

Film Review: Hey Lovers, ‘Safe Haven’ is a Decent Date Movie

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 14, 2013 - 1:36pm

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CHICAGO – It’s Valentine’s Day, and along with the impossible to get dinner reservations, the decision of which movie to see has probably spoiled this holiday as much as Walgreen roses. But the romantic drama ‘Safe Haven’ is a well performed, well paced narrative that won’t make you gag, and that includes you wishing-to-see-Die-Hard dudes.



Credit for this probably goes to director Lasse Hallström (“Chocolat,” “Casanova”) who knows a thing about romantic canoodling, and the earnest cast that includes Julianne Hough and Josh Duhamel. Based on a novel by Nicholas Sparks (“The Notebook”), the story itself has an air of well established mystery, which adds some depth to the characters that make them more interesting. Hallstrom also adds some touches that are unexpected, with a nod toward Hitchcock. Also Hough and Duhamel’s characters are seeking some sort of redemption, which makes a love story more motivated and savory. Debate the odd ending all you want, but this Valentine’s Day movie makes its case.

The film opens with a woman (Julianne Hough) running through a Boston neighborhood, obviously on the lam. We follow her through the escape, with a cop named Tierney (David Lyons) hot on her trail. She cleverly boards a bus going south, and manages to slip away. At a rest stop in a North Carolina oceanfront town, she finds some peace, and decides to stay there under the name Katie. She takes up residence in a woodsy cabin, with only Jo (Cobie Smulders from “How I Met Your Mother”) as a remote neighbor.

A notably attractive woman coming into a small town gives rise to some attention, and the local shopkeeper named Alex (Josh Duhamel) takes a interest in the new arrival. This surprises those around him, because he hasn’t been the same since losing his wife to cancer two years earlier. He cares for his kids Josh (Noah Lomax) – who hasn’t gotten over his mother’s death – and Lexie (Mimi Kirkland), who welcomes his father’s new love interest. The Boston cop keeps up his obsession to find Katie, and slowly begins to crack the case. The race is on between finding a fugitive and finding romance.

“Safe Haven” opens everywhere on February 14th. Featuring Julianne Hough, Josh Duhamel, Cobie Smulders, Mimi Kirkland, Noah Lomax and David Lyons. Screenplay adapted by Leslie Bohem, based on a novel by Nicholas Sparks. Directed by Lasse Hallström. Rated “PG-13”

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On the Beach: Katie (Julianne Hough) and Alex (Josh Duhamel) in 'Safe Haven'
Photo credit: Relativity Media

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