

Film Review: 'Love, Simon' is a Palatable Queer Film Entry That Leaves Us Wanting

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on March 18, 2018 - 7:14pm

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CHICAGO – Anyone who has ever held a big secret knows that the weight of it is usually worse than the secret itself. The only thing worse than that is when the secret you're holding back is your true self. "Love, Simon" explores the all-too-familiar, high school coming of age story, but with the added complication of coming to terms with your sexuality and identity.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The importance of this film is undeniable, especially when it comes to mainstream representation. Director Greg Berlanti understands this and shows all due respect to the tough topic. With all of Berlanti's work on teen-based television shows ("Dawson's Creek", "No Ordinary Family", "The Tomorrow People", etc), he clearly understands how to highlight the emotional complexity, while keeping the character relatable and grounded. "Love, Simon" isn't lacking in flair either, with a colorful dance sequence and more red herrings than a fishing trip. Berlanti makes sure that every scene is vibrant and intoxicating, helping emphasize the film's high moments and to remind the audience that they always outweigh the lows.

The film provides a subtle visual feast, but it never lets you forget that this is a human-centered story, and Simon's (Nick Robinson) journey is the clear focus of the entire film. Elizabeth Berger and Isaac Aptaker develop Becky Albertalli's novel "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda", making sure to keep the story's youthful energy while raising the dramatic impact. Berger and Aptaker channel their past collaborations, especially "This is Us", and deliver powerful emotional gut punches tempered with enough feel-good moments to turn what could have been a roller coaster into a balanced and fluid Ferris wheel.

As I mentioned before, representation matters and is extremely important, which is why "Love, Simon" will hopefully be a great stepping stone into more queer and diverse stories that will be more representative of true LGBTQ+ lifestyles. Much like the endearing "Call Me by Your Name" last year, "Love, Simon" presents us with an almost fairytale-like premise that is not representative of the experience the majority of LGBTQ+ people face. Simon comes from a very supportive, suburban family and has a close group of open-minded friends. His privileges include white and straight-passing privilege, all while living in an upper-middle-class environment. As an intimate look into the mind of a person coming to terms with their sexuality and the process of self-acceptance, this film excels. As a gripping look into the way society and culture clash with LGBTQ+ coming out (like "Moonlight" depicted), "Love, Simon" leaves us wanting.

"Love, Simon" opened everywhere on March 16th. Featuring Nick Robinson, Josh Duhamel, Jennifer Garner, Alexandra Shipp, Katherine Langford, Keiynan Lonsdale, Tony Hale, Natasha Rothwell and Clark Moore. Directed by Greg Berlanti. Written by Elizabeth Berger and Isaac Aptaker. Rated "PG-13"



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Looking for love is harder than it looks in ‘Love, Simon’
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

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