



The Main Feature

Season 43 – Issue 10 – Screening 8 February 2024

Where the Crawdads Sing

US 2022
125 mins Cert 15

Director	Olivia Newman
Screenplay	Lucy Alibar (from the novel by Delia Owens)
Cinematography	Polly Morgan
Music	Mychael Danna
Producers	Reese Witherspoon, Lauren Neustadter
<u>Cast</u>	
Daisy Edgar-Jones	Catherine 'Kya' Clark
Taylor John Smith	Tate Walker
Harris Dickinson	Chase Andrews
David Strathairn	Tom Milton
Michael Hyatt	Mabel Madison
Sterling Macer	James 'Jumpin' Madison
Logan Macrae	Jeremy 'Jodie' Clark
Bill Kelly	Sheriff Jackson
Ahjna O'Reilly	'Ma' Julianne Clark
Garret Dillahunt	'Pa' Jackson Clark
Jayson Warner Smith	Deputy Joe Purdue
Eric Ladin	Eric Chastain



Where the Crawdads Sing is based on the best-selling 2018 novel of the same name by Delia Owens. Catherine, known as Kya (Daisy Edgar-Jones, recently seen in the BBC drama *Normal People*), is a young girl living in the North Carolina marshland, who is forced to raise herself from a young age. Although she is completely ostracized by the town, she gains the attention of two men, Tate Walker and Chase Andrews. After Chase dies, Kya is accused of murder.

Delia Owens is a zoologist. With her then-husband Mark, she spent seven years in a remote and uninhabited part of Botswana studying the social behaviour of lions and hyenas. Owens says she was struck by the female hyenas, who stay in their birth groups and maintain strong bonds with their pride or pack mates for life. Her research was published in a book *Cry of the Kalahari*. She moved on to study social behaviour of elephants in Luangwa, Zambia. Besides studying elephants, the Owens established a program that offered jobs, loans, and other assistance to local villagers so they would not have to poach wildlife for a living. The death of an elephant poacher led to an unsolved murder investigation by the Zambian authorities.

In an interview with BookBrowse, Owens explained the creation of *Where the Crawdads Sing* and what elements were drawn from her personal life. A surprising amount of the story, setting, themes, and characters have been informed by Owens' personal experiences with everything from the North Carolina marsh (which is a character in its own right) to Kya's flaws from living in isolation.



When asked why a coastal marsh was chosen for the setting, Owens explained the importance of nature within the overall story as it effectively became Kya's parent after her mother died; and she remarks that there truly is no greater teacher than nature itself. However, in terms of the setting, Owens said 'I chose the coastal marsh because I was somewhat familiar with it and knew other marshes and swamps of the southern states very well. When I was girl, I went canoe camping with my mother in the Okefenokee Swamp and other wild places'.

Owens' time as a researcher in remote areas in Africa also informed Kya's character. She says much of her adult life was spent in complete isolation, between living in the Kalahari Desert for seven years and having her own camp in Luangwa. 'I know what it is like to be alone. [...] I know how isolation can make you feel insecure and inadequate. What it is like to avoid people when you go to town because you don't belong'.

The score of the film is by the prolific Canadian composer Mychael Danna (he won a Golden Globe and an Oscar for the score of *Life of Pi*), and includes the award-winning original song *Carolina* by Taylor Swift.

On release, the film received mixed reviews from critics, who praised Edgar-Jones's performance and the cinematography, but found the film's overall tone incoherent. Audience reception was more positive and the film became a box office success, grossing \$144.3 million worldwide on a \$24 million budget.

And the title? Owens said that when she was a girl, her mother encouraged her to explore far into the oak forests, saying 'Go way out yonder where the crawdads sing'. A crawdad is a freshwater crayfish. According to the National Geographic 'Though they don't exactly sing, these little decapods do produce sounds both in and out of water. A thin appendage that draws water and air through the gills makes a noise called a pulse train that sounds a bit like Morse code. The noises made are likely used for communicating with other crawdads, and to alert others to the presence of predators.'

I have read the novel and seen the film. I enjoyed both. Now you see the film and see what you think!

Mike Widdup



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Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 14 February 2024
Discs of previous shows are available to hire for a modest fee.

Here are the Oscar nominations for 2024. Use your reaction sheets to let the Committee know if you would like any of these to feature in next season's programme (subject to availability). Apologies for the small print!

