourage Harry and Orville, and even help them fight off an attack from a gang of kids. The final sequences of the restored plane flying over the city of Sydney are joyful, though one wonders what the Department of Aviation would have to say about it all.

David Stratton

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