

‘Life as We Know It’ is More Schlock From Katherine Heigl

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 8, 2010 - 9:40am

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Since her breakthrough “comic” role in “Knocked Up,” Katherine Heigl has a line-up of titles that almost reads like parody – “27 Dresses,” “The Ugly Truth,” “Killers” – but there had to be some audience or they really wouldn’t exist. She makes just enough box office to keep working, which explains the latest and maybe worst of the bunch, “Life As We Know It”

With a premise that could only happen in the absurd parallel universe of movieland, Katherine Heigl is yet again single (in real life, Heigl couldn’t get down a city block and remain single) and yet again has one of those vague high paying small businesses (muffins!) that somehow manages to give her enough time to meander through another crash-and-burn narrative.

This time her name is Holly, and the film opens she is waiting for a date (cue skin crawling). It is a set-up, because apparently she spends so much time at the Muffin Shop that no one ever notices her. The date, named Messer (Josh Duhamel) is a motorcycle riding wreck, who wastes the comic opportunity of squeezing into Holly’s tiny Smartcar by setting up a booty call. Our heroine, tormented by this behavior, kicks the cad to the curb before the match-up can begin.

Except they are not done, they are too pretty to be done. The date was set up for them by their mutual best friends, Peter (Hayes MacArthur) and Allison (Christina Hendricks), happily married couple with a beautiful baby daughter named Sophie. In fact, Holly and Messer come together again on the occasion of Sophie’s first birthday, which gives them an opportunity to hate one another anew.



Not Smart First Date: Josh Duhamel as Messer, Katherine Heigl as Holly in ‘Life As We Know It’
Photo Credit: Peter Iovino for © Warner Bros. Pictures

In an oh-my-gawd-I-can't-believe-they-did-it twist, Peter and Allison die in an automobile accident. And as it happens in so many custody cases, the couple in their will stipulates that Holly and Messer will be the guardians of Sophie. I wish I were making that up. Yep, the polar opposites set up housekeeping in the dead couple's home (conveniently paid for in the will) and become reluctant parents. And yes, they will hate each other until they don't.

Even the hare core romantic comedy audience this thriller is targeted toward will have a hard time swallowing that any sane parents would make the stipulation that Peter and Allison did, so the film starts out with the main premise being extremely flawed. The legal and moral gymnastics just to get the couple into the house with Sophie would make Mary Lou Retton blush, not to mention (though I will) that the State gets involved through a wacky case worker (Sarah Burns), who exists simply to set up random visits that catch the couple being naughty (skin crawl II).

Katherine Heigl is a pleasant enough actress, certainly strikingly attractive in a movie star way, but she has the worst taste in scripts. Maybe after all the other potential "rom-com" actresses (Drew Barrymore, for example) have picked through the pile this is all that was left. In an interview with this publication, director Greg Berlanti said that the script had been circulating for seven years. There is a reason for this...it stinks. Even the best comic actors couldn't wring a laugh out of this situation, and all the elements – clueless non-parents, cute baby, even a little pot smoking – still could not revive this corpse of a script.

The actors try, oh how they try. Duhamel, the eye candy hunk, is completely miscast as the rebel with a diaper bag. There is not a single man on earth, with the life that he has, that would take on raising a child. In that scenario, a normal person would have enough sanity to understand that there are other people out there who would do anything to welcome a cute upper middle class baby into their homes. And although Duhamel is giving it the old actor's try, at not one point in this film can we believe he's a Daddy, except that the script says he is.

This story is voyeurism in a category I like to call "Socio-Economic Porn." People with nonchalant high end disposable incomes create the perfect life, free of stress and all about love. They die, and the "best friends" pick up where they left off, even though their jobs are not as lucrative as the dead people. But wait, Messer has enough money to fund Holly's expansion of her Muffin Shop. Ain't the American Dream grand and aren't we lucky to be entertained by it?



We Are Family: Josh Duhamel, Baby Sophie and Katherine Heigl in 'Life As We Know It'
Photo Credit: Peter Iovino for © Warner Bros. Pictures

Director Greg Berlanti began his career with one of the most natural romantic comedies even made, "The Broken Hearts Club (2000)," It was from his own script. I don't blame him for this mess, because I know that the film couldn't have been made without the Katherine Heigl green light. Katie, you have some explaining to do.

In the true spirit of Socio-Economic porn, there is one more act of voyeurism that will fit within the framework of a Katherine Heigl romantic comedy. The box office returns will come in, and we can all cheer when the film is number one. Or if there is cultural justice, the numbers simply won't be there.

"Life As We Know It" opens on October 8th everywhere. Featuring Katherine Heigl, Josh Duhamel, Christina Hendricks, Sarah Burns, Josh Lucas and Will Sasso. Screenplay by Ian Deitchman and Kristin Rusk Robinson, directed by Greg Berlanti. Rated "PG-13." [Click here](#) [13] for the HollywoodChicago.com interview of Director Greg Berlanti of Life As We Know it.

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