



FILM: **THE HOLDOVERS**

FDG RATING: 3.9 😊😊😊😊😊

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

Alexander Payne: *director*
Paul Giamatti: *actor, Professor Paul Hunham*
Dominic Sessa: *actor, Agnus*
Da'Vine Joy Randolph: *actress, Mary*

DATE: January 21, 2024

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **THE HOLDOVERS**

Paul Giamatti is a favorite actor and his performance is outstanding in *The Holdovers* as, Paul Hunham, an irascible, curmudgeon ancient history professor at a remote prestigious New England prep school. A few students could not go home during the Christmas break and since someone needs to be “in charge” of them, Hunham was assigned the task. The father of one student offers to take the boys on a ski trip but 15 year old brainy, troublemaker Angus has to stay on campus since his parents couldn’t be contacted for permission.

The story follows the unlikely bond that develops between two lonely souls, Hunham and Angus. We also see the supportive relationship Hunham has with the school's head cook, Mary, also stuck on campus, a woman who is grieving for her son who was killed in the Vietnam War. All three actors were exceptional and we really cared about their characters especially Mary who, one discussion participant, described as down to earth and very sympathetic.

Several discussion participants could especially relate to being in a snobby boarding school and many said they were reminded of the awkwardness of those teenage years. There was an enjoyable nostalgic 70s feeling to the film. As the story progressed we understand more of the back stories of the three main characters. Angus’s mother has remarried and the couple is always busy traveling, ignoring Agnus, while his biological father is institutionalized. Agnus has always wanted to go to Boston so Hunham finally gives in, which goes completely against his rigid demeanor that focuses strictly on academic exercises and routines despite being Christmas break. Everything turns around during this trip. The ending is especially poignant.

Several discussion participants described the film as an enjoyable holiday movie but a couple others were disappointed and had hoped for more. A nice departure from more dramatic, layered, cerebral movies, we could just sit back and enjoy the sprinkles of humor, cinematography, excellent performances, and heart warming story. *The Holdovers* held onto a strong 3.9 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!
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