



Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community

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CODA Movie Review

Benji Boyd, Freshman

Did anyone actually watch the Oscars? Or did we all just witness the oddest celebrity moment since Bernie wore those gloves and call it a night? Well, if you did stick around, you might recall that the winner of Best Picture was the movie *CODA*, the story of a hearing girl in an entirely deaf fishing family.

Unlike the rest of the nominees, *CODA* is a movie that I actually took the time to watch beforehand. Admittedly, I was only really drawn in by the fact that it was filmed in Gloucester, and I was hoping to catch a glimpse of something familiar on the silver screen. I mean, did anyone here in Marblehead watch Adam Sandler's *Hubie Halloween* for the plot? It was exciting to see the Gloucester harbor and various locations around the Gloucester downtown area throughout the movie, but nowhere near as thrilling as watching characters wander around Marblehead cosplaying as Salem on steroids (assuming that I'm not crazy and this movie wasn't just a Halloween candy-induced fever dream).

But let's talk about the big winner, *CODA*, which tells the story of Ruby, and her struggle being the only hearing member in her deaf family. Not only can Ruby hear, but she loves to sing. As a high schooler, she is conflicted between continuing to aid her family with their fishing business after graduation, acting as the sign language interpreter that they need, and going on to college to pursue her passion for music.

This movie follows the timeless trope of the torn protagonist, the family and mentor who can both only see one side, and the supportive love interest. The events of this movie were predictable and the plot could be copy and pasted into any eighties movie script without too much trouble. However, this story was saved by both the premise and the execution. While the struggle for every high school heroine is unique, the representation of deaf characters and actors was new and exciting. Unlike other pieces of mainstream media, all three deaf characters were played by deaf actors, which allowed the ASL (American Sign Language) dialogue to

feel natural and genuine to deaf viewers. While some have complained that lead actor, Emilia Jones, who plays Ruby, is not as natural with the signs as one would expect a *CODA* (child of deaf adults) to be, for the most part, *CODA*'s representation of ASL is much more accurate than that of other media employing hearing actors in deaf roles.

But what about the representation of deaf people as a whole? In an article I found on today.com, "Deaf Community Responds to 'CODA': What the Movie Gets Right and Misses," I read about how many found a scene in which Ruby's father (Troy Kotsur) is blasting rap music in his truck in order to feel the bass relatable and authentic. Kotsur ended up being the second deaf person to ever win an Academy Award for his role in *CODA*. Many enjoyed the small details that were able to be included in the movie due to the deaf actors adding their own personal experiences to their acting.

If you're still not convinced why hiring deaf actors for deaf roles is so important, imagine if an actor who didn't speak English was hired for a role as a person born and raised in America, and instructed in English in the months leading up to filming. Not only would their performance be unconvincing for us who were born and raised in America, but they would likely not be able to put much of their own knowledge and talent into their acting. The slang would be stilted, the mannerisms off, and the whole thing annoying. Sure, non-English speakers watching with subtitles would like it, but would we? The same principle applies.

Overall, *CODA* walked a well-worn moviemaking pathway with a fresh stride, and its victory in the Oscars put deaf narratives into the limelight. It was funny and enjoyable, and the cliches had just enough of a fresh twist to keep me entertained. Obviously, as a hearing person, I'm not an authority on matters of the deaf community, but the general consensus seems to be that any representation that helps deaf individuals see themselves on the big screen and educates others on deaf issues is a good addition to the Best Pictures.

Teens Around the World

Ila Bumagin, Sophomore
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Teens these days. All we do is talk about ourselves and how special we are, how Gen Z is unique and weird, and what a difference we'll make. But we certainly have a lot to say, and instead of talking about myself (I could do that forever), I decided to interview some people with different perspectives: teens from other countries. I asked them about the pandemic, what they think of any goings-on in the United States, what's going on in their countries, and what they think defines being a teenager.

After reading the six reports from teens in Europe and North America, one thing stands out: my generation is adaptable and resilient. Each country responded in its own way, but every teen expressed how much their privilege helped them in quarantine, whether it was privilege with school, money, or COVID safety.

