

The Dig: A Review by Kanika Aurora



I chanced upon this quiet little movie based on John Preston's novel, 'The Dig' depicting the fascinating true story of the 'Sutton Hoo Find' on Netflix last night.

An enchanting and engrossing tale told with stark simplicity and infinite grace, it acquaints us with Basil Brown, the excavator extraordinaire with no formal training played with admirable finesse by Ralph Fiennes who has been hired after

some persuasion for Two pounds, no less, by Edith Pretty portrayed with quiet determination by Carey Mulligan. She wants him to dig up huge mounds on her property in Suffolk. She apparently has an acute interest in archaeology and a strong feeling that they shall in fact discover something of value. "My interest in archaeology began like yours," Edith tells the initially sceptical Basil, "when I was scarcely old enough to hold a trowel."

They literally end up striking gold, discovering a burial chamber within an 88 foot ship dating back to the Anglo Saxon period.

Lush English landscapes, an unlikely yet palpable chemistry between the working class Fiennes and the widowed lady with the large estate and a son, who develops an attachment towards Fiennes who has a telescope and an encyclopedic knowledge as well as the impending threat of war in 1939 Suffolk is the backdrop. The plot unfolds at a languid pace; the only urgency displayed when they discover what lies beneath.

There is parallel sub plot of sorts with Peggy played by Lily James, part of the new excavation team from the British Museum, whose husband has a glad eye for his male colleague and a suppressed romance waiting in the wings between her and Edith's cousin, Rory- the gorgeous Johnny Flynn.

Edith Pretty carries her sadness and the burden of her disappointing past with immense dignity as she discovers she is incurably unwell. There is an extremely poignant moment between her son, Robert played by Archie Barnes as he navigates the ship late at night to the skies above, acutely aware that his mother may not survive, reassuring her that he will meet her in another world.

Not for the impatient, watch this movie for the lonely beauty of the blue skies, the nuanced, unhurried, sensitive performances, the appreciation of a collective legacy as well

reaffirming your belief that Life is Continuous and "it speaks, the past."



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