

Kevin Hart Takes a Plunge in ‘The Wedding Ringer’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 16, 2015 - 1:10pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “The Wedding Ringer” is a Wedding Stinker. It’s a misogynistic trip through a barren land of hackneyed premises, stock characters, female stereotypes and strained physical gags that exemplifies everything that is wrong with big studio comedies today. The sheer fact that it even lunges out of the starting gate is a credit to the whirlwind of activity from star Kevin Hart. But the little man’s riffing can’t shock this film to life.

Hart plays Jimmy - a professional best man for hire. He’ll give you the best man of your dreams for a very lucrative price. He’s apparently very successful – despite the fact his business is run out of a basement inside a run-down go-cart track. It’s really just another character that allows for Hart to run his mouth off. In one of the hoariest plot devices to come out of the old Hollywood script-o-matic, sad sack groom (Josh Gad) comes to Hart in desperation. He needs a best man and seven groomsmen in time for his wedding in 11 days. After much hemming and hawing Hart takes on the challenge. Why? Because we wouldn’t have a movie if he didn’t, that’s why.



Josh Gad and Kevin Hart Shout it Out in ‘The Wedding Ringer’

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing

Josh Gad may be gifted a Broadway performer but he’s unable to lend any humanity to his shapeless blob of a character. Hart is supposed to be part time mentor and professional best man, with Gad as the eager pupil But he provides so little in his scenes with Hart, you could replace

him with a cardboard cutout and probably not tell the difference. "The Big Bang Theory's" Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting plays Gad's bride-to-be, and she's locked into the regressive stereotype of the money-grubbing bridezilla who has to have everything just so. Yet somehow we're asked to accept she would wait until ten days before her wedding to even get to meet any of her husbands groomsmen – or best man.

This is a comedy that takes the wrong approach at nearly every turn. Trouble begins immediately when Gad's sad sack groom spends a fruitless afternoon trying to round up friends to be his groomsmen, and then for no reason whatsoever breaks the glass desk in his office. There's no joke or humor involved. It's just destruction, and ham-fisted destruction at that.

Worse yet is a family brunch where Gad must introduce Hart to his wife's clan, complete with gay slurs from the old football jock dad. For reasons unbeknownst to me, this brunch ends with Hart accidentally setting Cuoco's grandmother (Cloris Leachman) on fire. In the scene we see her clearly engulfed in flames as the family pours wine on her to try to put it out – only to see the fire burn hotter instead.

The movie is at its most tolerable when Hart is just riffing trying to whip either Gad or his rag-tag collection of seven groomsmen into shape. But from time-to-time this kind of big comedy just seems to pop in out of nowhere to stretch out its running time. This movie is a pitch meeting in search of a plot.



Josh Gad, Bride Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting and Kevin Hart in 'The Wedding Ringer'

Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing

I have no problem with comedy vehicles which are just paper thin clotheslines to hang a series of gags on, as long as at least some of them are funny. However, writer/director Jeremy Garelick doesn't seem to have a clue how to flesh out his five-minute pitch. "The Wedding Ringer" takes gags that didn't work the first time and then repeats them ad nauseam. In the entire runtime, I didn't laugh, guffaw, giggle, chuckle, smile, or even grin at the events before my eyes.

With each passing film, Hart's diminutive fast talking dynamo becomes more familiar, and Hart doesn't offer any new surprises here. I got a distinctly "Beverly Hills Cop II" vibe from this picture, because that was another brain dead would-be blockbuster that was coasting from the get go, and got as far as it did due solely to the charisma of its star. If he doesn't start picking better scripts, we could have a total eclipse of the Hart.

"The Wedding Ringer" opens everywhere on January 16th. Featuring Kevin Hart, Josh Gad, Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting, Olivia Thirlby, Josh Peck, Mimi Rogers and Cloris Leachman. Written and directed by Jeremy Garelick. Rated "R"



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