

‘Endless Love’ Remake Feels Like Endless Slog

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 14, 2014 - 10:51am

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – It’s Valentine’s Day movie remake weekend! Hot on the heels of the “About Last Night” redo, comes our love, our “Endless Love” – and it’s interesting that the film doesn’t use that song at all, not even for a hip-hop version. That’s just one of many problems in a remake that doesn’t generate any heat or dramatic conflict, unless you wonder if a rich woman will ever write another best seller.

It’s not all that bad, if you’re looking for a bland way to spend 103 minutes in an early relationship Valentine’s Day date – during the multiple down-times in the film you can gaze at each other – but it will have also the potential to lull you into slumber, so don’t eat a big meal before going. There is no relationship to the first film at all, the production opted to go in a different direction, trading the obsessive (and more interesting) love of the first film for upper middle class porn, an emphasis on all the shiny stuff that the rich family has. And it doesn’t really end as much as run out of steam. In a coin-flip between remakes, “About Last Night” versus “Endless Love,” go for “The LEGO Movie,” which has a much more realistic love triangle.

Jade Butterfield (Gabriella Wilde) is at her high school graduation, after keeping to herself for the entire four years of schooling. A tragic circumstance with her brother Chris forced this hermitage, his death from cancer having affected her, her parents Hugh and Anne (Bruce Greenwood and Joely Richardson) and brother Keith (Rhys Wakefield) in different ways. But a classmate named David (Alex Pettyfer) has an eye for the fetching Jade, and sparks start to fly.



Endless Lovers: David (Alex Pettyfer) and Jade (Gabriella Wilde) in ‘Endless Love’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Jade decides to have a graduation party, and she and David go for more than just googly eyes at the event. Father Hugh is not amused, especially when Jade gives up an internship to spend the summer with her new love. Despite all efforts, Hugh and mother Anne can’t keep the new lovers apart, until a set of negative situations force Hugh’s hand. David cannot see Jade again, but their endless love might overcome this desperate roadblock.

It can be argued that the film isn’t about the couple, but on Greenwood’s interpretation of Hugh. He chews some scenery big time in this one, and his actor’s instinct steals scenes right and left. David’s father is played by the underrated Robert Patrick, and he seems more in line with character than Greenwood’s histrionics. Pettyfer also can’t stand up to Greenwood in their conflict moments together, another blow to the supposed “star-crossed lovers” conflict in the story.

Another intriguing notion about the film – the three main kids (the two lovers and the brother) are two Brits and an Aussie, portraying All-American types. There is no problem with this on the surface, except Wilde has problems maintaining her American accent, and Pettyfer had a hilarious phone call in which he’s suppose to be faking a British accent and it’s letter perfect. This across-the-board casting decision was a bit distracting.

While the 1981 version (with Brooke Shields as Jade) was at times an unintentionally funny soap opera, it still had some juice regarding the portrayal of obsessive love and longing. There was none of that in this remake, where it can be argued that the rich Butterfields have no problems, save for the overwrought memory of the departed son. Working class David certainly has no visible problems (he got 1290 on his SAT!), and even when Hugh does a background check, it takes more misunderstandings than an “I Love Lucy” episode to create a negative impression. Without key dramatic friction, the endless love just lies there. Even the “PG-13” sex is weird, and uncomfortably casual for high schoolers.



Mano a Mano: Hugh (Bruce Greenwood) Has it In for David in ‘Endless Love’
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The supporting cast is actually more compelling than the couple and Hugh. Joely Richardson as mother Anne is the frustrated writer, whose husband may be playing around on her – though the narrative drops that like a hot potato. Although it’s easy to tell she didn’t get much direction, her rendition of the pain Anne feels is palpable. And if you miss Kevin Hart, Dayo Okeniyi as David’s best friend fills in that persona admirably. It’s as if Hart is screaming his lines in yet another movie.

In conclusion, there was really no reason to remake “Endless Love,” at least through this interpretation. If the production would have changed all the names, it could have even been released under another title. My suggestion – “The Girl, The Guy, And the Very Nice Lake House.”

‘Endless Love’ opens everywhere February 14th. Featuring Alex Pettyfer, Gabriella Wilde, Bruce Greenwood, Robert Patrick, Joely Richardson and Dayo Okeniyi. Adapted by Shana Feste and Joshua Safran. Directed by Shana Feste. Rated “PG-13”



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