

MOVIE

RECOMMENDATION

okja

Okja (2017), directed by Bong Joon-ho, is a South Korean–American film that follows a young girl, Mija, on a daring mission to rescue her genetically engineered “super pig” from a greedy multinational corporation. Blending adventure, satire, and emotion, the film explores themes of friendship, ethics, and the dark side of industrialized food production.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Okja (2017) tells the story of Mija, a young girl living in the mountains of South Korea with her grandfather and her beloved companion, Okja a massive, gentle “super pig” created through genetic engineering by the powerful Mirando Corporation. For ten peaceful years, Mija and Okja share a simple, natural life, far removed from the modern world’s greed and exploitation. However, when the corporation claims Okja as part of a global marketing campaign, Mija embarks on a desperate journey to bring her friend home.

Her pursuit takes her from the serene countryside to the chaotic streets of Seoul and finally to New York City, where she encounters both cruelty and compassion. Along the way, Mija crosses paths with animal rights activists, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), who expose the brutal reality behind the corporation’s “green” image. The truth is that Okja and hundreds of other super pigs were bred for mass slaughter, disguised under the banner of sustainable innovation.

Bong Joon-ho uses this adventure to expose the hypocrisy of corporate marketing and the moral cost of industrial food production. The film’s tone shifts fluidly between humor, emotion, and horror, making the viewer both empathize with Mija’s determination and question their own complicity in systems that prioritize profit over life.

At its core, Okja delivers a powerful message about empathy, ethics, and the consequences of human greed. It highlights how consumerism often hides animal suffering behind sanitized branding and how the pursuit of “efficiency” in the food industry erases compassion. The film does not preach vegetarianism directly but encourages awareness urging viewers to think critically about where their food comes from and what values they support through consumption.

In relation to real-world practices, Okja mirrors the operations of modern agribusiness and genetic engineering, where animals are commodified and their welfare is secondary to profit. The film also touches on issues of environmental sustainability, biotechnology ethics, and the exploitation of both animals and marginalized communities within global supply chains.

The learning it offers for a better future is deeply human: that progress without ethics leads to destruction, and that compassion whether toward animals, people, or the planet must be at the heart of development. Through Mija’s courage and unwavering love for Okja, Bong Joon-ho reminds us that change begins with empathy and that even one individual’s resistance can expose the truth behind powerful systems.

