

TV Review: Will Arnett, Keri Russell Star in Disappointing ‘Running Wilde’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 21, 2010 - 11:51am

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CHICAGO – I love Will Arnett, Keri Russell, David Cross, and Mitchell Hurwitz. And yet, I don’t love “Running Wilde.” If you need any proof that quality television takes something more intangible than just getting talented people together, look no further than this sporadically-entertaining FOX sitcom, a show with more-than-enough talent to get over the common growing pains of the first few episodes of a sitcom if the ratings are strong enough to give it time to do so but is undeniably disappointing at the start.



Television Rating: **2.5/5.0**

The broad moments of the last show on which Mitchell Hurwitz and Will Arnett collaborated — the undeniably-brilliant “Arrested Development — were balanced out by the heart and humanity of the performances by Jason Bateman and Michael Cera. And yet, “Running Wilde” lacks that same heart despite the best efforts of Keri Russell to provide a similar emotional backbone to counterbalance Arnett’s cynical style. There are a few decent jokes from talented actors but the pilot of “Running Wilde” just doesn’t work. The chemistry isn’t there and it could easily develop with time but ratings can be cruel to sitcoms that don’t immediately click.



A lovable but immature playboy (Will Arnett, C) tries desperately to win (or buy) the heart of his childhood sweetheart (Keri Russell, second from L), the über-liberal humanitarian who got away in *RUNNING WILDE*, the new romantic comedy debuting Tuesday, Sept. 21 (9:30-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX. Also pictured: Robert Michael Morris (L), Mel Rodriguez (third from L), Stephanian Owen (second from R), and Peter Serafinowicz (R).

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Arnett stars as Steven Wilde, an immature man-child who has no idea how the real world works after living his whole life in a palatial estate funded by oil money. When Wilde was young, he found love with a childhood sweetheart named Emmy Kadubic (Russell) and circumstance brings the lovely lady back into his life and even living in his house by the end of episode one. The oil-and-water dynamic is that Wilde is a spoiled, privileged jerk while Emmy is a humanitarian who has spent months working with a tribe in the middle of nowhere. What could a man who gives himself humanitarian awards and a woman who honestly deserves one have in common?

To make a set-up of personalities this distinctly different work in a sitcom, there's an intangible chemistry necessary that Arnett and Russell simply don't have to start the season. It's never once believable that Wilde still loves Emmy or that Emmy wouldn't dismiss this moron on-sight. They both tell stories about their sweetheart past but the lack of believability in their dynamic leaves a black hole in the entire pilot. None of it rings true. And the addition of incredibly broad bits like a girl who chooses to stop speaking, an aggressively-coddling nanny/assistant, and a tribe in a swimming pool drain the piece of any believability at all.

"Running Wilde" doesn't necessarily need to be believable. It could be seen as very broad satire of, as Fox's press site says, "*when ego meets eco*." But for it to be successful it still needs to be funny. The premiere of "Running Wilde" just isn't funny. Arnett, Russell, and co-stars David Cross and Peter Serafinowicz are very talented comedians but they haven't been given the right material to match those talents.

Having said that, with a cast this notable, all it takes is a few tweaks (and perhaps some house-cleaning on the writing staff) to immediately pull "Running Wilde" from disappointment to success. The fact that they've produced two versions of the pilot already and that neither has worked isn't very promising, but there's enough talent here to believe that the show could start running instead of this limp start to the TV race.

'Running Wilde,' which airs on FOX, stars Will Arnett, Keri Russell, Robert Michael Morris, Mel Rodriguez, Stephanian Owen, Peter Serafinowicz, and David Cross. It was created by Mitchell Hurwitz. It premieres on Tuesday, September 21st, 2010 at 8:30PM CST.



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