

The Girl

By Hannah Stadler

Directed by German filmmaker Fredrik Edfeldt, *The Girl* focuses on a nameless ten-year-old girl (Blanca Engström) left behind at her family's remote country house while the rest of her family move to Africa to help orphaned children. Her irresponsible aunt Anna is sent to look after her, but Anna soon tires of her responsibility and leaves on a sailing trip. The girl, alone again, intends to enjoy her freedom while it lasts.

With little dialogue, *The Girl* is unconventional and confusing, with no sense of time, climax, or resolution; however, despite these unusual elements—or perhaps because of them—the story is very powerful. In a sense, the questions left unanswered enhance the film's impact because they allow the viewer to decide for themselves what sort of message they want to draw from the story.

It is difficult to connect with the characters because the minimalist use of dialogue prevents psychological insight and inhibits character development. Other aspects of the film are exceptional: the cinematography is beautiful, especially a succession of shots just of the girl's face, either haloed with soft light or mellow colours, each frame highlighting the actor's eyes. The acting style is believable and harsh, each moment stressing the importance of preserving childhood innocence while it lasts.

Rather than conveying a clear message or theme, *The Girl* leaves blank spaces allowing the audience to create their own ideas and interpretations. Young children probably would not pick up on the almost paedophilic overtones and the rather depressing themes because they are depicted in a rather lighthearted manner, but *The Girl* is still a dark film.