

FIRESIDE STUDY 5

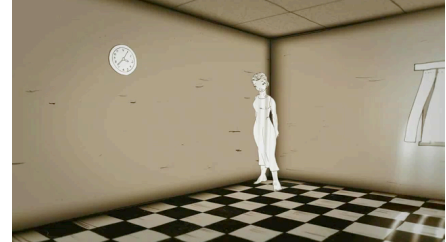
If you could picture hope, perhaps she'd look like this

Film: Hope

Introduction:

Meet Hope. A thin, translucent female figure in the life of a dying man. Hope tells the story about her relationship with this man, Jim. While reflective and a little sad, the story is engagingly told and layered with symbolism.

In short, *Hope* is a deftly animated short film about purpose.



Key issues:

Hope personified

What does it mean to hope? Animator Tim Clague helps us get a handle on the idea by presenting her as a woman. In the same way, many religions personify an important concept in order to come to a better understanding about it. Christians, for example have *wisdom* personified in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 3:17 says “Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.”

Here, Tim introduces us to Hope. Is she like *you* imagined?

He tried to do his best

The dying man Jim was no ratbag. In her monologue, Hope basically describes him as a decent bloke.

“... he never took the easy route. He tried to do his best; no matter the cost to himself.”

This is perhaps the saddest part of the whole story. As Hope walks away down the corridor, you're left wondering why he bothered to do his best. You're left only with questions to ask yourself:

What DO our efforts at goodness really amount to in the end? Who cares what we do anyway?

What motivates us to do good to others?

False hope, real hope

The deepest meaning of the film revolves around the reality of the central figure, Hope. Is she real or imagined?

This little gem of a film presents a challenge to us all – the religious and non-religious alike.

Tim Clague, filmmaker, declares himself an atheist, and quite clearly presents hope as something that only exists in our human minds. “*I can't exist without him,*” says Hope as she wanders off at the end.

What is YOUR hope? Does it exist in reality, or is it something created by you?

Suggested questions:

- It has been said that everyone needs just three things in life: something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for. Do you agree?
- How is hope different to faith? Is hope just the atheist's stand-in for faith?
- Jim was an optimistic person who did his best. What did he hope for? What gives you hope?
- Watch *Hope* in conjunction with the November Campfire film [Starting Over](#) – they make a stylistically opposite pair on identical themes. Where *Starting Over* is almost silent, *Hope* has a continuous monologue. *Starting Over* is about a boy at the start of his life, while *Hope* studies a man at the end of his life. We see realism versus symbolism; colour versus monotone – together they provide a rounded picture of the sadness of human hopelessness. Which do you find more hopeful? Why?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what amount of hope do you sense from this short film? Why?