



**Forum: Movies, TV and Entertainment**

**Topic:** Howl's Moving Castle

**Subject:** Re: Howl's Moving Castle

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Story

18-year-old Sophie works in a hat shop and lacks confidence and direction. Her chance encounter with the handsome but mysterious wizard Howl results in Sophie being turned into a 90-year-old woman by the villainous Witch of the Waste. On self-imposed exile, Sophie finds shelter in Howl's moving castle; a mobile, chaotic ensemble of metal scraps but a feat of magical engineering nonetheless. For example, the front door of the castle is magically connected to several buildings in different parts of the country, where Howl maintains a different identity at each one. Inside the castle, Sophie encounters Markl, Howl's eight-year-old apprentice, an animated scarecrow whom Sophie names Turniphead, and Calcifer, a feisty, smart-talking fire demon who plays a key role in Howl's intrinsic being, is the source of the castle's power to move, forced to work for Howl because of a spell that binds him to the castle. Sophie's love and support comes to have a major impact on Howl, who, while a grown man, is still a boy in many ways.

When summoned by his nation to help fight a war with a neighboring kingdom, Howl is at first afraid to respond, believing the summons to be a trap set by the king's head sorceress, his old mentor Madame Suliman. Sophie agrees to go to the capital city and pose as Howl's mother, in order to convince Suliman to leave Howl alone, and to stop the war; Meanwhile, after giving her a magic ring for protection, Howl followed behind her in disguise. However, just when Suliman had cornered both of them, Howl used his magic to help Sophie escape on a flying machine (along with Suliman's errand-dog Heen, and an aged, powerless, and more kindhearted Witch of the Waste in tow), while he kept the palace guards distracted with an illusion.

Later, as the war gets worse and Suliman tries to track Howl down, the dashing wizard begins fearing for the safety of Sophie and the others. After setting things up for them in case of his absence, he takes Sophie to a cottage in a flowery field, where he used to stay as a child. Unknown to Sophie, the self-confidence she has gained since being cursed, along with her developing affection towards Howl, has caused the spell to begin reversing itself, returning herself little by little to her original age (although her hair has completely turned silvery-gray in color); However, even when Howl tried to comfort her after he admitted he'd be leaving, she herself still didn't think of herself as beautiful.

When the appearance of Suliman's monstrous henchmen forces Howl to retreat Sophie back to the castle, he uses his powers to partially transform himself into a bird monster in order to protect Sophie's old hatshop, one of the buildings magically connected to the castle. Sophie fears Howl won't be able to change back to himself after too long, and convinces Calcifer to detach the magic linking the castle and the hatshop, collapsing the castle in the process. Using Sophie's braid of hair as an extra fuel source, Calcifer manages to reanimate a part of the castle in order to reach Howl, but is grabbed by the Witch of the Waste (realizing Calcifer had swallowed Howl's heart), whose longing for a kind heart has burst through again. As the heart begins to set the witch on fire, Sophie throws a bucket of water on her and Calcifer, which causes Sophie and Heen to go over a cliff as the castle

starts to collapse again.

Having survived the fall, Sophie starts crying over the thought that by dousing Calcifer, she might have killed Howl. Suddenly, the ring that she received earlier lights up, and when Sophie asks if it can find Howl, it points to the remains of the front door, connected to a portal that only Howl knows the destination to. Taking a chance, Sophie (with Heen on her heels) enters the door to find herself in Howl's childhood; after witnessing Howl swallow a shooting star and Calcifer popping out of his chest, Sophie is pulled back to the door, yelling to the young boy that she can help him in the future. Sure enough, bird-monster Howl is standing outside the door, ready to take them both back to their friends.

Upon returning, Sophie convinces the witch to give back Calcifer, and attempts to give Howl back his heart by pushing Calcifer into his chest. Suddenly, a bright light appears, and Calcifer emerges in his true form, as a shooting star spiraling into the distance. As what's left of the castle gives way without Calcifer, Turniphead uses his balancing pole to stop the remnants of the floor from sliding off a cliff. Sophie thanks him by giving him a kiss, and he instantly transforms into a human being. Specifically, he's the neighboring kingdom's prince, whose disappearance ignited the war, transformed by a spell that could only be broken by 'a kiss from your true love'. However, when Howl revives, Sophie (having since had the curse on her broken) shows she's really in love with him, giving the Witch of the Waste a chance to flirt with the prince. The story ends with Heen appearing before Madame Suliman in a crystal ball to show her that there was no more reason to continue the war, and as the kingdom's aerial warships return home, Sophie, Howl and their friends fly away in the rebuilt castle, supposedly living happily ever after.