

# Home Is Where the Heartache Is In Foster's 'Home for the Holidays'

I have realized that it is quickly becoming a trend that any film nowadays connected to the words "Jodie Foster" has to be amazing. This time, though, Foster steps behind the camera, but her unique wit and intelligence are reflected on every frame of the film, which is hands down one of the best films of 1995.

**JON HOWLE**

**Movie Review**  
"Home For the Holidays"

**A**

"Home For The Holidays" masterfully exemplifies what so many comedies aim for but never quite reach. The film begins in Chicago, where Claudia (Holly Hunter), an aspiring artist, loses her job and almost her mind prior to her flight home for the Thanksgiving holidays. Claudia knows it's going to be hell, especially since the whole damn family will be there. Claudia's parents, played brilliantly by Anne Bancroft and Charles Durning, meet her at the airport, and from there begins the holiday of all holidays. Add Claudia's eccentric brother Tommy

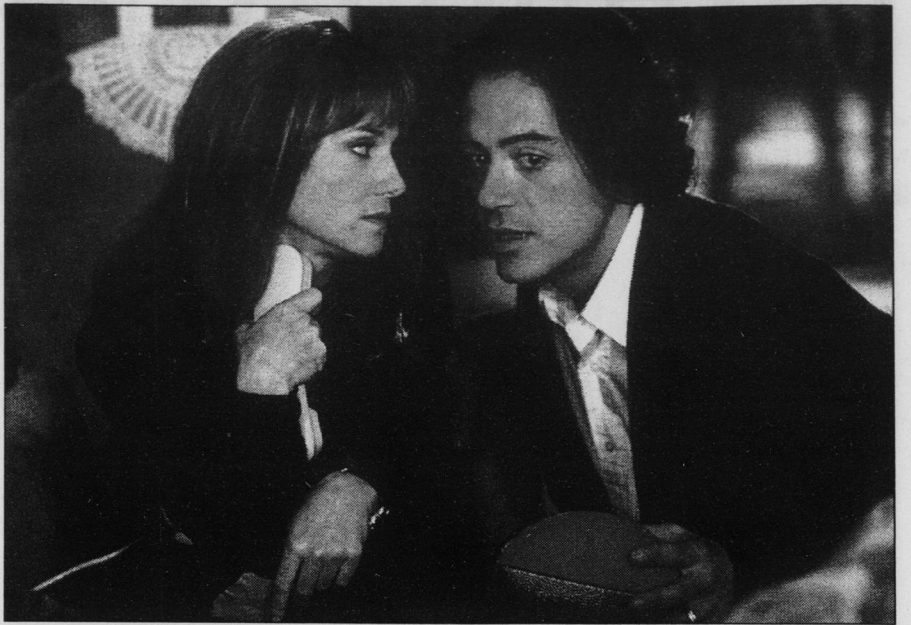
(Robert Downey Jr.), his nemesis, a.k.a. their sister Joanne (Cynthia Stevenson), Joanne's stuffy husband (Steve Guttenberg) and top it all off with Claudia's nutty aunt, and the recipe inevitably results in chaotic cuisine.

What is so incredible about "Home For The Holidays" is how there is so much going on in such a limited space (2 rooms and 3 big street scenes), and yet Foster remarkably holds it all together. A common mistake made when praising directors is to say that the best directed films are the technically superior films like "Apollo 13," "Forrest Gump" and "The Fugitive." While direction was important to those films, a film like "Home For The Holidays" is the kind where a director's true colors really shine through. In this film there are no explosions or funky special effects. The only thing that explodes in this film is talent and Foster takes advantage of every situation and every actor in the film, creating a unique balance of humor and sentiment unmatched in recent cinema. The Thanksgiving dinner scene is price-

less; it is during this scene when it becomes clear that this could be the first year the Oscars nominate an American woman as Best Director. And what a deserving nominee Jodie Foster would be.

Of course Foster was working with an ensemble of Hollywood's most superior actresses and actors. Holly Hunter's subtle performance almost matches her dynamic work in "The Piano." While Hunter is funny and heartwarming, she also allows us to see the disillusioned and disappointed side of Claudia, without turning her into the stereotypical depressive. It is usually the supporting actor or actress who accents the other performances, but in her leading role Hunter brings the best out of everyone she works with, a characteristic she shares with her director.

