

## **Secondhand Lions**

Rated PG

*“Secondhand Lions”* sets the bar for what constitutes a good movie. This comedy begins with young Walter (played by Haley Joel Osmond) dropped off at the front door of his great uncles’ home while his mother heads for parts unknown. The cantankerous great uncles, Garth and Hub are played to perfection by veteran actors Michael Caine and Robert Duvall. Walter is in dire need of loving parents, but after taking one look at his great uncles he fears that his life is only going to get worse. He has a belly full of his mother’s tendency to fall in love with untrustworthy and mean spirited men, and initially he sees his great uncles as no better. In fact, at first sighting they say to him, “We don’t know much about kids, so if you need something find it yourself or, better yet, go without.”

Unbeknownst to Walter, Garth and Hub have lived a fantastically adventuresome life and now are bored out of their britches, save an occasional shotgun blast at some pesky salesman trying to make a fast buck. In time, the three men begrudgingly and resignedly accept that they are going to have to live together, at least in the short term. Garth and Hub’s boredom with life is matched by Walter’s need for someone in his life to look up to, someone to take an interest in him, someone to care for him and love him.

Early in the movie, Walter discovers a photograph of a beautiful woman in a seaman’s chest in his bedroom. The mystery of this woman intrigues Walter and leads him to want to know more about his uncles. Along the way, Walter realizes that even though he loves his mother, she is unhealthy and that he has no idea what it means to be family. To the great surprise of Garth and Hub, Walter burrows into their hearts and they show him that life is worth living and that people can make promises to one another and keep those promises.

*“Secondhand Lions”* is excellently acted and entertaining from beginning to end. While filled with comedic moments, the movie has its share of heart warming messages, mystery, and drama. Although the story includes a lion in the cast, the movie title symbolizes how two unlikely old codgers harness the power and majestic qualities of a lion to instill pride into a shy, insecure boy. The movie is an excellent choice for kids from seven to one hundred seven as it demonstrates the importance of elders in the life of young children and the gift that children can be to elders. Its Christian themes of love and friendship, of loyalty and commitment, are powerful testimony to God’s message to love our neighbor. *“Secondhand Lions”* is the kind of movie you see just for the entertainment and walk away from with a sense that there is goodness in the world.

by *Natalie and Curt Levang*