

# Terry Pratchett's 'The Amazing Maurice' to Be Turned Into Animated Film (EXCLUSIVE)

By **STEWART CLARKE**



Terry Pratchett's "The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents" is set to become the first of the much-loved author's books to be adapted as an animated movie. The Discworld novel, the 28th in the series and the first for children, has been optioned by Germany-based Ulysses Filmproduktion, which will make the film alongside Ireland's Cantilever Media. U.S. writer Terry Rossio, whose extensive credits include "Shrek," "Aladdin," and "Pirates of the Caribbean," has written the screenplay.

Carter Goodrich, who worked on "Ratatouille" and "Brave," is on board for character design. Toby Genkel ("Ooops! Noah Is Gone...") is attached to direct the €15 million (\$17 million) movie.

Pratchett's book, published by Doubleday in 2001, is a reworking of the classic tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. It follows Maurice, a streetwise cat, who has the perfect money-making scam. He finds a dumb-looking kid who plays a pipe and has his very own horde of rats, who are strangely literate. When Maurice and the rodents reach the stricken town of Bad Blintz, they discover that something very bad is waiting in the cellars.

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Cantilever Media CEO Andrew Baker, who produced Netflix's "Robozuna," told *Variety* that the project has been in development for several years after Ulysses optioned the book. The team is now looking to raise the last part of the financing and, with a script and character designs in hand, is ready to go into production at the end of the year. The plan is for the comedy-action-adventure movie to be ready for release in early 2022.

"Terry Rossio's screenplay twists and turns and produces an unexpected yet heartwarming ending, with Carter Goodrich's designs bringing these characters to

life in their own unique style, which I'm sure audiences will love," Baker said. The script and tone of the film will be "very Terry Pratchett, very true to his vision," but different from the characters seen on the book jacket he added.

Rob Wilkins is managing director of Narrativa, which manages Pratchett properties and will exec produce the family movie. He was also with Pratchett when the author came up with the original idea for the novel after spying a Maxfield Parrish painting of the Pied Piper in the bar of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. "Terry seemed lost in the painting and so I finished my beer and ordered another," he said. "By the time it arrived, Terry had sketched out the plot for 'The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents' and had played it directly into my brain like a mini-movie."

Wilkins said that Pratchett, who died in 2015, "would be delighted with the character designs of Carter Goodrich" and added: "Bringing this story to life was so important to Terry, and it upsets me that he won't get to see the finished film, but the teams at Ulysses Filmproduktion and Cantilever Media are honoring his vision and I am absolutely delighted."

"'The Amazing Maurice' will be the first animated feature film ever made from a Terry Pratchett novel," said Emely Christians, CEO of Ulysses ("Luis & the Aliens"). "It will get Ulysses' complete focus and attention to detail to fulfill our promise: to make a wonderful movie from this very funny, unique, strong and awesome story."

Ulysse Filmproduktion and Cantilever Media will produce with animation studios Studio Rakete out of Germany and Canada-based Squeeze Animation. Christians and Baker will produce, and Roddy McManus and Robert Chandler exec produce.