

Film Review: Susan Sarandon Plays Smother Mother in ‘The Meddler’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 29, 2016 - 7:34am

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CHICAGO – Some mothers are born great, others have greatness thrust upon them. The Mom of “The Meddler” – portrayed with precise intuition by Susan Sarandon – is of the greatness-of-the-future variety, by simply evolving to be herself. Rose Byrne as daughter Lori tags along.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

What places this story above and beyond the norm is that [it's the true story of writer/director Lorene Scafaria](#). [16] Her mother really did move to Los Angeles to be near her, after Lorene's father and her mother's husband passed away. In essence, it's an exploration into the emotions of the isolation of loss, and the coping mechanisms that different people use to mitigate it. What makes the film exceptional is how Sarandon handles the material written by Scafaria, and brings it to life. Her Marnie character is forced to understand why she is suddenly living a life she never planned for, and in that sense provides a deep well of feeling for a character that starts out as one thing, and becomes another.

Marnie (Sarandon) likes to call her daughter Lori (Rose Byrne) several times a day, because she “just has one more thing to tell her.” In a voice over, Marnie describes her new life in Los Angeles, which is financially free but socially inert. Her thirtysomething TV writer daughter is suffering through a harsh break up from Jacob (Jason Ritter), a self-absorbed movie star, and it's been two years since Marnie's New Jersey-based husband has passed away.

Eventually Lori escapes the clutches of the too-much-in-her-life mother, by giving the excuse of work in New York City, and Marnie is stuck on the other coast, wondering who to nurture. Enter Jillian (Cecily Strong), who desires a fancy wedding with her same sex partner, which Marnie steps in to provide. At the same time the meddling matriarch meets Zipper (J.K. Simmons), who takes an unwanted shine to her. Life is pulling Marnie into unexpected directions.

“The Meddler” continues its nationwide release in Chicago on April 29th. Featuring Susan Sarandon, J.K. Simmons, Rose Byrne, Cecily Strong, Michael McKean, Jason Ritter and Lucy Punch. Written and directed by Lorene Scafaria. Rated “PG-13”



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Marnie and Lori (Rose Byrne) React in ‘The Meddler’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics



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