

Film Review: Sins of Modern Parenting Are ‘What Maisie Knew’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 24, 2013 - 8:50am

- [Alexander Skarsgard](#) [2]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [3]
- [Julianne Moore](#) [4]
- [Millennium Entertainment](#) [5]
- [Movie Review](#) [6]
- [New York City](#) [7]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [8]
- [Steve Coogan](#) [9]

CHICAGO – When mixing parenting responsibility, the separation of those parents and a legal system that cannot address the farce of human retaliation, the results become “What Maisie Knew.” Julianne Moore portrays a rock star, and the mother to the title character.



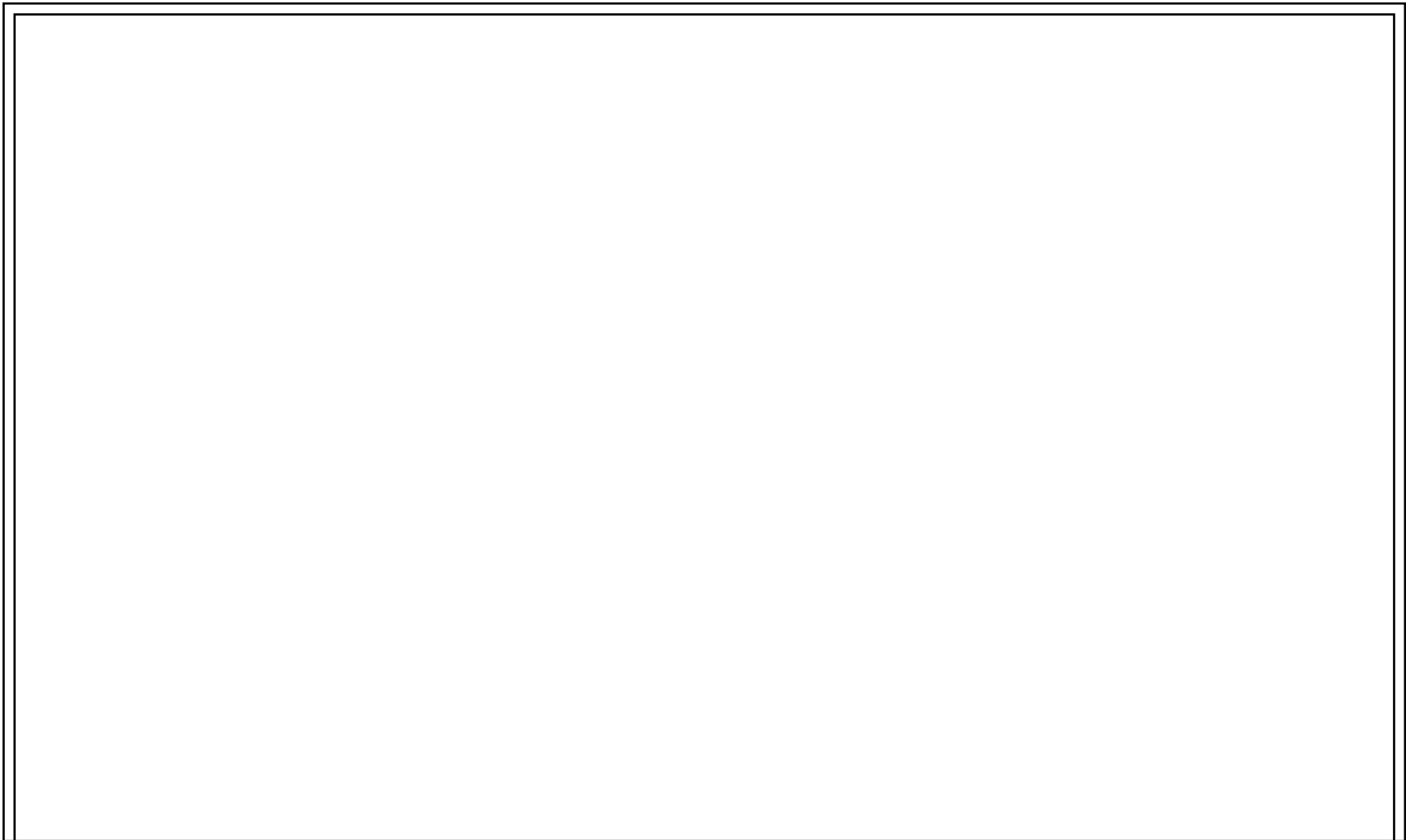
This is a poignant and relatable story, given the fly-by modern society that substitutes money and technology for responsibility and connection. Maisie is the child caught in the middle of her parent’s messy separation, but she is also caught in the web of “it’s not my turn to watch her.” The strange circumstances that result from such a emotional alchemy is fascinating to experience, but bitter in the context of empathy. It may be that Maisie eventually gets her satisfaction, but the price that is paid for it might never leave her psyche.

Susanna (Julianne Moore) is a fading rock star who is married to Beale (Steve Coogan), a somewhat shady international businessman. They have a 7 year-old daughter named Maisie (Onata Aprile), who experiences their constant arguing. Eventually the marriage disintegrates, and the legalities of custody falls upon Beale. It turns out that he had been conducting an affair with Margo (Joanna Vanderham), who is Maisie’s nanny.

This begins the ping-pong effect of who will take care of the child. Margo continues her caregiver role as she becomes Beale’s wife, and Susanna counters that move by “marrying” a bartender named Lincoln (Alexander Skarsgard) to legitimize her claim to Maisie. Neither parent takes the gauntlet of responsibility, and more often than not Maisie ends up with Margo or Lincoln. This begins an alteration of the child’s universe, as in the humans who bring a person into the world are not equipped to guide them through it.

“What Maisie Knew” continues its limited release in Chicago on May 24th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Julianne Moore, Steve Coogan, Alexander Skarsgard, Joanna Vanderham and Onata Aprile. Screenplay by Nancy Doyne and Carroll Cartwright. Directed by Scott McGehee and David Siegel. Rated “R”

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Susanna (Julianne Moore) and Maisie (Onata Aprile) in ‘What Maisie Knew’
Photo credit: Millennium Entertainment

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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/julianne-moore>
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- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22196/sins-of-modern-parenting-are-what-maisie-knew>