

Les Invasions Barbares (The Barbarian Invasions)

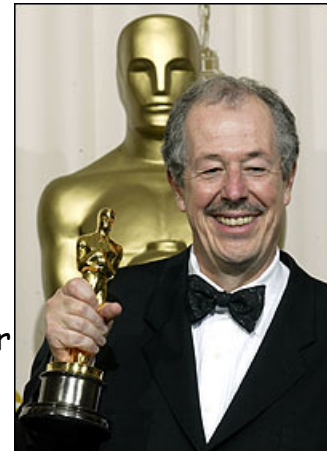
Reviewer: Helen Walsh

On February 29th, Quebec filmmaker Denys Arcand won an Oscar for best foreign language film for his much-celebrated movie, *The Barbarian Invasions*. This was Arcand's third nomination for an Oscar but his first win. This film also won top prizes at the Cannes Film Festival, the French Cesars and Quebec Jutra awards and was immensely successful in movies theatres in Québec.

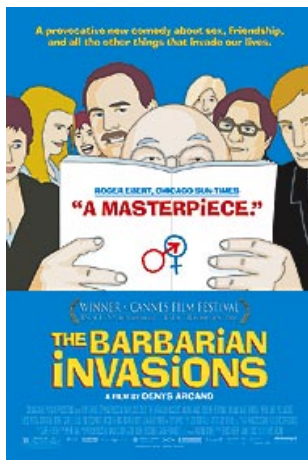
The Barbarian Invasions is a sequel to Arcand's 1986 film, *Decline of the American Empire*. He uses the same cast for both films, this time in a bittersweet examination of a man facing his own death of cancer. At the beginning of the

film, Rémy, a history professor, is seen within the chaos of an over-crowded, under-funded hospital in

Québec, his only family present an ex-wife with whom he fights. His estranged son, now a financial trader in London, reluctantly returns home to help his mother deal with this crisis, and old tensions between father and son quickly boil to the surface.



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At the point of returning in frustration back to London, Sébastien is reminded of the responsibility that family entails, and he sets out to gather together the friends and community that were once the cornerstone of his father's life, but which, in the intervening years, has dissipated. This film reminds us that community starts with family but also extends to those friends we hold close to our hearts. This reunion is what allows Rémy to come to terms with his life, with the choices he has made, their impact on others, and finally to face his own death with dignity.

This is a film with a huge amount of heart. It provokes a range of emotion from laughter to tears to bittersweet smiles. The intensity of the emotion stems from the reminder that ultimately we are not alone in life if we have community that surrounds us, whether this community has come from genetics or from a lifetime of shared experience. These connections are what give our lives context and meaning and the support we need to face difficult times with grace.

Related Links:

- Movie website: <http://www.miramax.com/thebarbarianinvasions/>
- [View the trailer](#)
- Barbarian Invasions at the Oscars: http://www.oscar.com/oscardnight/winners/win_33160.html