Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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It's surprising to realize how much of the iconic Tim Burton's career has been spent shepherding established properties to his own unique universe. It's especially curious, as his greats EDWARD SCISSORHANDS, BEETLEJUICE and ED WOOD account for a filmmaker whose style we recognize but we haven't truly seen operate since those titles. How fortunate then, for kids today and audiences alike, that a Burton with a personal, reignited passion has seemingly returned to the tale of the young, ambitious and darkly tinged outsider, hitting many notes we've so longed to hear in the process.

A hodgepodge of references and monster kid nostalgia stitch together the story of FRANKENWEENIE, as a young Victor Frankenstein in the suburban graveyard of New Holland takes to science to reanimate late pup, filmmaking partner and best friend, Sparky. Victor navigates the ensemble of oddities in his town (wide-eyed, strange classmates, grumbling neighbors and even his own misunderstanding parents) with Sparky, making the dog's accidental demise a serious blow. Unfortunately, on Sparky's return, prying eyes turn Victor's triumph into a monstrous bit of chaos.

Gorgeously animated , FRANKENWEENIE's enthusiasm for the layers it works on (both as an intimate story to Burton and a reverential, fun one) *feels* handmade, making the choice of stop-motion wholly appropriate. It lends a naturally macabre quality—although, how much of that is our own expectance of the types of children's films that are often stop-motion—amplified by the black-and-white and fairly heavy themes Burton trusts the younger viewers with. Midst the goofy, broad humor, there's some dark, loathing of the safe, sanitary and judgmental in FRANKENWEENIE.

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