

Film of the week:

## *This Doggish Cat* (reviewed by Carl Chung)

5 Emilia Wong has been obsessed with the theme of love—except romantic love. In her long career as a director, she has already given us cinematic portrayals of familial love, love between master and servant, and love between fellow soldiers. One would have expected her swansong to be about love between two handsome youths. But she defies expectations, as always.

10 Her last film retells the true story of a shy girl and her house cat. Samantha (Kelsey Chan) has been miserable and despondent long before she is officially diagnosed with depression. However, her mother Helen (Linsey Lee) does not believe the words of her daughter's psychologist. Nor does she think, after the diagnosis, that anything except medicines can cheer her daughter up. But something eventually does, weeks after Helen brings home a brownish-white cat called Latte. Having lost his owner in a car crash, Latte is taken home by Helen out of charity. Quite understandably, Helen expects a catastrophe rather than a miracle at first, as animals and coffee are the two things Samantha hates most in the world. Latte would be a smaller trouble if he acted like a usual cat, as Helen initially assumed. But sometimes animals can just be as unpredictable as humans: Samantha finds herself followed by

20 Latte, wherever she goes and whenever she is awake. Latte's love is finally reciprocated after he sits by a lonely Samantha's side loyally and quietly, while her classmates chat away the party hours with one another. Latte is now in Samantha's heart, just as she has always been in his. A plot like this is universal enough to be enjoyable to people of all backgrounds.

25 I cannot think of anything awful to say about the cast. Kelsey Chan and Linsey Lee act their parts so excellently that I thought they were really related by blood. And Carlos (who plays Latte) performs as naturally as a cat could. It is unfair for this little actor to be treated only to sardines as rewards, while the humans have an opening weekend box office as high as

30 \$100 million to enjoy.

Emilia Wong is not the only film director to take the victory of true love over obstacles as a theme. There have been many artworks in which two souls care deeply for each other, despite differences which make it difficult. In her hands, however, such a theme comes fully alive—no longer an old chestnut from which nothing is to be expected.

35

### Let's Think!

1. Do you read film reviews?
2. Do you read them before watching the films?



### STEAM CLASSROOM

Cinematography is the art of photography and camerawork in filmmaking.



### Looking into Grammar

The simple present tense is used in synopses as the events in a plot are always true.

✗ In the tale, the princess fell (✓ falls) to death off the castle.

? In which paragraph does the synopsis appear?

~420 words

## Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the film review. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. *This Doggish Cat* is a \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. documentary
- B. romance
- C. comedy
- D. drama

2. Which features of Latte make the decision to bring him home seem wrong?

- I. his being brownish-white
- II. his being an animal
- III. his name
- IV. his character

- A. I and II
- B. II and III
- C. III and IV
- D. II, III and IV

2 The phrase 'seem wrong' implies that something bad is likely to happen.

3. In the beginning, Latte is a trouble to Samantha because \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. he is too shy and unusual
- B. he is a bit like her
- C. he acts like a human being
- D. he is always around her

4. In paragraph 2, the miracle that later surprises Helen is that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Latte follows Samantha all the time
- B. Samantha's depression is cured
- C. Samantha and Latte get along
- D. Latte is a very loyal cat

5. Samantha starts to become close to Latte because \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. he is faithful when she is lonely
- B. she has no other friends at all
- C. he is quiet while she is enjoying the party
- D. her classmates like him but not her

5 Don't go for options that seem true but are unstated.



6. Which of the following about the film is NOT praised by the reviewer?

- A. its actors and actresses
- B. the storyline
- C. the rewards Carlos got
- D. the way Kelsey and Linsey acted



7. The reviewer thinks \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. the film's theme is clichéd
- B. the director handled the theme well
- C. the cast is perfect for the film's theme
- D. some people tend not to have expectation for things

### More to Take Away



You might have thought that cats, unlike dogs, are generally aloof and independent. However, some cat breeds act quite like dogs. Turkish Angora is one example. You can recognise them by their white appearance and blue eyes, as well as their eagerness to play with anyone.



Self-evaluation  
Checklist

Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

## Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the film review. For questions 5 and 6, answer in complete sentences.

1 One's 'swansong' (line 6) is one's last piece of work in one's career. Swans were once believed to sing a beautiful song last time right before they die.

1. According to the film review, Emilia Wong \_\_\_\_\_.
- A. has long been directing films about romantic love
- B. has avoided themes about family and war in her films
- C. began as a director of films about adolescent love
- D. makes films that people do not expect her to
2. Determine whether each of the following statements is true, false, or undecidable because not enough information is given.

Statement	True	False	Not Given
(i) Samantha's classmates dislike her.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(ii) Latte loves Samantha from the beginning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(iii) In the film, there is an actor or actress whose performance is not enjoyed by the reviewer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Complete the summary of the film review by circling the best option.

This film is based on a (i) *talkative / reserved / cheerful* girl named Samantha. Being a long-time (ii) *patient / case / student* of depression, she keeps feeling down until she (iii) *adopts / bumps into / meets* Latte, a stray kitten taken home by her mum.

4. Match each of the following quotes with its most likely speaker. Put the letters in the corresponding boxes.

A. Samantha

B. Helen

C. Carl Chung

(i) 'He's here with me when I'm all alone. He's my soulmate.'

(ii) 'I was deeply moved by this love between a depressed soul and a cat.'

(iii) 'Dear, listen to me. Medication is what you need.'

5. In line 34, what does 'such a theme' refer to?

5 The word 'such' is used to refer to what has just been mentioned.

6. Based on the film review, how does Helen probably feel about Latte's coming?

## Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos below with the names of some of the common pets from the word box.

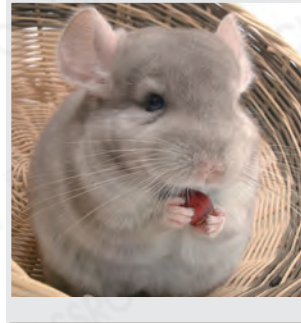
hedgehog      guinea pig      chinchilla      parrot  
chipmunk      chameleon      tortoise      hermit crab



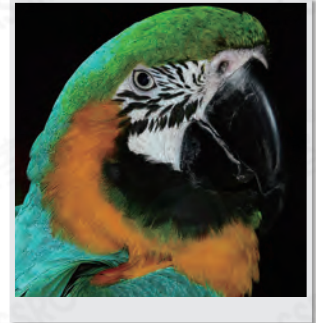
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



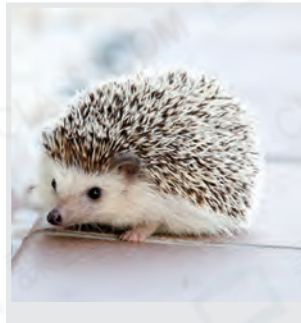
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



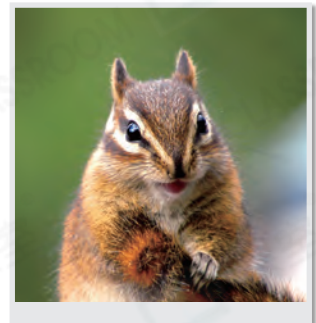
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Word Craft

#### Retrospect (Refer to P.110.)

The prefix **retro-** is used to construct words with the meaning 'relating to or being in the styles of the past'.

**e.g.** **retrospective** (=related to or thinking about the past)  
**retrograde** (=returning to older and worse conditions)  
**retro-pop** (=modern-day music that resembles pop from the 1960s)

### Let's Discuss!

1. In your opinion, what makes a film worth watching?
2. Do you think reading film reviews helps you understand a particular film better?