

# ‘Definitely, Maybe’ Borrows From Successful Romantic Comedies, Adds Fresh Hook

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CHICAGO – The makers of “Love Actually” and “Notting Hill” know how to do romantic comedy that doesn’t somehow fall into the trap of a formulaic chick flick like “27 Dresses”. “Definitely, Maybe,” which is their latest effort, on the other hand isn’t particularly original and really isn’t very funny.



Isla Fisher in “Definitely, Maybe”.  
Photo credit: IMDb

That said, the picture still feels fresh and doesn’t do anything overly cutesy that will elicit groans from the reluctant boyfriends who will be dragged to the film this weekend. So long as you pick a comfortable seat, you’ll have an enjoyable two hours.

Ryan Reynolds plays Will Hayes: the quintessential Manhattan advertising executive. His hectic life gets a little crazier when he’s served with divorce papers.

On top of that, he learns his 10-year-old daughter, Maya (Abigail Breslin from “Little Miss Sunshine”), just started sex education in school. She begins asking questions about why his parents can’t stay together and wonders about her father’s romantic history, which leads him to tell the story of the women in his life since the early 1990s.

In most romantic comedies, you know Meg Ryan will be getting together with Tom Hanks in the final scene and you just have to hold on for the ride. “Definitely, Maybe” seems to borrow from TV’s “How I Met Your Mother” and doesn’t immediately reveal who Maya’s mother is or why that woman is divorcing Will.

Adding to that, the viewer knows – despite what happiness comes about in the flashbacks – the character is ultimately going to have to deal with the impending divorce before the movie ends. It’s the elements of mystery mixed with underlying depressing tone set at the beginning that makes this movie more emotionally involved than your run-of-the-mill Valentine’s Day release.



Elizabeth Banks and Ryan Reynolds in "Definitely, Maybe".  
Photo credit: IMDb

Ryan Reynolds is solid and it's his goofy, lovable looks that sell what would possibly be a dull script. Isla Fisher from "Wedding Crashers" sparkles in every one of her scenes.

Fisher, who is about two seconds from being a box-office draw on her own right, shares the billing for this film with the equally beautiful and gifted Elizabeth Banks and Rachel Weisz.

Kevin Kline plays Weisz's father: an opinionated, old writer complaining about the state of everything in society.

The film was penned and directed by lovey-dovey film veteran Adam Brooks. Brooks can be credited for "French Kiss" and "Practical Magic" and blamed for "Wimbledon" and "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason". Most of the elements of this picture feel strongly borrowed from other successful romances.

The locations in the upper west side of New York bring back memories of "You've Got Mail" and "Serendipity". His creative jobs in advertising and politics remind you of "What Women Want" and "When Harry Met Sally". The soundtrack of Will's life even includes Badly Drawn Boy, who was last featured on the big screen accompanying another manboy in "About a Boy".

What makes or breaks a romantic comedy is the ending. While the "Definitely, Maybe" finale doesn't tread any new ground, it comes across warm without feeling hokey. In the genre that has a spectrum ranging from "Sweetest Thing" to "Annie Hall," this film clearly falls into the more intelligent side.

The picture makes for a nice Valentine's Day date that won't leave the men emasculated. "Definitely, Maybe" gives an enjoyable experience that the audience can walk away from not thinking they've found another guilty-pleasure film.

*"Definitely, Maybe" opened on Feb. 14, 2008.*

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By [DUSTIN LEVELL](#) [14]  
Senior Staff Writer  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[dustin@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:dustin@hollywoodchicago.com) [13]

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