

## The Blind Side (Dec. 15, 2009)

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Leigh Ann is a real-life Christian who lives in a mansion with her millionaire husband and two children in Memphis, Tennessee. Their neighborhood and lifestyle are completely foreign to Michael, a young African-American man who was removed from his mother at a young age because she was a drug addict. His mother had so many children by different men that she doesn't even remember who Michael's father is when asked. Michael has a kind-hearted uncle who allows Michael to take shelter in his home. Because of the uncle's efforts in speaking to the athletic director, Michael is accepted into the Christian private school in the area. However, soon after being enrolled the uncle can no longer keep Michael in his home so Michael is left homeless. The scene that stood out to me is when Michael left the gym and walked in the pouring rain because he has no place to go. At that moment, the Tuohy family drove by and Leigh Ann told her husband to pull over so she can talk to Michael. After a brief conversation, Leigh Ann discovered that Michael is indeed homeless and she invites him to stay with their family for what they believed will only be for one night. During the course of the movie, we see in flashbacks of Michael's life in the past. However, what we also notice that no matter how bad his past has been, Michael managed to keep a gentle, open spirit and did not harbor any anger, bitterness or resentment towards anyone. Leigh Ann questioned Michael about his past because it was hard for her to fathom how Michael had been able to survive without some emotional baggage. Michael gently told her that whenever something "bad" was happening, his mother told him to close his eyes and wait until it was over. This simple lesson passed on to him by his mom somehow enabled Michael to survive and not dwell on the past. His ability not to harbor bitterness allowed him to accept whatever came his way and show grace to people even when life had treated him unkindly. One more thing about Michael is that his school test scores showed that he had an extremely high aptitude for being a "protector." Later, we see why this was an important revelation. The coach of the football program made many attempts to help Michael become the football player that everyone was hoping he would be but without success. Leigh Ann stepped in and used Michael's protective instincts to help him become the right tackle on the football team that she knew he could be. She told him that just like Michael protected her when they were shopping, Michael needs to protect the quarterback and other key players because they are "his family" on the football field. This was a new revelation to Michael and from then on he progresses to become the great football player everyone had hoped he would become. I want to encourage everyone to see this movie. It is NOT just about sports and football. Although it starts out like it's going to be one of those kind of movies, Sandra Bullock, who plays Leigh Ann, explained the background and the reason for the movie title. You may not appreciate all the ins and outs of football, but in the end, you will appreciate that the heart of this movie lies in the relationship between Leigh Ann Tuohy and the young African-American, Michael Oher.

Leigh Ann is someone who has it all and is willing to sacrifice her friendships and social status in order to take this young man into her home. At one point, Leigh Ann was told what a wonderful life lesson she's teaching Michael by adopting him, but Leigh Ann replies, "No, he is teaching me." Initially, she questioned her decision to adopt Michael but once she decides that this would be what's best for him, she tries to hunt down Michael's birth mother so she can get permission to adopt. She does this not because it was legally required but because she believes it was the right thing to do. What I appreciated most was how this movie depicted this growing relationship between Leigh Ann and Michael. Personally, I also appreciated all the football scenes because I enjoy watching the game and I love to see the big "bullies" on the other team get what's coming to them. What I really enjoyed was watching the unfolding of a "miracle" in a sense, because it really was a miracle that led Michael Oher to become a part of the Tuohy family. Leigh Ann and the Tuohy's are a remarkable family and this is a remarkable movie that all the family will enjoy.