

MICHAEL CAINE

"THE MARVELOUS MICHAEL CAINE GIVES ONE OF THE BEST PERFORMANCES OF HIS CAREER!"

STEPHEN FARBER, HOLLYWOOD LIFE

"TRIUMPHANT! A TRUE GEM OF A FILM!"

PETE HAMMOND, HOLLYWOOD.COM



IS ANYBODY THERE?

STORY ISLAND ENTERTAINMENT AND BIG BEACH PRESENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH BBC FILMS & HEYDAY FILMS / BIG BEACH PRODUCTION MICHAEL CAINE DAVID MORRISSEY "IS ANYBODY THERE?"
SUPERVISOR LIZ GALLACHER MUSIC BY JORDY TALBOT COSTUME DESIGNER JANE PETRE CASTING FRONA WYER EDITOR TREVOR WAITE PRODUCTION DESIGNER KAVE QUINN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROB HARDY PRODUCED BY ROSIE ALISON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHRISTINE LANGAN DAVID M. THOMPSON WRITTEN BY PETER HARNNESS PRODUCED BY DAVID HEYMAN MARC TURTLETAUB PETER SARAI DIRECTED BY JOHN CROWLEY
Big Beach HEYDAY FILMS
IsAnybodyThereMovie.com
PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13
LANGUAGE INCLUDING SEXUAL REFERENCES AND SOME DRUG RELATED MATERIAL
DOLBY DIGITAL
BBC FILMS
STORY ISLAND
Entertainment Pictures

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Developed by Heartland Truly Moving Pictures to accompany *Is Anybody There?*, recipient of the Truly Moving Picture Award, an honored distinction given to films that unlock the vast potential of the human spirit and enable us to view stories that display courage, integrity and hope, taking entertainment to a higher level.

www.TrulyMovingPictures.org



IS ANYBODY THERE?

One Film Can

Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, a non-profit organization, recognizes and honors films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. We believe that one film can move us to laughter, to tears, or to make a difference. *Is Anybody There?* is a movie that demonstrates that **One Film Can**.

Synopsis

Sir Michael Caine gives one of the finest performances of his career as a retired magician who reluctantly enters a family-run old age home in John Crowley's *Is Anybody There?* Set in a seaside English town circa 1987, *Is Anybody There?* charts the unlikely friendship that develops between Caine's proud, acerbic old performer and the death-obsessed young son of the home's overwhelmed owners (played by Son of Rambow's Bill Milner).

Written by Peter Harness, who draws from his own experience growing up in a retirement home, *Is Anybody There?* brings a rich humor as well as a rigorous honesty to its portrait of different lives colliding under one roof. With a supporting cast that includes Anne-Marie Duff (*The Magdalene Sisters*), David Morrissey (*"The Deal"*), Rosemary Harris (the *Spiderman* trilogy) and Leslie Phillips (*Venus*), *Is Anybody There?* tells a charming story about growing up, growing old, and the unpredictable adventures that happen along the way.



IS ANYBODY THERE ?

Friendship

Edward is an introverted child who is obsessed with death. His obsession prevents him from making new friendships with his peers and from engaging in the world around him. When he meets Clarence, life seems to turn around for both of them.

Use the prompts below to discuss the depth of friendship in the film and the way you explore friendship in your own life.

Discussion Questions

- Clarence was someone who was able to pull Edward out of his isolation by being his friend. Is there anyone who has done a similar good for you?
- There is a tremendous generational gap between Clarence and Edward, but wisdom flows from each of them. How does each one benefit the other in this relationship?
- Think about all of your relationships. How do you see each one as being symbiotic, like Clarence and Edwards?
- Clarence doesn't answer the questions that Edward seeks, but he helps provide something else Edward needs. What do you think Clarence ultimately provides Edward?
- While Clarence is stuck in the past, Edward is fascinated by death, something far in his future. How do the two form a friendship while on such opposite ends of the spectrum?
- "Make contact with the living, son!" This is Clarence's advice to Edward. You may not be obsessed with death, like Edward, but could this advice be beneficial for you? Are there ways that you can better connect with people around you? What are they?

IS ANYBODY THERE?

Family Dynamics

Discussion Questions

- Edward's mother and father in the movie had a relationship that demonstrated some of the problems that arise in times of stress or difficulty. How did you feel about the way the movie handled their relationship?
- Edward's struggles growing up are magnified by the fact that he is feeling displaced in his home, in addition to having trouble fitting in with his peers. Outside of these struggles, what is Edward dealing with that a number of other children his age are dealing with? How could his mother or father have helped him through some of these difficult issues?
- Edward's father pursues Tanya, the help at Lark House. How is his attraction and pursuit of her a result of the changes in their family's home over the last year?
- With so many aged individuals in their home, how do Edward, his mother and his father all react or act out differently to the changes in their home?
- Did the setting of the movie impact your appreciation of the movie? Why do you believe it was set in 1987 instead of a more contemporary time? Were any of the family roles played in the movie different than had the movie been set in a different time? Do you believe it would have changed your appreciation of the movie if that had been the case?



Is Anybody There? © 2009 Big Beach. All Rights Reserved.

IS ANYBODY THERE?

Death and Aging

As the movie begins, we see individuals of various capacities in the old age home. Not only have Edward and his family had to alter their lives to accommodate these individuals, but the residents have had to drastically change their lives by giving up independence, possessions and, in some cases, pets or other comforts of their former lifestyle. The situation is not an easy one for anyone to adapt to, and Clarence and Edward embody those difficulties both sides are experiencing.

Use the following prompts to discuss death and aging in *Is Anybody There?* and as it relates to your own life.

Discussion Questions

- Death and aging have been captured in a number of different ways in *Is Anybody There?* How did Edward's views on aging and death differ from Clarence's and how did each individual's view impact the other?
- Like Edward, did you ever experience fascination with death or dying while growing up? How did you come to terms with these inevitable parts of life? How do you continue to come to terms with thoughts about death and dying?
- *Is Anybody There?* deals with the reality of old age and the regret that Clarence encounters when dealing with it. As you age, what are the mental and emotional regrets you encounter? Do your regrets lessen or grow as you age?
- How do you deal with your child's fear of death and dying if he or she has a fascination with it?
- In the beginning of the film, we see Clarence reluctantly check himself into Lark Hall at the request of Social Services. As Clarence had to give more and more of his possessions up to move into this new space, he became more aggravated. Life changes like this are very difficult for those who move into assisted living or retirement homes. Think about those things that these individuals must give up as they transition into this new phase of life when moving from an entire home into a residence facility. Can you identify with this life change? In what way?
- This film explored friendship when people most needed it. Think about some ways you can reach out in your own community to befriend those in need of someone in their life, whether it be a mentor to a young person or a becoming a friend to a peer.

IS ANYBODY THERE?

Truly Moving Moments

Is Anybody There? has been honored as a Heartland Truly Moving Picture Award-winning film. This award was created to honor films released theatrically that align with Heartland's mission to recognize and honor films and filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life.

These award-winning movies are made up of moving and inspiring moments – those moments that cause you to think, see something in your life differently, and be inspired to take action. It's what makes the movie and its message remain with you well after leaving the theatre.

Think about *Is Anybody There?* What were the moments that stood out to you? How did they make you feel? How will they cause you to think about things differently in the future? Share those moments with others at www.TrulyMovingPictures.org. Simply create a membership or login if you already have one and then search the movie list for *Is Anybody There?* You can leave your review of the movie or thoughts about this Truly Moving Picture in the "Thoughts and Reviews" section.



Is Anybody There? © 2009 Big Beach. All Rights Reserved.