Finding Dory

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One year after rescuing Nemo, Dory starts to have memories about the family she lost. She persuades Marlin and Nemo to accompany her back to the Jewel of Morro Bay, California to find her parents. Once arriving at the Marine Life Institute (a version of Seaworld) she gets split up from her companions and placed in quarantine for sick fish. She meets Hank, the octopus with seven legs, who agrees to help her search. They journey across the park and Dory reunites with some of her old friends. Plagued by worries her parents won’t love her because she remembers it was she who lost them, Dory refuses to be paralyzed by her fears. She uses her unique skills, personality, and fragmented memories to locate the parents who actually have been waiting and loving her for many years. Friends old and new work with Dory to release other marine life back into the wild. All return home to restart their life as a family and form new, happy memories.

Finding Dory is not the most original of Pixar’s hits, but its warmth in reinforcing the themes of the first movie make it a success. Like Finding Nemo, family plays the preeminent role. Flashback scenes to Dory’s childhood are unabashedly adorable and undoubtedly a highlight of the film. In a touching scene that contrasts with Finding Nemo, Dory’s parents display their unconditional love by staying steady and laying a path for her to come home rather than searching to find her. The kindhearted goodness of the parents and child will have audiences cheering when they find each other. The other theme is one of, “You can do it!” Nemo’s fin was a physical challenge for him and Dory’s memory presents the mental obstacle for her. As Dory tests her own abilities, she discovers the power within herself that gives her confidence to save the day. The film is wholesome, uplifting, funny, and filled with exaggerated adventures that will have kids giggling. In all its happy endings though, the film lacks the bittersweetness that has garnished Pixar’s most sophisticated stories.