

“A Self Made Hero”

Rodrigo Arellano

A Self Made Hero is about the adventures of a talented liar who uses this ability to reach stardom, seduce women, gain prestige and get respect. The protagonist (played by Mathie Kassovitz, who also directed the prize winning *La Haine*) proves to us that with a modicum of intelligence, and a lot of work, there's no reason why anyone cannot become what they have always dreamed of - as long as they don't mind lying for a living.

This movie can best be appreciated if you know a bit about the history of France during World War II. In 1940 France suffered one of the worst defeats in its history and until 1944 it collaborated with the Nazi regime. Since this wouldn't look good in the school books, overnight the French were no longer the defeated, they were the conquerors; they were no longer the collaborators, they were resistance fighters. The architect of this brilliant illusion was de Gaulle, and it took the French over four decades to get over the lie, and for films like *A Self Made Hero* to be made.

The film is highly ironic and probably more fun to the French than to us. But it did win last year's *Best Screenplay* at Cannes and it did give me some good pointers about lying and a few moments to treasure for that autumn afternoon.

***1/2

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Mathie Kassovitz posing as a Resistance hero



The hero in a moment of contemplation