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The Hero

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The Hero

Abstract

This is a film review of *The Hero* (2017) directed by Brett Haley.

Author Notes

William Blizek is the Founding Editor of the Journal of Religion and Film, and is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is also the editor of the Continuum Companion to Religion and Film (2009).



The Hero (2017), dir. Brett Haley

This is a movie about the meaning of life, something that most of the world's religions try to explain. And, as is true in both the movies and real life, it often takes death or the threat of death to get us out of our ruts enough to give the meaning of life serious consideration.

The hero of this story is Lee Hayden (played by Sam Elliott), a former cowboy actor who now spends most of his time doing voice overs for commercials and smoking weed.

"Lone Star Barbecue Sauce. The perfect partner for your chicken."

When Lee learns that he has pancreatic cancer, he can no longer live as he has been living. The cancer and the threat of death force Lee to face a failed marriage, an estranged daughter, and the rut his life has become. He is aided in this journey by an angel (played by Laura Prepon), a much younger woman who guides Lee through the pitfalls of facing death and the past. Here the movie moves from being charming and delightful to poignant and sometimes painful.

In the end, the angel is successful. Lee reconciles with his daughter and ex-wife and he takes up the task of fighting the cancer; "buying time." And life now has new meaning for the hero.

"Lone Star's New Spicy Barbecue Sauce. The perfect partner for your ribs."