



FILM: **ABE**

FDG RATING: 2.9 😐 😐 😊 🕐 🕐

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

Fernando Grostein Andrade: *director*
Noah Schnapp: *actor, Abe*
Seu Jorge: *actor, Chico*

DATE: October 23, 2022

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **ABE**

Abe is a 12-year-old boy from Brooklyn who has a passion for cooking and tries to unite his loving but constantly bickering extended family (half Israeli/Jewish and half Palestinian/Muslim) by preparing a special dinner fusing flavors of both cultures. Called “Avram” by his Jewish grandfather, and “Ibrahim” by his paternal grandparents, the boy prefers just “Abe” as he navigates his young life amongst the various traditions of each side. He has been brought up without a specific religious designation since his father is an atheist and his mother is agnostic. We do however, see them participate separately in their parents’ traditional meals. Of course, Abe is enthusiastically at all the traditional meals.

We applauded young Noah Schnapp’s performance as an endearing, precocious Abe, and enjoyed watching his culinary skills evolve under the mentorship of an adventurous Afro Brazilian chef, Chico, who offers up tasty fusion foods at street market fairs. Abe’s parents think he is at the youth cooking class they enrolled him in for the summer, which he ditched after the first minutes of the teacher’s simplistic instructions about using food coloring. Instead, Abe is taking the subway each day to reach Chico’s restaurant and has managed to ingratiate himself into Chico’s tutelage. Of course, he spent his first week doing dishes and taking out garbage but earns the respect of Chico and his team who then teach him important culinary techniques.

Some discussion participants thought the story was a good youth movie but not fully developed for an adult film especially as it introduces but skims over several heavy religious issues. Others agreed that the premise was good but the script was weak and the acting was uneven. The characters of Abe’s mother and father were especially weak. We did like Abe’s Jewish grandfather who happens to be an esteemed actor. We noted the cinematography and the authenticity of the scenes in Chico’s kitchen. As always, close-ups of food and spices are visually mouth-watering.

It was endearing to watch Abe navigate his family’s conflicting cultures as he fasts for Ramadan and watches his loving Muslim grandmother cook traditional foods while also wanting a bar mitzvah which greatly please his maternal grandfather who also encourages Abe to sip wine at the Sabbath dinner. Abe says he wants to practice both religions to which his Muslim grandmother replies, “You can practice both but you have to choose one.”

We applauded the idea of bringing together people with deeply rooted conflicting beliefs but as Abe discovered, it takes more than a fusion of food for people to set aside their differences. He cooks a complete Turkey dinner creatively fusing foods from both cultures with many unexpected combinations of flavors, but it ends as a disaster. It takes more than a fusion of food to unite his extended family.

Many of us thought it was cute, entertaining, meaningful, and enjoyable, despite its weaknesses, but definitely could have been a more impactful, bigger story. The film served up a luke warm score of 2.9 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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