What was school like in the pandemic? How did you deal with school? In the responses, I was most surprised at the normalcy of online school, and that most people, at least in this group, didn't hate quarantine. For example, Andrea (from Guatemala) writes, "It was boring and a bit stressful, but at the same time it was interesting to learn how to study from a distance. I'm still doing online school. It also has its advantages (not having to wake up early...)." From Spain, Becca explains, "Quarantine wasn't too bad for me. I'm not very sociable, and I like working, so being locked up helped me learn to practice the cello for more hours, and I'm very glad that happened."

Michael from Ireland adds, "My life during the pandemic was actually quite easy and it felt like normal after the first month... Our class was using Zoom in the morning at 9 o'clock and we would get our work on Google Classroom." It's interesting to see how everyone worked around new schedules and actually enjoyed some time locked up.

Another question about the pandemic, and then we'll move on. What did you learn about yourself? I loved hearing responses to this question because it shows how Gen Z is resilient. For example, Diana from Spain says she learned to "organize my schedule

and be calm." Andrea added that she learned, "That I don't need anybody to be happy. A global pandemic is not necessarily bad, if you have a positive attitude." And my personal favorite from Erik in Sweden: "During the pandemic and online school I learned to observe and appreciate the smaller things in life such as taking a walk in the sun or having a good lunch." We tend to talk about all the worst effects of the pandemic, and yes, there were horrible consequences. But, it is important to see how we all can grow from the challenges we face.

Finally, I asked what it is like to be a teenager in each country, and how these crucial years have been affected by everything going on in our world. Most said teenage years had a lot to do with spending time with friends, but some, based on age and which country they're from, said that they are very different.

Andrea says being a teen now versus a teen many years back, "is like a completely different reality." On being a teen in Guatemala: "It's hard sometimes, especially being a woman. Sometimes you feel insecure but sometimes it's really fun to hang out with your friends and enjoy your teenage years." Becca in Spain says, "I don't think I have been deprived from a normal teenager's life. My environment is very similar to that Covidless." Michael in Spain says, "I think my parents' life was much simpler than ours because they didn't use technology the way we might use it now and they also didn't have social media which puts a lot of pressure on our generation to grow up quicker." He also says that, "Being a teenager in Ireland is all about having the craic with your mates and excelling in sports and school."

I didn't know what to expect when I sent out emails to six friends across the globe, but now I am proud of my generation. Through the pandemic, and now a war, we are proving to be adaptable and resilient. Maybe that's what being a teenager is: changing the world just by being ourselves, and overcoming new challenges - challenges in our everyday lives, and challenges across the world.

An Inspiration: Nelson Mandela

Nadia Warab, Freshman

"A winner is a dreamer who never gives up," said Nelson Mandela. Those words inspired the world. I did not know who he was when I was younger, but I often heard that quote in texts. It was not until December 5, 2013 that I learned his name, when old footage of him appeared on national television as everyone honored his death.

He was an activist known by his clan name Madiba. In 1993, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. By 1994, he was elected president. Mandela was a philanthropist best known for his movements against apartheid in South Africa. By doing so, he helped end the segregation apartheid laws that existed between the black majority and white minority. He proved himself to be a brave and dedicated leader, who survived getting arrested and jailed for 27 years.

He especially showed his strength when

his sons, Thembekile and Ndaba Mandela, died before him.

Madiba continued to be an inspirational icon to many other leaders such as, African-American civil right activist, Martin Luther King, Jr. Mandela, himself, found motivation in Indian anti-colonial leader Mohandas Gandhi. He believed in Gandhi's idea of non-violence, which he named satyagraha, or "Truth Force."

To be a leader is not about power; it is about doing what is right for people. It is about helping them find the oasis in the mind's desert. Nelson Mandela is an individual who portrays those characteristics, so if you ever wonder why he is dear to many Africans, just remember that his efforts changed not only South Africa, but also the whole world.



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