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THE LEGENDS OF NETHIAH



★★★★★ 
 Year Released: 2012
 MPAA Rating: Unrated
 Running Time: 93 minutes
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Russ Emanuel's *The Legends of Nethiah* tells the tale of Gabriel (Jared Young), a young boy recently suspended from school for getting into a fistfight with his best friend. Gabriel's parents are getting a divorce, and they've given him the unenviable task of choosing which of his parents he wishes to live with. Mom (Laura Covelli) and Dad (Jilon Ghai) fight nightly and Gabriel finds himself without a friend to turn to, save the park trash collector Tully (Jeremiah Sayys), who talks to Gabriel on his time off. All is stressful and confusing for Gabriel, whether he admits (or even notices) it or not, until Grandpa (Robert Picardo) comes over to watch over Gabriel while he is home from school. Grandpa's got an imagination on him, you see, and he starts to tell Gabriel tales of a fantasy land and one particular denizen, Nethiah (also played by Jeremiah Sayys).

The tale of Nethiah has some similarities to 1980s film *Conan the Barbarian*, as Nethiah's village is pillaged and he is captured and turned into a pitfighting slave for his overlords' amusement. From there it's about winning his freedom, and then rebelling against those that have wronged him and so many others. It's a heroic tale, albeit one that didn't always seem to make sense, for me, with what Gabriel was experiencing, but it more than covered the bases of empowerment and entertainment a child could truly embrace, so I dug it overall.

And while those fanciful elements are there to educate and entertain Gabriel, this is still a story about a child put in a not-so-uncommon spot in today's world. Children from divorced families are probably more common now than ones whose parents stick together for the long haul, and the stresses of the

divorce, in addition to adults being unable to settle their own affairs properly enough that they need to leave adult decisions to their children, are something to which many can relate. In that sense, *The Legends of Nethiah* is a masterful film, particularly for those of Gabriel's age who may find themselves in similar situations. Hell, it might even give some parents out there an inkling of how their "fair" decisions can affect those they claim they wish to protect the most.

Credit is due all around to the actors in the film, particularly Robert Picardo, Jared Young and Jeremiah Sayys. Picardo's Grandpa is everything to like about a cinematic grandpa; imaginative, rebellious and a little bit world-weary but not so far as to be pessimistic. He's the friend Gabriel can't seem to find (since he broke the nose of the last one), and the confidant Gabriel doesn't know he needs.

And Jared Young, in his feature film debut, does a great job as Gabriel. Had he been too whiney, or even a bit too oblivious, we'd have trouble relating, perhaps. But he more than pulls his weight, as does Jeremiah Sayys as Tully. Why Tully befriends Gabriel is definitely something any adult should question, as Grandpa does, but Sayys manages to keep the character likeable, even when we don't know what his angle could be. Maybe we'll never know why Tully was there for Gabriel, but it winds up being necessary for both of them.

This is just a wonderful, imaginative film about a really intense subject, and it works at almost every turn. Sure, the art direction and creature effects-work of the world of Nethiah doesn't always stand up to fantastical scrutiny, but that's not really what this film is all about and, honestly, if you imagine it's Gabriel's brain that's putting images to Grandpa's words, it still works.

This film was submitted for review through our [Submission for Review](#) system. If you have a film you'd like us to see, and we aren't already looking into it on our own, you too can utilize this service.

Posted on February 28, 2012 in [Reviews](#) by [Mark Bell](#)

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