

Many of the

Music by Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits

So many of the people in this are polymaths: Wallace Shawn, Christopher Guest, Mandy Patinkin, Peter Cook

Some are new: Robin Wright

Some were well known. Carol Kane and Billy Crystal

One was iconic: Peter Falk –Columbo, Wim Wenders' Wings of Desire in 1987

But over time—now—almost none of that matters. Most of you know none of those early roles. If you know Robin Wright it's from House of Cards.

It's not a mockumentary, a mockfolktale. The characters, for the most part, play it straight. They're deadpan. The torture looks like it hurts.

It brings back memories of the Erroll Flynn swashbucklers, but Mandy Patinkin is so good a swordsman in his own right you very soon forget the antecedent.

And the frame story: it's not just a fairy tale. It's an old man reading a book to a kid who asks the kinds of questions a kid asks, who hates the kissing parts—at first. Many of the questions we have about it, the grandson puts to the grandfather, who almost always replies, listen to the story.