

Million Dollar Baby

Rated PG-13

If you are a movie goer, I am sure you have heard of "*Million Dollar Baby*." It won four Oscar awards and has rave reviews. It also received some controversy about an aspect of the film which addresses euthanasia. Before getting ahead of myself, the story of the film is about a gruff, grumpy old man, Clint Eastwood playing Frankie, who is approached by a very determined and motivated woman, Hilary Swank playing Maggie, who wants to be a professional boxer. In addition, Morgan Freeman plays Scrap, and is Frankie's former protégé who mentors Maggie on how to deal with Frankie and how to make it as a fighter. The movie does a great job of telling the story of a poor "white trash" woman who wants to have more in life than to "buy a used trailer, a deep fryer, and eat Oreos." Frankie initially comes across as male sexist you-know-what, but this does not stop Maggie from coming to the gym and pursuing her goal. She gets some wise counsel from Scrap and Frankie not only turns around but comes to truly love Maggie.

The movie is certainly a boxing movie that brings back memories of the great boxing scenes (at the time) you remember from Rocky. You quickly get caught up in the story and find yourself caring deeply for both Frankie and Maggie and began to root for them to attain their dreams. If you did not see the movie, I will not spoil the ending. However, as noted before, there is a critical point in the film which deals with euthanasia. Frankie, who is a devout catholic, consults his priest, Father Horvak (played by Brian F. O'Byrne) about engaging in an act that is biblically immoral. The priest warns him, "If you do this thing, you'll be lost, somewhere so deep you will never find yourself." As priests go in films of late, this was not terrible but I found myself hoping for the priest to show more compassion for the wretched decision Frankie was faced with. The movie certainly provides a great forum to discuss this issue.

Overall, this film had obviously great acting and presented a story where the characters were all flawed in some way, which to me, made them more human and interesting. They were all struggling from some ghosts from their pasts, and were looking for answers and solutions to attain their dreams. In a way, it was a bit like Rocky but more emotionally in depth as even the minor characters were interesting and helped build the story. I would definitely recommend "*Million Dollar Baby*."

By Curt Levang