



FILM: **A SIMPLE FAVOR**

FDG RATING: 3.6 ☺☺☺☺○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Paul Feig: *director*
Anna Kendrick: *actress, Stephanie Smothers*
Blake Lively: *actress, Emily Nelson*
Henry Golding: *actor, Sean Nelson*

DATE: October 21, 2018

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **A SIMPLE FAVOR**

We expected a thriller like *Gone Girl* but *A Simple Favor* was more quirky with moments of cute humor. One discussion participant described it as a Hitchcockian humorous mystery. Many of us, unfamiliar with Blake Lively's acting chops, were admirably surprised at her pitch perfect performance as the casually gorgeous, intimidatingly confident, Emily Nelson, who can turn on a dime from being warm and encouraging to uncomfortably scary. A high-powered business woman, she is the polar opposite of Stephanie Smothers (Anna Kendrick), a cute, single mom who runs a popular "vlog," where she shares recipes, parenting tips, and DIY how-tos. However, at her son's elementary school, where she is an over achieving volunteer inadvertently making the other mom's feel like slackers, she remains basically friendless. So, when Emily shows up at the school to pick up her own son and initiates a friendly conversation with Stephanie, an unlikely relationship begins, eventually leading to Emily's request that Stephanie pick up her son one day from school as favor since she will at a business meeting and her husband will be in London. The plot thickens as Emily never comes to get her son and after 2 days of not responding to Stephanie's calls, Emily is officially declared missing. Stephanie's husband, Sean, who had been away in London, notifies the police.

Things get a little odd as Stephanie offers to help Sean out with the kids at their lavish house and starts trying on Emily's designer clothes. But she also decides to do her own sleuthing as things just aren't adding up. It's interesting to see Stephanie's persona evolve as she becomes more involved in Emily's mysterious life.

Lots of twists (which one discussion participant found a bit confusing) keep the story interesting and the intermittent comic scenes remind us not to take the film seriously. One resident reviewer described the film as a send-up to thrillers, taking the thriller framework and then playing with it. The two female characters really carry the film. We were disappointed in Henry Golding as Sean since his performance in *Crazy Rich Asians* as Nick Young, Rachel Chu's boyfriend, seemed perfectly cast. In *A Simple Favor*, his Sean is flat; causing one resident reviewer to note that he needs acting lessons.

Not ambitious, not pretentious, but with well-timed funny lines and the right balance of suspense, we favored it with a simple 3.6 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

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