

Film Review: ‘Magic in the Moonlight’ is Woody Allen By the Book

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 25, 2014 - 3:53pm

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CHICAGO – After last year’s powerful “Blue Jasmine,” writer/director Woody Allen’s trajectory seemed destined toward another film masterpiece, but “Magic in the Moonlight” isn’t it. Colin Firth and Emma Stone are an unlikely pairing in this seen-it-before-Woody film trifle.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Again Allen goes back to the 1920s, an era he has explored before in “Bullets Over Broadway” and to a lesser degree “Midnight in Paris.” The elements of magicians and illusions have also been covered in “Shadows and Fog” and the underrated “Stardust Memories.” Thematically, it feels like Woody Allen has done this film before, even in the relationship between Colin Firth and Emma Stone, which generates zero chemistry. In his quest to make at least one film a year, the 78-year-old auteur has made this one a placeholder, albeit a funnier, more beautifully filmed and at times more interesting placeholder – better than most of the films out there.

Stanley (Colin Firth) is a master magician, renown for his ability to conjure illusions and expose hucksters trying to con people with similar sleights-of-hand. A fellow magician named Howard (Simon McBurney) asks Stanley to help his expose a psychic named Sophie (Emma Stone), who is traveling with her mother (Marcia Gay Harden) at the lavish estate of son Brice (Hamish Linklater) and mother Grace (Jacki Weaver).

Sophie is seemingly unbreakable in her abilities, and has an uncanny way of figuring out elements of Stanley’s life in an unsolicited manner. She begins to break down Stanley’s doubt, which has plagued him his entire life. After one amazing psychic event after another, Stanley becomes smitten with Sophie, which throws the delicate balance of his life out of synch. Will there truly be magic in the moonlight?

“Magic in the Moonlight” has a limited release, including Chicago, on July 25th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Colin Firth, Emma Stone, Simon McBurney, Hamish Linklater, Jacki Weaver, Marcia Gay Harden. Written and directed by Woody Allen. Rated “PG-13”



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Stanley (Colin Firth) and Sophie Are Together in ‘Magic in the Moonlight’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics



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