Entertainment
Film Reviews
The Constant Gardener

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Callum: Hello, I'm Callum Robertson, and this is Entertainment. In the programme today we are taking a further look at the art of reviewing a film. In an earlier programme we said that one of the first things to do is to give the listener or reader a few details about the film, its cast or director for example and then a short summary of the plot.

Shortly we'll be looking at the new film The Constant Gardener but before that, another feature of giving a review is giving your personal opinion about a film. Do you like it or not? What do you think of it.

Mark Kermode is a film reviewer who works regularly for the BBC. He is well known for being very direct with his personal opinions about movies. If he doesn't like a movie, he say so. This, for example, is his opinion on the recent release, Elizabeth Town. He mentions that the film is 'a contender'. A contender is someone or something which has a chance of winning a competition. Which competition does he suggest this film could win?

**MARK KERMODE**

Honestly it is a possible contender for worst film of the year. I mean I cannot believe that anyone could see it without throwing up.

Callum: He thinks it's 'a contender' for worst film of the year. If there were a competition for worst film of the year, he thinks this film could win it. He then gives a very dramatic image, saying that he thinks the film is so bad that it will make people throw up. Throwing up is an expression that means being physically sick as if you had eaten some really bad food. Let's listen again.
MARK KERMODE
Honestly it is a possible contender for worst film of the year. I mean I cannot believe that anyone could see it without throwing up.

Callum: So not a very positive opinion for that film. Another recent film is 'In Her Shoes' which was based on a best-selling novel. When a film is 'based on' a novel, it means that the plot of the film comes from the book. After seeing the film, would Mark like to read the novel?

MARK KERMODE
It's apparently based on a best selling novel which I have to say I would have no intention of reading on the basis of having seen the film and it's a total stinker.

Callum: Well, no. He says that he would have no intention of reading it. If you have no intention of doing something, you really do want to do it! He goes on to say that the film is a 'total stinker'. This again is quite a colourful expression. If something 'stinks' it smells really bad and 'a stinker' is a noun used to describe something which is of poor quality – it is often used with the adjective total. A total stinker – a really bad movie. Listen again.

MARK KERMODE
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Callum: So as you can see, Mark Kermode can be very critical of movies which he doesn't like and he uses a lot of imagery in his reviews. He talks about throwing up and about movies being 'stinkers.' Here's what he had to say about the film Wallace and Gromit in The Curse of the Were Rabbit.
**MARK KERMODE**

It's great, it's perfection, it's fantastic, it's lovely, it's marvellous, it's British, it's just terrific.

Callum: This time a string of very positive adjectives, including it's perfection, perfection, something that is perfect! It's nice to know that there are movies which he does like! Here he is again.

**MARK KERMODE**

It's great, it's perfection, it's fantastic, it's lovely, it's marvellous, it's British, it's just terrific.

Callum: So what does he think of the film, The Constant Gardener, starring Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz? The story is about a diplomat who has a relationship with a woman who is very passionate about a political and social issue – about exploitation of poor countries by international drug companies. After she dies, the diplomat finds 'a web of personal and political intrigue' - a complicated set of secret plans.

So what does Mark think about the film, will he love it or hate it or something in between?

**Mark Kermode**

What it is is an interesting, intelligent and ambitious film that works about half the time and then stops working. In the end I think it’s a film to be admired rather than enjoyed I think that there are great performances in it but I think there are also duff performances in it and I think that it's a film that has more on the surface than it actually has underneath.

Callum: Well it seems as if he neither hates it or loves it. He thinks it is a successful film for some of the time but not for all. He can respect or admire the film but not
really enjoy it. There is some good acting but also some 'duff' performance. Something that is duff is not very good – so a duff performance means poor acting. Finally he says that the film seems to have more than it really does – it has more on the surface that underneath.

You can find more explanation of vocabulary from this programme along with a transcript and a quiz on the website, bbclearningenglish.com.

That's all from this edition of Entertainment.