

Film Review: 'Labor Day' Provides Meaning to Romantic Tension

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 31, 2014 - 9:54am

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CHICAGO – There is a real power when the right filmmaker connects with the right performers. What appears on the surface to be a slight and well-worn story, gains a decided psychological edge. 'Labor Day' features Kate Winslet and Josh Brolin, and writer/director Jason Reitman.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The story – adapted from a novel by Joyce Maynard – is about a convict kidnapping a single mom and son after a prison break. In keeping them in place as he hides out, a relationship develops between the lonely matriarch and the escaped prisoner. This theme has been explored before, but Reitman takes it to another level of resolve. The underlying mood and tension involving the emerging adolescence of the captured boy, the break in the psychosis of the newly paired lovers and the overriding feeling that they might be caught at any moment creates a tension that raises the narrative stakes.

Adele (Kate Winslet) is a depressed single mother in 1987 whose son Henry (Gattlin Griffith) is her only advocate. She has become virtually a shut-in, only venturing out to get supplies every few months. On one of those runs during Labor Day weekend, a stranger named Frank (Josh Brolin) appears from the shadows and kidnaps the pair. He is an escaped convict from a local prison, and a roadblock is put up on all the potential small town getaway points.

This begins a standoff. Frank is essentially a decent guy, and proclaims his innocence. He becomes a protector for the mother and son, and quickly ingratiates himself into the clan. Over the next couple weeks, a bond grows between the escapee and Adele, which blossoms into an obsessive love. Henry represents this secret, and does everything in his power to hide the situation, as he is also under Frank's spell.

"Labor Day" opens everywhere on January 31st. Featuring Kate Winslet, Josh Brolin, Tobey Maguire, Clark Gregg, James Van Der Beek and Gattlin Griffith. Screenplay adapted and directed by Jason Reitman, from a novel by Joyce Maynard. Rated "PG-13"



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Adele (Kate Winslet), Henry (Gattlin Griffith) and Frank (Josh Brolin) in 'Labor Day'

Photo credit: Dale Robinette for Paramount Pictures



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