

Film Review: The Dog Days of Diane Keaton in 'Darling Companion'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 27, 2012 - 5:47pm

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CHICAGO – “If you want a friend in Washington,” Harry S. Truman once said, “get a dog.” The same can be said for the film industry, as they keep producing canine quandaries. Diane Keaton, Kevin Kline, Sam Shepard and Elisabeth Moss cozy up to their own ‘Darling Companion.’



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

This is about folks of a certain age who are contemplating some of their own mortality, and what prompts such action is a person’s best friend, a mutt named Freeway. The film is unusually paced, almost leisurely so, and the cast is all-around excellent, no doubt dog lovers all. Diane Keaton still has the power to shoulder a film, and old pros Dianne Wiest, Richard Jenkins and Kevin Kline also get to sink their teeth into a film that’s about losing that dog, but never allowing it to sink into cloying sentiment. Pets become one of our most treasured relationships, and their unconditional love teaches us a few lessons in human relations, as the film illustrates.

Beth (Diane Keaton) and her graduate student daughter Grace (Elisabeth Moss) come upon a injured dog on the side of a freeway. They take a risk and bring it to a veterinarian named Sam (Jay Ali), and he brings the pooch back to health. Beth decides to keep the dog – much to the consternation of her husband Joseph (Kevin Kline) – and Sam also starts to date Grace. A year later, the couple becomes engaged (so far, if the dog wasn’t involved, this would be the plot to “The Five-Year Engagement”). Freeway, as they now have named the dog, has become so entrenched in the family he participates in the wedding ceremony.

All the guests staying are staying at Utah mountain lodge where the wedding took place, including Joseph’s sister Penny (Dianne Wiest), her boyfriend Russell (Richard Jenkins) and her son Bryan (Mark Duplass). The happiness of the weekend dissipates when Freeway runs away, putting into motion a search effort that will involve the lodge manager named Carmen (Ayelet Zurer), a woman with a gypsy heritage who can sense where Freeway might be, and the local law enforcement through Sheriff Morris (Sam Shepard). As the family searches for the dog, they also confront certain life issues that desire resolution.

“Darling Companion” continues its release on April 27th in Chicago. Check local listings for theaters and showtimes. Featuring Diane Keaton, Kevin Kline, Dianne Wiest, Richard Jenkins, Elizabeth Moss, Sam Shepard, Mark Duplass, Ayelet Zurer and Kasey as Freeway. Screenplay by Lawrence Kasdan and Meg Kasdan. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan. Rated “PG-13”



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Diane Keaton (Beth) and Elizabeth Moss do a Freeway Rescue in 'Darling Companion'
Photo credit: Wilson Webb for Sony Pictures Classics

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