



Reading 12

Read four reviews of a film. For questions 1–4, choose from reviews A–D. The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Four critics comment on the film *The King's speech*

A

History and film buffs will delight in Seidler's *The King's Speech*. Its strong historical context might deter those not falling within these two categories, however. The film largely involves the actors Colin Firth, formal and decent, and Geoffrey Rush, large and expansive, in psychological struggle, Helena Bonham Carter, who can be merciless, is here filled with mercy, tact and love for her husband; this is the woman who became the much-loved Queen Mother of our lifetimes, dying in 2002 at 101. As the men have a struggle of wills, she tries to smooth things and raise her girls Elizabeth and Margaret. In the wider sphere, Hitler takes power; war comes closer, and the dreaded day approaches, when Bertie (Firth), as George VI, will have to speak to the world and declare war. The director's handling of that fraught scene is masterful. Firth internalizes his tension and keeps the required stiff upper lip, but his staff and household are terrified on his behalf as he marches towards a microphone as if it is a guillotine. At the end, what we have here is a superior historical drama and a powerful personal one.

B

Some films turn out to be unexpectedly good. Not that you've written them off; only they ply their craft on the hush-hush. Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech*, looked no more than a well-spoken costume drama, optimistically promoted for Sunday tea-time; decent cast, nice costumes and posh carpets. That was until the film finished a sneak-peak at a festival in deepest America and the standing ovations began. Tweeters, bloggers and Internet spokespeople of various levels of elocution, announced it the Oscar favorite, so it arrives in our cinemas with a fanfare of trumpets. But for all its pageantry, it isn't a film of grandiose pretensions. Much better than that, it is an honest-to-goodness crowd pleaser. *Rocky* with dysfunctional royalty. *Good Will Hunting* set amongst the staid pageantry and fussy social mores of the late 30s. A film that will play and play. A prequel to *The Queen*. Where lies its success? Let's start with the script, by playwright David Seidler, a model for transforming history into an approachable blend of drama and wit. For a film about being horrendously tongue-tied, Seidler's words are exquisitely measured, his insight as deep as it is softly spoken.

C

W. H. Auden wrote his poem "September 1, 1939" while sitting in a New York bar:

"Uncertain and afraid /
As the clever hopes expire /
Of a low dishonest decade."

The King's Speech takes a rather different view of Britain and the 1930s, though it's not entirely inconsistent with Auden's judgment and isn't in any sense what is sneeringly called, 'heritage cinema'. It is the work of a highly talented group of artists who might be regarded as British realists. The film is the private story of a famous public man, King George VI (known in his family circle as Bertie), the woman who loved him and became his queen and the innovative Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue, who helped him control and come to terms with the stammer that had tortured him since childhood. Although the film involves a man overcoming a serious disability, it is neither triumphalist nor sentimental. Its themes, which are of universal appeal, are courage, where it comes from, how it is used, responsibility, and the necessity to place duty above personal pleasure or contentment - the subjects, in fact, of such enduringly popular movies as *Casablanca*.

D

It could have been a bunch of pip-pip, stiff-upper-lip Brit blather about a stuttering king who learns to stop worrying and love the microphone. Instead, *The King's Speech*, a crowning achievement powered by a dream cast, digs vibrant human drama out of the dry dust of human history making it a real crowd-puller. King George VI (Colin Firth), father of the present Queen Elizabeth, found his own *Dr. Strangelove* in Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), a wildly eccentric Australian speech therapist who made it possible for the stammering monarch to go on radio in 1939 and rally his subjects to support the declaration of war on Hitler's Germany. *The King's Speech* plays out on the battlefield of words, not action. Writer David Seidler breathes fresh, urgent life into every frame of this powerhouse, The film's director Tom Hooper, 37, is a prodigious talent. The emotion this film produces is staggering.

Which reviewer

1 does not make a comparison between *The King's Speech* and another film?

2 highlights the work of the film's writer like reviewer **D**?

3 like reviewer **D**, was forced to re-assess any preconceptions they had had about the film?

4 disagrees with the other three reviewers, in saying *The King's Speech* does not have popular appeal?

Источник задания: финал олимпиады «Учитель школы будущего» 2015/16

Reading 12 — Keys

- 1 A
- 2 B
- 3 B
- 4 A

EXPLANATION

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