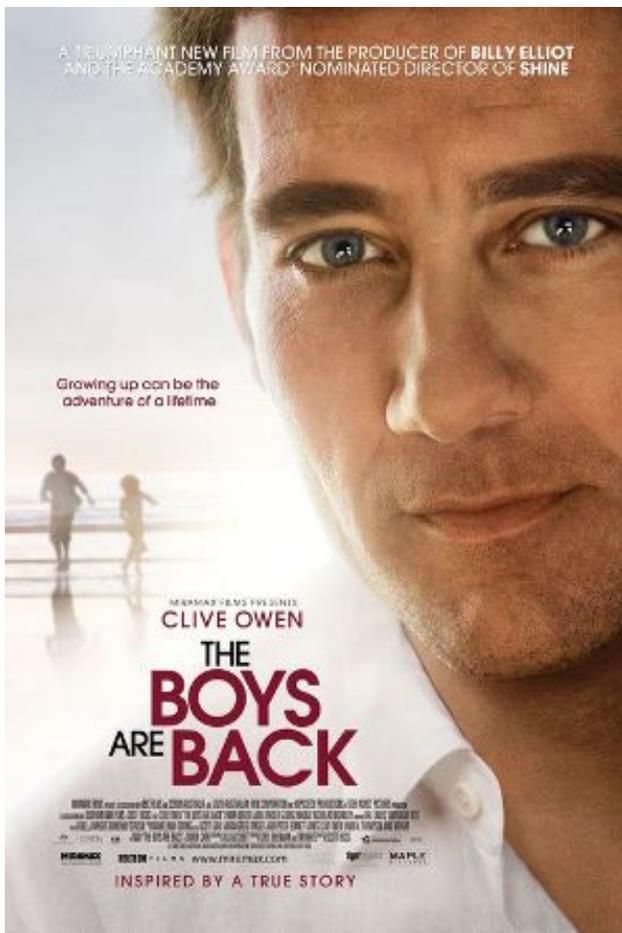




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Clive Owen Uses His Charm in The Boys Are Back



It's no secret that Clive Owen is a capable actor. Speckled throughout his filmography are various strong turns, of which, his Academy-Award-nominated, Golden Globe-winning turn in *Closer*, is the most well-known. That being said, he's proved his mettle in smaller films like *Croupier*, *Greenfingers*, *Gosford Park* and *Derailed* to name a few.

His latest turn, as a widowed sports journalist trying to raise his two sons in Southern Australia, may arguably be one of his best. Under the capable hands of Scott Hicks (Academy Award-winner *Shine*, *Hearts of Atlantis*, *No Reservations*), Owen plays a character much like you'd expect. Sometimes gruff, always messy, consummately compassionate and as expected, ever flirtatious. After a rather maudlin opening 30 minutes, *The Boys are Back*, based on the 2001 best-selling novel by [Simon Carr](#), gets rolling when Joe Warr (Owen) takes his youngest son Artie (Nicholas McAnulty, who makes his big screen debut) on a road trip in the hopes of getting the both of them out of their doldrums. When his mission fails, he winds up back at home, only to encounter more headaches.

With the exception of a few scenes, in which Joe imagines his wife is standing next to him and conversing with him, there's little about *The Boys are Back* that's contrived, predictable or overwrought. Instead the scenes unfold exactly the way life does: unpredictably, bittersweet and not without the least bit of confusion. Aided by Greig Fraser's breathtaking cinematography, the natural beauty of south Australia and a terrific soundtrack (Sigur Ros, Ray LaMontagne, to name a few) anchored by Hal Lindes' ethereal score, *The Boys are Back* goes from being a banal, tearjerker into a warm and compassionate film.