



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 30, 2011

Arthur Christmas: A Delightful Holiday Film

So how does Santa's youngest son, Arthur Christmas, fit into this scenario? Therein lies the ingenious, touching, and captivating plot of this wonderful Christmas film.

It's Christmas Eve and Santa Claus (Jim Broadbent) has just traveled around the entire world in his high-tech spaceship, which has replaced the antique sleigh formerly pulled by eight reindeer. At the helm of this impressive new vehicle, however, is not our beloved Santa Claus, but Santa's son Steve (Hugh Laurie). It becomes clear early in the movie that Steve has pushed his father to the back burner and replaced him in virtually every aspect of the entire Christmas operation. Santa's role has been diminished to a few quick cameos in the homes of several children just to show he was there.



Meanwhile, Santa's younger son Arthur (James McAvoy) plays an extremely vital role in Santa's workshop. He reads every single letter sent to the North Pole from the anxious children across the world, and sees to it that each child receives the very present requested from good old Saint Nick. This role seems to serve Arthur just fine, as his whimsical spirit and loving, optimistic nature allows him to see the beauty and Christmas spirit of every letter sent to Santa. At the same time, it is a safe job for someone such as Arthur, who is both clumsy and fearful of virtually everything.

As the position of Santa Claus is inherited, Santa Claus must prepare to relinquish his post after serving for 70 years and permit his eldest son to take over. However, this Santa Claus is unwilling to give up the position just yet, fearful that he will have nothing to live for if he is not the world's beloved Santa Claus. Meanwhile, Steve is anxiously awaiting the day when he can step into his father's boots, but for all the wrong reasons. Steve seeks the glory of the Santa Claus position, not the joy of bringing happiness to children across the world.

And unlike past Santas, Steve is devoid of the inherently loving and spirited nature that makes Santa Claus, well, Santa Claus. This becomes undeniable when, as Santa, Steve, and the elves return to the North Pole after a long night of delivering presents, they learn that a single little girl in England was overlooked and did not receive a present from Santa Claus. Steve, unmoved, is more concerned about the precision of his prized Santa spaceship, viewing one child out of millions as an acceptable margin of error.

On the other hand, good-natured and compassionate Arthur cannot bear the thought of the little forgotten girl waking up on Christmas morning and believing that she was the only child in the world to be unloved by Santa. And so he takes up the task of delivering her toy, by any means necessary. He hauls the ancient, rusty sleigh out of the storage closet, and with his senile great-grandfather — a



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retired Santa Claus — they set off on an adventure that proves slightly more difficult than anticipated.

Arthur Christmas is a wonderful story with a variety of valuable morals. First, it inspires viewers to cherish even what has been labeled “ancient” or “antique.” Outdated does not necessarily mean useless, and that lesson pertains to both items and people.

Likewise, moviegoers are taught the importance of family, and the value of finding love and support in one another. For the newest Santa Claus, this lesson is particularly important, as in the beginning of the film he finds value in just his profession and nothing more.

There is also a subtle pro-life view in the film, as Arthur and the elves recognize that every child is valuable, and not a single one should be left out or forgotten. In fact, when the elves believe that Santa no longer cares about all children, they are prepared to cancel Christmas forever, overwhelmed by the possibility that everything they have ever known about the true meaning of Christmas is untrue.

Lastly, the film emphasizes the importance of sacrifice, of taking a risk to achieve the happiness of another, even if that means sacrificing one’s own sense of security and momentary joy.

Arthur is by far the most inspiring character in the film, as his care for the little forgotten girl, whom he has never met, motivates him to embark on a dangerous and frightening journey. Many times throughout the course of that trip, he is nearly thrown off course and must make a difficult decision to either continue or give up and go home, where he is safe and warm. But he always remembers that giving up will mean that a little girl in England will have no Christmas present, and that is a consequence he cannot bear to accept.

Arthur’s inspiring endeavor motivates a number of other characters in the film to make significant decisions, and ultimately brings about a happy ending for all — one that audiences are sure to enjoy.

The entire film is full of excitement and humor, and is likely to entertain audiences of all ages. And the valuable lessons are sure to touch each moviegoer. Viewers are shown that virtues such as humility, self-sacrifice, and the Golden Rule are not long-forgotten concepts, but ones that should be at the forefront of our everyday lives.

Some Christian audiences may take issue with the heavy reliance on superstitious and magical elements found in the film. Santa and his story entirely replaces the real story of Christmas, which, for those who may have forgotten, is intended to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Throughout the film, Arthur articulates concern that the little girl without a gift will not “have a Christmas,” seemingly forgetting that it is impossible to not have a Christmas. Religion is not entirely left out of the film, however, as the song “Silent Night” is featured.

For some of the really young audiences, the film may be a bit confusing as it does make changes to the classic tale of Santa Claus and Christmas Eve, and some of the concepts, such as the hereditary nature of the Santa Claus position, the struggle for power, the value of treating every child the same, may be a bit difficult for them to grasp.

Overall, however, *Arthur Christmas* is a lovely family film and a very pleasant holiday movie.



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