Twitter Thread by Charlotte Clymer ■■■■

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It was December of 1992 and I was six, and "Aladdin" was in theaters. My sister and I weren't seeing it. My mother couldn't afford the tickets. I remember this because the three of us were sitting in the car and she cried + apologized for not being able to take us. (thread)

> Tell me about a great movie-going experience you'll never forget.
>
> Not as a memorial, but as a chance--right now--for us all to tap into that communal joy of the cinematic experience. pic.twitter.com/GqJfqUZ5as
>
> — Kristy Puchko (@KristyPuchko) December 3, 2020

The strange thing is that I don't think I had even heard of "Aladdin" until she said anything. Maybe? I'm not sure. But I don't remember feeling like we were expecting to see it. I don't remember being disappointed. But to her, I think it felt like one more way she had failed us.

This was in the final year of her marriage to her second husband--our first "stepfather"--and there were reasons the three of us were in this car and not back at our place with him and his two kids. He was very abusive, and these car rides felt like a break.

So, we were sitting there in the car while she was contemplating how to get us out of this situation, but by now, it had become almost a weekly ritual, which was not lost on us, obviously. So, we're sitting there, and she starts crying and says the thing about "Aladdin".

And then, while crying, she says: "You've never been to the movies," which was true. My sister and I had not been to a movie theater up to that point in our short lives. I remember saying "that's okay", and my sister said the same and put her little hand on my mother's arm.

He left early one morning a year later with his kids. Packed up and went away. It was random. I had woken up and walked into the living room as he was carrying things out to the car. I looked out the door, and the car was full. A bunch of bags + boxes + his kids were in there.

When he walked back up and saw me standing there, he hissed to not say anything and go back to bed, which I did and listened to the front door close a bit later. I quietly ran to the front window and watched them drive away. And I knew what it meant, and I was relieved.

Fast forward to December of 1994, and the three of us were living alone in a trailer in Harker Heights, Texas. It was definitely an improvement. Things were looking up. And a sure sign of that was when she told us we were going to see "The Lion King". Early Christmas present.

Again, going to the movies felt like a luxury. I have no idea what tickets cost in that particular area back then, but I just knew it wasn't something we did. But for the first time ever, my sister and I were going, and I could tell this was a significant moment for my mother.

I'll never forget walking into the lobby of the theater and being enveloped by the smell of popcorn. It was exciting and comforting in a way that I can't describe. And we didn't even get concessions! It was still a great memory. I love that smell.

We took our seats in what--at the time--felt like an *enormous* room and there's the big screen which I had never seen before in person and it seemed SO BIG. People were streaming in and taking their seats. The room went dark. The previews began.