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'The Revenant'

By Derek Zemrak



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"The Revenant" is a highly intense, gripping, graphic film, which follows Hugh Glass (Leonardo DiCaprio), a frontiersman on a fur trading expedition in the 1820s who is on a quest after being brutally mauled by a bear. The opening scene sets the tone of the movie, as a group of Native Americans attack the fur hunters in a violent, graphic killing spree. Think "Saving Private Ryan." The intensity continues throughout the entire movie.

DiCaprio delivers a stellar performance as Glass. His dialogue is limited after he is attacked by the bear and must rely on his facial and body expressions to pull off this very different role. DiCaprio makes it all work and the audience will feel his pain and anguish. Tom Hardy ("Inception," "The Dark Knight Rises") gives an equally amazing performance as the nemesis, John Fitzgerald. I am surprised Hardy was overlooked for a Golden Globe nomination. His character will be remembered in cinematic history for years to come as one of the most hated characters, alongside Nurse Ratched and Hannibal Lecter. Director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, who won the Best Director Oscar last year for "Birdman," truly knows how to pull an audience in and not let go. Inarritu will receive another Oscar nomination for "The Revenant" when they are announced.

The real standout for me in this film is the amazing cinematography by Emmanuel Lubezki. It is truly breathtaking in many ways because it is very difficult to take such a dark subject matter and turn every shot into a masterpiece. I feel the remarkable photography helps one through the extremely explicit scenes. Emmanuel could very well win his third Oscar in a row for cinematography. He won in 2014 for "Gravity" and in 2015 for "Birdman."

"The Revenant" is not a movie for everyone due to the violent, realistic nature of the story, but it is one of the best films in 2015. It is rated R for brutal, realistic combat, violence with graphic gory images, sexual assault, strong language and brief nudity. The TRT (Total Running Time) is two hours and 36 minutes. I do have to say that due to the high intense pacing that Inarritu delivers, the movie did not seem that long. Just remember to breathe deeply.

Best wishes to all in 2016. May it be a sweet 16! My top seven favorite movies of 2015 are:

1) "Trumbo"

- 2) "Spotlight"
- 3) "The Big Short"
- 4) "Brooklyn"
- 5) "The Revenant"
- 6) "Carol"
- 7) "Inside Out"

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