Best picture

American Fiction
Anatomy of a Fall
Barbie
The Holdovers
Killers of the Flower Moon
Maestro
Oppenheimer
Past Lives
Poor Things
The Zone of Interest

Best actor

Bradley Cooper - Maestro
Colman Domingo - Rustin
Paul Giamatti - The Holdovers
Cillian Murphy - Oppenheimer
Jeffrey Wright - American Fiction

Best actress

Annette Bening - Nyad
Lily Gladstone - Killers of the Flower Moon
Sandra Huller - Anatomy of a Fall
Carey Mulligan - Maestro
Emma Stone - Poor Things

Best supporting actress

Emily Blunt - Oppenheimer
Danielle Brooks - The Color Purple
America Ferrera - Barbie
Jodie Foster - Nyad
Da'Vine Joy Randolph - The Holdovers

Best supporting actor

Sterling K Brown - American Fiction
Robert De Niro - Killers of the Flower Moon
Robert Downey Jr - Oppenheimer
Ryan Gosling - Barbie
Mark Ruffalo - Poor Things

Best director

Anatomy of a Fall - Justine Triet
Killers of the Flower Moon - Martin Scorsese
Oppenheimer - Christopher Nolan
Poor Things - Yorgos Lanthimos
The Zone of Interest - Jonathan Glazer

Best adapted screenplay

American Fiction
Barbie

Oppenheimer
Poor Things
The Zone of Interest

Best original screenplay

Anatomy of a Fall
The Holdovers
Maestro
May December
Past Lives

Best original song

The Fire Inside - Flamin' Hot (Diane Warren)
I'm Just Ken - Barbie (Mark Ronson, Andrew Wyatt)
It Never Went Away - American Symphony (Jon Batiste, Dan Wilson)
Wahzhazhe (A Song For My People) - Killers of the Flower Moon (Scott George)
What Was I Made For? - Barbie (Billie Eilish, Finneas O'Connell)

Best original score

American Fiction
Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny
Killers of the Flower Moon
Oppenheimer
Poor Things

Best international feature

Io Capitano
Perfect Days
Society of the Snow
The Teachers' Lounge
The Zone of Interest

Best animated feature

The Boy and the Heron
Elemental
Nimona
Robot Dreams
Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse

Best documentary feature

Bobi Wine: The People's President
The Eternal Memory
Four Daughters
To Kill a Tiger
20 Days in Mariupol

Best costume design

Barbie
Killers of the Flower Moon
Napoleon
Oppenheimer
Poor Things

Best make-up and hairstyling

Golda

Maestro
Oppenheimer
Poor Things
Society of the Snow

Best production design

Barbie
Killers of the Flower Moon
Napoleon
Oppenheimer
Poor Things

Best sound

The Creator
Maestro
Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One
Oppenheimer
The Zone of Interest

Best film editing

Anatomy of a Fall
The Holdovers
Killers of the Flower Moon
Oppenheimer
Poor Things

Best cinematography

El Conde
Killers of the Flower Moon
Maestro
Oppenheimer
Poor Things

Best visual effects

The Creator
Godzilla Minus One
Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3
Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One
Napoleon

Best live action short

The After
Invincible
Knight of Fortune
Red, White and Blue
The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar

Best animated short

Letter to a Pig
Ninety-Five Senses
Our Uniform
Pachyderme
War Is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko

Best documentary short

The ABCs of Book Banning
The Barber of Little Rock
Island In Between
The Last Repair Shop
Nãi Nãi and Wài Pó

Comments and reactions to: **Dog Day Afternoon**

No of reaction slips received = 27

Average score = 7.15

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	2	~	3	15	2	4	1

I found it long and a bit tedious. Hard to believe it was a real event *Perhaps a bit too long*
Better than I remembered. They'd have trouble shooting this today ... remember banks?
One of the few American dialogue films that could be understood *Hilarious, dramatic and sad*
I was surprised by how relevant the issues remained after 50 years **Great short. Excellent film**
Good film – the first mini-film was absolutely diabolical. A complete waste of time and an insult to my intelligence! *Only in America! Very good film, Pacino was brilliant*
Very funny and entertaining, much enjoyed **Good portrayal of real event**
Dragged on a little on a repeat viewing. Were the participants quite that stupid?
Enjoyed the film which was funny to start and then very sad to end **Hard to believe it's a true story**
My first viewing of this film. Will have to see it again. Al Pacino – brilliant
Holds up very well. Absorbing with excellent performances **Rather drawn out, but worth watching**
Essentially a (highly entertaining) tragi-comedy albeit at the expense of two distinctly sad characters.
Perhaps a little too drawn out. But all wonderfully held together and raised up the scoring table by a towering performance by Al Pacino.

Position	Film	Average score
1	Living	7.62
2=	Mrs Harris Goes to Paris	7.58
2=	Downton Abbey – A New Era	7.58
4	The Lost King	7.38
5	Dog Day Afternoon	7.15
6	The Banshees of Inisherin	7.06
7	Rams	6.40
8	Three Colours: Blue	6.18
9	Decision to Leave	4.59

Forthcoming attraction: 22 February 2024 – **Vagabond (Sans toit ni loi)**



A young homeless woman (Sandrine Bonnaire) is discovered dead in a freezing ditch by an agricultural worker. Pale and still undecomposed, she looks strangely peaceful, as if asleep, and in the mysterious and fractured drama to come, showing flashback episodes in her life descending to this grimly inevitable ending, she is often to be discovered sleeping rough in very much the same situation. As one witness says: "If they're dead, it's ugly; if they're asleep, it's cute." (...) [T]his is surely one of [Agnès Varda's] greatest films: enigmatic, possessed of a cool artistry in its structural asymmetries and inconsistencies, and as gripping as any thriller.

Guardian