

Film Review: Strange Story of ‘Disobedience’ is Constant Distraction

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 9, 2018 - 10:26am

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CHICAGO – The director Sebastían Lelio is no stranger to oddball human stories. His 2017 film, “A Fantastic Woman” – the Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film – was a one-of-a-kind but amazingly poignant story of identity. His latest, “Disobedience,” mines the same human territory with lesser results.



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

The film is based on a novel by Naomi Alderman, and this is another film in the latest trend to infiltrate the world of Orthodox Jews (like the recent “Menashe” and upcoming “To Dust”). The two Rachels – Weisz and McAdams – portray lovers brought together again through the circumstance of the death of a Orthodox rabbi... who happens to be the father of Weisz’s character. The return of that character to her roots upsets the delicate balance of the closed society. The key and centerpiece lesbian relationship is entirely distracting to the larger themes of the story, not helped by the two familiar performers playing out the affair. There also is a familiar conclusion in the story as well, which also doesn’t serve the slow pacing of the film by director Lelio. It was a perfect example of how to make a pretty wild story less wild.

Rav Krushka (Anton Lesser) drops dead in the middle of a Orthodox Jewish service in London. This shakes the small community, including his right hand man Dovid Kuperman (Alessandro Nivola, unrecognizable) and his wife Esti (Rachel McAdams). Somehow, Krushka’s prodigal daughter Ronit (Rachel Weisz) makes it back for Shiva, much to the surprise of the whole gathering.

It becomes clear that Esti and Ronit had more of a friendship than is first thought, and the sexual tension between them is soon being manifested in the usual dark corners. Meanwhile Dovid is being touted as the new rabbi for his community, and cannot abide the non-patriarchal interruptions of Ronit. The relationship between the two women starts to achieve an intensity, which means decisions will have to be made.

“Disobedience” opened in Chicago on May 4th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Rachel Weisz, Rachel McAdams, Alessandro Nivola, Nicholas Woodeson, Anton Lesser. Screenplay adapted by Rob Greenberg and Rebecca Lenkiewicz. Directed by Rob Greenberg. Rated “R”



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The Two Rachels – McAdams and Weisz – are Lovers in ‘Disobedience’

Photo credit: Bleecker Street Media



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