

My 50/50 Review

Man, Joseph Gordon Levitt is an attractive cancer patient.

I mean, not like conventionally attractive or anything. But for a cancer patient? An attractive dude, and that's definitely one of the strengths of 50/50.

Directed by Jonathan Levine, 50/50 is about Joseph Gordon Levitt as Adam, a somewhat overcautious twenty something year old who has a typical, average life with his goofy best friend Kyle, played by Seth Rogan, and decent girlfriend Rachel, Bryce Dallas Howard. After a routine test discovers cancer, however, Adam's life goes sideways and he has to learn how to deal the gigantic adjustments to his life that comes with a condition that has a 50/50 survival rate.

The best part about this movie is how real it is. From the start, everybody just clicks and gives honest, sincere reactions to every moment of the movie, and it consequently it is a really powerful examination of what life is like for someone who has cancer. It wasn't about Joseph Gordon Levitt being some down trodden young soul that beats the odds and rises to prosperity. It's about some random dude just trying to get by and figure this shitty situation that came out of nowhere, and there is a real beauty to the simplicity of the narrative. Admittedly, it makes a certain amount of sense that it feels so real since the movie has a somewhat autobiographical script written by Seth Rogan's friend, Will Reiser, who went through this ordeal and consequently had a certain amount of research done for the piece. Just saying "he knows what he's talking about" doesn't give him justice, however, because not only does he know the minutia that creates an honest story, but he also knows how to write nuanced moments that really sell this piece that could be just another "person tryin' to beat the odds" flick.

Similarly, each actor brings such an awesome performance to the table and each in their own way adds so much. This in mind, it could be said that the actors aren't really going too far out of their wheel houses for the movie; Seth Rogan plays Seth Rogan, Levitt plays the cool likeable protagonist and Anna Kendrick plays her stumbling awkward self as Katharine, the therapist trying to help him through this ordeal. The thing is, however, is that each actor's "character" so appropriately fits each character of the movie that this concern turns into an advantage and instead of the movie feeling like "another one where Rogan is a goof ball", the casting allows them to really knock the movie out of the park with really strong performances.

As for weaknesses, there aren't too many. While each relationship felt real, certain ones seemed a bit underdeveloped or forced towards a specific direction. Adam's relationship with his mother is so well done that certain moments they share near the end of the movie pulled my heartstrings to the point of almost bursting out with tears, but his relationship with Rachel

was a bit one sided and off as well as his relationship with Katherine left me yearning for a little more substance.

The greatest achievement of this movie? It makes cancer interesting. It makes it approachable and engaging. It pulls cancer out from the shadows to show everyone how terrible the condition is, but also to let people see that those who have cancer are still human beings; not just uncomfortable conversations have and “poor souls” to pity. It proves that no matter how terrible times can get, there are still opportunities to laugh, love, and feel hope. But not in a preachy way, in an honest and sincere way that makes the audience get pulled in instead of turned off.

And it proves that Joseph Gordon Levitt looks alright bald.

No wait, THAT is the greatest achievement of the movie.