



FILM: **GRANDMA**

FDG RATING: 2.86



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

Paul Weitz: *Director, writer*

Lily Tomlin: *Actress: Elle (grandma)*

Julia Garner: *Actress: Sage*

DATE: Sept. 20, 2015

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **GRANDMA**

I doubt if any of us have a Grandma as “hip” as Elle played by Lily Tomlin. Feisty, 70 year old Elle, a lesbian poet, is having trouble coping with the recent death of her long-term life partner, Violet. Realizing that her new relationship with a much younger woman, Olivia, isn’t fair, she brutally breaks off the relationship and returns to her bereavement for Vi. Unexpectedly, in the morning, her 18 year old granddaughter, Sage, arrives asking her Grandma to lend her \$600. After some prying, Sage confesses that she needs the money for an abortion scheduled later that day. Elle has already cut up her credit cards after paying off all her debts so without enough cash, she embarks on a frenetic roadtrip with Sage, visiting the people she is currently close to (such as her tattoo artist) to borrow the money. The twosome visit others and then as a last resort, Elle visits a relationship from her past, Karl, (a mesmerizing performance by Sam Elliott) to try and get the cash Sage needs. We get a quick trip down memory lane as Elle and Karl reminisce, but ultimately a pivotal life decision is exposed which puts the brakes on any hope of getting the cash from Karl. The roadtrip allows Elle to vent her anger, resentment, and sorrow as we learn about the trials and tribulations of her free spirited life style. Finally, we meet Sage’s mother, Judy, a self-absorbed, workaholic, corporate executive, and understand why Sage didn’t go to her mother with her problem. Three generations of independent woman, each making critical unconventional decisions about their own bodies, their own lives. The ending has each of the characters coming to terms with their lives, their past, their decisions, and their relationships. We see Sage reconnecting with her mother which brings a satisfying end to the film.

We enjoyed seeing Lily Tomlin in a leading role and the participants in the film discussion group took our own walk down memory lane remembering all of her funny, quirky characters, including the iconic Ernestine. As for Grandma, some of us simply didn’t like the story, others felt there wasn’t enough depth. Other resident critics noted that the cast of characters that Elle and Sage encounter seemed like flat, cartoon sketches presented to make a specific stilted point. The script wasn’t smooth. And the timing felt implausible to cover so much territory, and visit so many people in a few hours. On the flip side, fans of the film felt Lily Tomlin’s performance could be Oscar worthy, the relationships and dialogue was compelling, the comedic aspect was smart -- the film was funny, poignant, and entertaining. Scores detoured widely from 1 to 4 resulting in a disappointing 2.86 on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best).



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See you at the movies!

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