Robert Downey Jr. does wonders as Claudia's homosexual brother who is obsessed with Polaroid Cameras and scaring the hell out of people by dancing on their cars. It comes to the point in the film when you find yourself laughing before he even says a word. And then there is Claudia's kooky aunt, brilliantly played by scene-stealer Geraldine Chaplin. An aging high school Latin teacher, she takes pride in her Fruit Loop necklace and especially in her rendition of "We Gather Together." I won't ruin it; it is hysterical! Charles Durning and Anne Bancroft do wonders as Claudia's



Claudia Larson (Holly Hunter) and her brother Tommy (Robert Downey Jr.) try to achieve harmony for the holidays.

parents. From them we learn how this nutty family has remained sane and together over the years. Durning does his best work since 1982's "Tootsie."

Although it sounds almost like slapstick comedy, the true magic of "Home For The Holidays" is found in the understated sentiment. Chaplin's scene in which she discusses the greatest moment of her life is

absolutely heartbreaking. And when Holly Hunter and Robert Downey Jr. embrace after he is chastized by their sister Joanne, the tears start to flow. Finally, in the closing scene with Hunter and Durning we see the evidence and power of true love between a father and a daughter.

Above all, "Home For The Holidays" is about family, and the fact that regardless of

how much we try to get along there will always be problems. Some of them can be fixed, but some of them cannot, as Foster and screenwriter W. D. Richter so brilliantly show through Joanne.

The only solution is not to miss what will definitely be hailed as one of the most intuitive and heartwarming comedies in recent cinema.

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SBF, 18, 5'3", 110lbs., black hair, brown eyes, shy, laid back, freshman student, likes quiet evenings at home, cooking, movies, seeking honest, outgoing, trustworthy SBM, for dating. Ad# 4233

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**LOOK AT INNER SELF**  
SBF, 20, large frame, attractive, shy, happy, entertaining, dentistry student, likes movies, music, walks, rides, dining, athletic events, seeking well-dressed, respectful, truthful, serious SBM, for dating, maybe more. Ad# 4200

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SBF, 20, 5'9", brownish/blondish hair, hazel eyes, bubbly, student/waitress, seeking humorous SBM, for dating. Ad# 7777

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SBF, 20, likes going to dinner, movies, bars, and having lots of fun, looking for SM, professional, sensitive, honest, sincere, physically fit, not a health freak, to date. Ad# 7400

**SERIOUS FRIEND WANTED**  
SBF, 25, educated, serious, fun-loving, enjoys cooking, theater, reading, looking for a SBM, 25-35, N/S, for friendship, companionship. Ad# 5848

**LOOK AT INNER SELF**  
SF, 25, 5'11", brown skin, medium frame, shy but fun, student, likes jazz, books, rides, walks, dining out, seeking well-dressed, non-judgmental SM, for dating, maybe more. Ad# 4200

**LOVES TRAVELING**  
SBF, 26, 5'7", no children, adventurous, likes tennis, volleyball, writing, photography, museums, movies, seeking attractive, professional, outgoing SM, for dating. Ad# 4026

**NEW TO AREA**  
SF, 36, undergraduate student, calm, serious, likes classical music, traveling, seeking SM, for friendship. Ad# 4444

**COMPANIONSHIP**  
SBF, 38, mother of two, enjoys movies, water activities, good conversation, quiet walks, seeking intelligent SBM, to share activities, maybe more. Ad# 5432

**FIND OUT MORE**  
SB mom, 38, two children, likes water oriented activities, movies, quiet walks, good conversation, seeks intelligent SBM, 37-45, N/S and non-drinkers are preferred, for possible long term commitment. Ad# 2222

**FUN-SEEKING**  
SWF, 40s, with two children, enjoys movies, outdoors, dining out, seeking SM, with similar interests. Ad# 2858

**AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
SBF, 48, seeking educated, professional SBM, 35-50, who is interested in and practices African American culture, for communication, dating. Ad# 8290

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**FRIENDLY STUDENT**  
SBM, 19, 5'9", 165lbs., black hair, brown eyes, down-to-earth, laid back, open, loves music, dancing, friends, joking, basketball, working out. Sega, seeking trustworthy SF, for dating, friendship, possible relationship. Ad# 7852

