

Blu-Ray Review: Misguided ‘Life As We Know It’ With Katherine Heigl

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 21, 2011 - 7:25pm

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CHICAGO – I recently made a reference to Katherine Heigl being the symbol of the modern decline of the romantic comedy and was reminded that she’s done good work on “Grey’s Anatomy” and was actually quite good in “Knocked Up.” Then why has she made such horrible films since then? Why have we had to suffer through “27 Dresses,” “The Ugly Truth,” “Killers,” and, now, “Life As We Know It,” recently released on Blu-ray and DVD and a film that doesn’t break her downward slide even if it does slow it a bit.



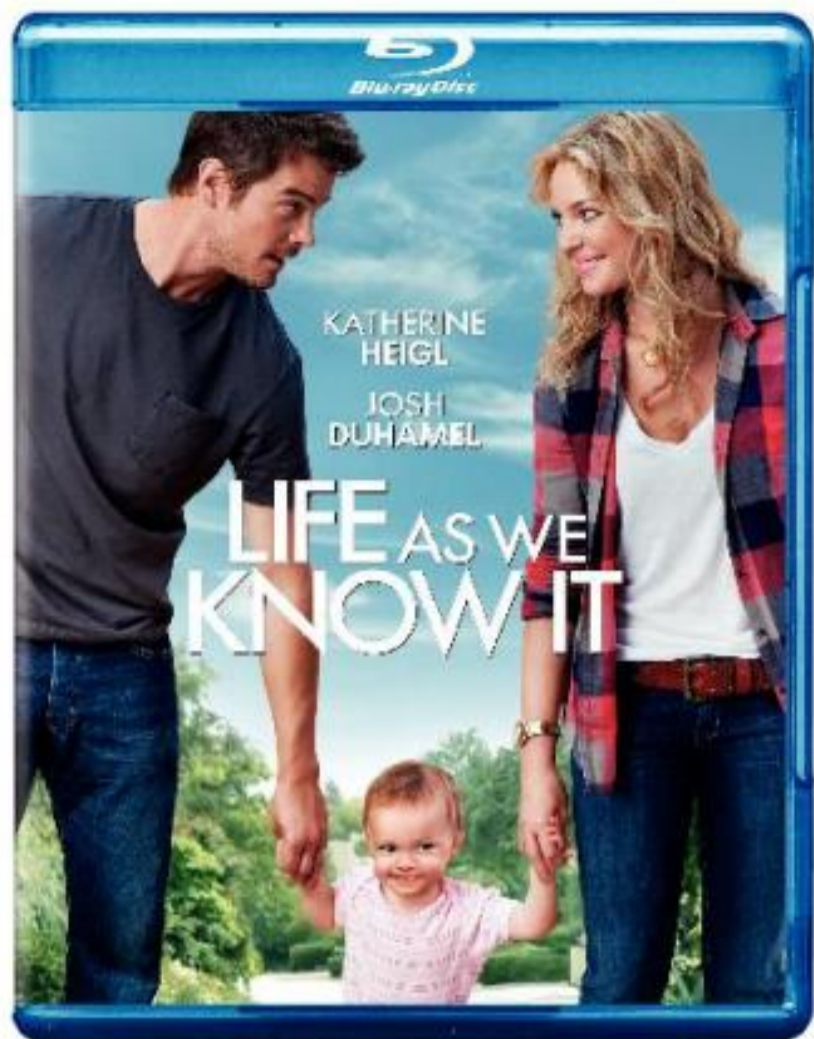
To be fair, Heigl is better here than in the other three chapters of the quartet of romantic crap, but that almost makes it worse. You can see glimpses of the quality actress she could be if she just fired her agent or hired someone to find her better scripts. Even Josh Duhamel, an actor who once seemed charming but more often seems bored now, finds more character here than in junk like “When in Rome,” but neither of the stars can do anything to save this project that doesn’t understand family, friendship, romance, or, most of all, parenthood.



Life As We Know It was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on February 8th, 2011

Photo credit: Warner Bros. Home Video

“Life As We Know It” would have to make any list of the most forced set-ups in romantic comedy history. After hating each other for years but sharing mutual friends (including Christina Hendricks of “Mad Men,” who one hopes would stick around much longer than the brief opening), Holly (Heigl) and Messer (Duhamel) are granted custody of a baby girl after her parents named them official guardians in the case of a disaster. Not only do Holly and Messer want to honor the wishes of their friends, but they are forced to live together to do so. Will they fall in love over diapers and baby food? Have you ever seen a movie?



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Photo credit: Warner Bros. Home Video

The concept of “Life As We Know It” is so paper-thin that it becomes dependent on the execution. We need to not only believe Holly and Messer but we need to like them and think that they’ll not only be good parents but a good couple. Sadly, all of the brief glimpses of character development is discarded as the horrendous script falls victim to the same sitcomish dynamic as most material involving parenthood in film — total idiocy. Why do all new parents in modern movies have to act like complete morons? We see Holly and Messer hanging out with the baby before her parents die but when they’re given responsibility they behave like people who have never even seen a baby before.

And, of course, “Life As We Know It” has to fall victim to the expected traps of the baby movie genre. At barely over half-an-hour, both leads have been spit up on. Five minutes later, a dirty diaper is treated like a nuclear bomb. Are these grown-ups? No, they’re movie characters. At one point, Katherine Heigl even has baby crap on her face. One only hopes the paycheck was worth it.

The attempts at honest emotion feel like manipulation and the film runs stunningly long, getting close to two hours. So much of “Life As We Know It” is just tonally wrong. Are we supposed to laugh when the baby pulls out an old man’s breathing tubes? It seems like no one is sure. And that lack of confidence pervades the entire film, never more damagingly than in the final act when the romance is supposed to kick in but doesn’t feel genuine.

“Life As We Know It” is nowhere near as reprehensible as “27 Dresses” or “Killers” but it certainly doesn’t change the direction of Heigl’s career. Just slowly keeps it going in the same direction.

Synopsis:

“After a disastrous first date for caterer Holly (Katherine Heigl) and network sports director Messer (Josh Duhamel), all they have in common is a dislike for each other and their love for their goddaughter Sophie. But when they suddenly become all Sophie has in this world, Holly and Messer must set their differences aside. Juggling careers and social calendars, they’ll have to find common ground while living under the same roof. Josh Lucas, Christina Hendricks, Hayes MacArthur and Jean Smart co-star in this tart and tender romantic comedy directed by Greg Berlanti (Brothers & Sisters, Everwood).”

Special Features:

- o A Survival Guide to Parenting
- o Katherine Heigl: Becoming the Best Mom Ever
- o Josh Duhamel: The Triplet Tamer
- o Additional Scenes

‘Life As We Know It’ stars Katherine Heigl, Josh Duhamel, and Josh Lucas. It was written by Ian Deitchman & Kristin Rusk Robinson and directed by Greg Berlanti. It was released on Blu-Ray and DVD on February 8th, 2011. It is rated PG-13 and runs 114 minutes.

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