

The Language of Film

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Film: Home

Director: Franka Potente

Stars: Jake McLaughlin, Kathy Bates, Aisling Franciosi

Genre: Drama

Run time: 1hr 40min

Rating: 3/5

Home



A man returns home after spending almost 20 years in jail to face up to his past in a small Californian town where not everyone is happy to see his return. Within the first 5 minutes he's skateboarded across half of California, waited the longest time possible for a supermarket coffee and **wrestled** his mother's home help to the floor. It seems a peculiar **backwater** part of the world and Marvin is no different. A tall athletic looking guy who looks physically intimidating in his sports tracksuit with tattoos on his arms, hands and neck, and his hair slicked back and shaved at the sides. Having spent so long away things must be pretty strange for him as he discovers what he's missed in the world and reminisces with his old druggie loser friend Wade, hanging out at a few of their **old haunts** like the skate park.

He catches up with his mother and when he finds out she is terminally ill their time becomes especially poignant as they play cards at home, drinking and smoking together, despite her being on an oxygen tank. Not everyone is pleased to see him though. The brother and sister who lost their grandmother are holding major **grudges** and are not going to make life easy for him insisting, "We can't do nothing...I want to let him know he's not welcome here." But surprisingly the sister, Delta, is charmed by Marvin and they begin to build a relationship despite their differences.

Written and directed by Franka Potente in her first feature film she achieves the small town feel of an **arid** Californian neighbourhood using some good local locations like the diners, the **backyards** and alleyways. Well cast, Jake McLaughlin plays the man-child anti-hero who's straight out of prison still wearing the same shiny

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tracksuit and bearing the burden of his guilt. Kathy Bates plays the mother with plenty of **vim** in spite of her condition and is seen sat on the porch with shotgun in hand and also collapsing on the porch with equal grace, delivering some beautifully **droll** lines along the way in her languid Tennessee accent, "Prison ain't supposed to be fun anyway."

The story comes across incredibly **twee** considering its dark nature but this is probably as much to do with its likeable cast. Don't expect any surprises as the only real surprise is that we don't fully understand the reasons behind Marvin going into prison and without knowing any of his **backstory** we are left unsure whether he deserves any kind of redemption at all.

Similar films:

Out of Sight (1998): Dir: Steven Soderbergh; Stars: George Clooney, Jennifer Lopez

Exercises:

A. Questions True or False:

1. The man has been in jail for over 20 years? T/F?
2. Nothing has changed since he's been away? T/F?
3. His mother is seriously ill? T/F?
4. Marvin is attracted to Delta? T/F?
5. Marvin doesn't feel any guilt? T/F?
6. We don't know anything about Marvin's life story? T/F?

B. Vocabulary / Phrases Match

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. wrestled | a. background |
| 2. backwater | b. sentimental |
| 3. old haunts | c. hatred |
| 4. grudges | d. fringe |
| 5. arid | e. fought |
| 6. backyards | f. gardens |
| 7. vim | g. dry |
| 8. droll | h. energy |
| 9. twee | i. familiar places |
| 10. backstory | j. humorous |

C. Discussion Questions:

1. What's the longest time you would wait for a coffee?
2. Do you ever go back to the old haunts you used to hang out as a kid?
3. Have you ever held a grudge against someone?
4. Have you ever looked after someone who was ill?
5. Do you think people who commit crimes should be forgiven?

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Listening Gap Fill

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He catches up with his mother and when he finds out she is terminally ill their time becomes especially poignant as they 2. _____ at home, drinking and smoking together, despite her being on an oxygen tank. Not everyone is pleased to see him though. The brother and sister who lost their grandmother are holding major grudges and are not going to make life easy for him insisting, "We can't do nothing...I want to let him know he's not welcome here." But surprisingly the sister, Delta, is charmed by Marvin and they begin to build a relationship despite their differences.

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