**SPEND TIME**  
SBF, 20, 5'10", 150lbs., enjoys TV, movies, seeking SF, humorous, for friendship and dating. Ad# 9111

**NO GAME PLAYING**  
SM, 21, attractive, good sense of humor, outgoing, enjoys dining out, sports, theater, seeking honest SF, who enjoys movies, sports, to date and spend quiet evenings together. Ad# 6635

**UNIVERSITY SENIOR**  
SBM, 21, outgoing, independent, considerate, enjoys cooking, working out, quiet times, seeking sensitive, intelligent, affectionate SWF, for dating, possible relationship. Ad# 2874

**PAUL BUNYAN LOOK ALIKE**  
SM, 21, tall, lanky, seeking SF, who likes beer, philosophizing, Dobermans, facial hair, for friendship, possible relationship. Ad# 3283

**WANTS TO GO OUT**  
SBM, 22, brown hair/eyes, tall athletic, intelligent, graduate student, likes music, racquetball, tennis, squash, bars, seeking physically fit SWF, for dating. Ad# 7362

**SIMILAR INTERESTS?**  
SM, 24, graduate student, likes hiking, traveling, sporting events, seeks intelligent SF, who enjoys conversation, movies, music and likes having a good time, for a possible relationship, no games. Ad# 3109

**EXPLORE LIFE**  
SBM, 25, 6'1", 185lbs, curly blond hair, graduate student, likes exercising, movies, dining out, movies, the beach, adventure, seeking outgoing SF, for dating, maybe more. Ad# 1158

**LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE**  
SBM, 26, 6'2", 225lbs., athletic, easygoing, gets along with everyone, enjoys movies, reading, planes, seeking SF, attractive, well-versed, humorous, under 35, for possible relationship. Ad# 2269

**PROFESSIONAL MAN**  
SBM, 27, professional, seeks down to earth, attractive, physically/emotionally fit, open-minded SF, who likes laughing, movies, the beach, tennis, outside activities. Ad# 7469

**SINGLE MALE**  
SM, 29, nice looking but not handsome, fit but not athletic, bright but not in Mensa, employed but not stressed, funny but not always, seeks SF, 18-48, with a good mind. Ad# 4113

**GIVE ME A BEEP**  
SM, 30, 5'5", likes sports, watching sports on TV, going to the movies, having good times, seeks nice, intelligent SF, for friendship, possible relationship. Ad# 2621

**HAS REAL ESTATE BUSINESS**  
SM, 30, 5'10", engineer, likes cooking, movies, the beach, dancing, fine dining, seeking sweet, nice, easygoing, energetic, honest SF, for friendship, possible long-term relationship. Ad# 1152

**INVITING BROWN EYES**  
SBM, 32, 6'1", 185lbs., brown hair/eyes, fit, athletic, Type A personality, student, likes working out, lifting weights, athletics, gourmet cooking, seeks sincere, loving SF, 22-35. Ad# 7700

**TAKES LIFE AS IT COMES**  
SBM, 32, 6', 180lbs., athletic, fit, laid back, fun-loving, student, enjoys good humor, running, biking, weightlifting, gourmet cooking, seeks sweet, sincere, trustworthy, communicative SF, for possible relationship. Ad# 4104

**HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER**  
SBM, 33, 6', 190lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, physically fit, open-minded, easygoing, intelligent, likes music, mountain biking, hiking, reading, traveling, seeking SAF, for companionship, maybe more. Ad# 3289

**NOTHING SERIOUS**  
SBM, 39, college teacher, part-time Airline Computer Technician, seeking SWF to date and have fun. Ad# 2370

**GIVE ME A CALL**  
SM, 40, enjoys sports, going to the park, seeking professional SF, with good sense of humor, who would enjoy wine and dining, maybe more. Ad# 1028

**SWEET DREAMS**  
DW dad, 43, 5'5", 150lbs., long hair in a ponytail, laid back, caring, loving, romantic, one child, one cat, likes the outdoors, camping, canoeing, rock and roll/R&B, cooking, partying, campfires, seeking SF. Ad# 2557

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