

“Saturdays at the Sculley’s” - “The Return [Возвращение]” starring Russian actors, 2003, NR, 105 minutes

Major themes:

- How our relationship with our earthly father affects the way we view God
- Manhood
- Authority
- Abuse
- Tough love
- Loyalty

Major Characters:

- Andrei
- Ivan
- The father
- The mother
- The grandma

Interesting info:

- *The Return* won awards at the Venice Film Festival, the European Film Awards, and the Palm Springs International Film Festival.
- *The Return* was filmed on and around Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland.
- The budget of the film remains a secret, though in an interview the director and the producer hinted that it was well below \$500,000.

- Actor Vladimir Garin, who played Andrei, drowned shortly after the end of shooting in a lake near the one where several of the picture's scenes were filmed.

Scriptures:

Psalm 68:4 – 5 (NIV) – *“Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds—his name is the LORD—and rejoice before him. A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.”*

1 Corinthians 13:11 (NLT) – *“When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.”*

Proverbs 15:1 (NLT) – *“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.”*

Ephesians 4:31 (GWT) – *“Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred.”*

Ephesians 6:4 (NLT) – *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.”*

Colossians 3:21 (NLT) – *“Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.”*

Proverbs 20:6 (NIV) – *“Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?”*

Discussion points:

1. Twelve years is a long time for a father to be absent, only to suddenly reappear. Discuss.
2. Discuss the test of manhood of almost mythic proportions to which the father subjects his sons.
3. Talk about how Andrei and Ivan react to their father and his increasingly brutal efforts to make up for lost time.
4. What can we and what should we do when we encounter one person abusing another? How can we distinguish between abuse and tough love?
5. Sometimes a sudden crisis breaks down our emotional defenses. Discuss how the final lake scene reveals what's in the boys' hearts.]
6. How has your relationship with your earthly father affected your view of God? Has anything caused that view to change?
7. How did you feel at the end of the movie? What response can we have to these kinds of feelings?