

Film Review: Paul Rudd, Reese Witherspoon in Gloriously Romantic ‘How Do You Know’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 17, 2010 - 9:48am

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CHICAGO – Writer/Director James L. Brooks has been producing prime entertainment for nearly 50 years now, and proves he has not lost a step in ‘How Do You Know.’ This film of love, loss, power and especially romance is a great showcase for the talents of Reese Witherspoon, Paul Rudd, Owen Wilson and the great Jack Nicholson.



The beauty of How Do You Know is in its simplicity, a basic love triangle in the will-she-or-won’t-she mode, but placed in a modern setting where the stakes are higher, where money and power is a seducing tool, and the relationship between a father and son may actually overcome the obvious love connection between a couple of very distracted adults.

Reese Witherspoon convincingly plays a woman softball player named Lisa, one who has achieved gold medal status at the Olympics. Her anticipation is that she will be named to the American team once again, despite her advanced age of 31 years. She also has just started dating a major league baseball pitcher named Matty (Owen Wilson), and serious sparks are flying between them.

Paul Rudd is George, a decent fellow with a high profile job in the law firm of his father Charles (Jack Nicholson). He receives a strange summons from the federal government, accusing the firm he is now directing of high level malfeasance. Confused at first, it turns out that George has been picked to take the fall for the entire operation, having to do with some shady dealings his father pursued. He is given the status of ghost, as the firm cannot legally support him. To make matters worst, his girlfriend dumps him because of his troubles.

This is the point where Lisa and George meet. On the day that Lisa finds out she won’t make the Olympic softball team, and George has literally run away from his father, they decide to follow through on a long ago set-up blind date. It goes quite badly, but not so bad as they make a bit of a connection. Lisa goes on to pursue her budding relationship with the pitcher Matty, and to her surprise he offers that they should live together.

This is the scenario and these are the complications as the love triangle begins. George seeks out Lisa, who isn’t sure about Matty and leans on George during her confusion. George must decide if he is going to take punishment for his father’s actions. Although the title of the film may sound cryptic, all of the main cast is trying to answer the question, “how do you know?”

“How Do You Know” opens everywhere December 17th. Featuring Reese Witherspoon, Paul Rudd, Owen Wilson, Tony Shaloub, Kathryn Hahn, Mark Linn-Baker and Jack Nicholson. Written and directed by James L. Brooks. Rated “PG-13”

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So Grows the Twig: Jack Nicholson as Charles the Father and Paul Rudd as George the Son in ‘How Do You Know’
Photo credit: © Columbia Pictures

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