

You'll Be Counting the Minutes Until You Too Can Be 'Home Again'

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on September 10, 2017 - 12:17pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Seeing so many films on a daily basis, you would think that I would grow tired of them. I don't. Instead, I begin to notice the same formulas in films, like the one in "Home Again". Unfortunately for "Home Again" you'll spend most of the film wondering just how much longer before you can be the same.

The film uses the tried-and-true formula we have come to expect from many of these types of family comedies, except this one feels more tried than true. Much like Reese Witherspoon's character in the film, we as an audience deserve better. Too long have films like this one taken us (the audience) for granted. We deserve better than these stagnant, one-sided films that ultimately don't respect our time and leave us unfulfilled by the time they reach their predictable ends. We deserve something new, refreshing and exciting in our lives, and "Home Again" is not up to the task.



Who needs a man when you can have four in 'Home Again'

Photo credit: Open Road films

First-time writer/director Hallie Meyers-Shyer gives us an amalgam of every romantic comedy she has ever seen. The film's premise is the only part of this project that even makes any attempt at originality, and even that comes off as too convoluted to be enjoyable. A newly separated mother of two faces a midlife crisis that leads her to let three complete strangers stay with her and her young children. Each of the three men acts as a different, essential part of her psyche telling her what she should be doing or how she should be reacting. Their logic is sound, but no less upsetting to watch as they are essentially showing that they have more maturity and life wisdom than this single mother.

Meyers-Shyer doesn't aspire to anything beyond the low-hanging humor she infuses around this formulaic rom-com. Every joke or gag can be seen coming from the distance, and when it finally arrives, the most it can muster is a half-hearted chuckle. The only hope this film had of standing out of the crowd was with what seemed to be the story about empowering a single mother. This is where the film deviates from its

predictability and dives well into an infuriating territory. From the beginning of the film, you think you have it pegged. The mother is struggling to find herself after a separation, but through a series of hijinks and misadventures with three men, she realizes she doesn't need a man to validate her.



Reese Witherspoon and Pico Alexander share a moment in 'Home Again'

Photo credit: Open Road films

To a degree, the film achieved this moment, but by the time it reaches the final scene, we realize that this pseudo-feminist tale is, in fact, a way to show how much women and children need the influence of a man (or multiple men) in their life. With how much we've had to suffer through in this film, looking forward to an empowering ending in this farfetched tale was the only thing going for it. Instead, we get a mother facing a midlife crisis and trying to raise children with the help of her mother, who was also a single mother herself, realizing that it takes a village to raise children, but mostly a village of men. As a bad sitcom, this could work, but as a film, it just comes off as mediocre.

Reese Witherspoon is an actress with a varied range, but some extremes of hers should never be reached. When delivering a comedic performance, she tends to overact, which may have been funny the first couple of times (especially in "Legally Blonde") but dozens of films later it just comes off as grating. Earlier this year, she gave a great performance as a mother in "Big Little Lies". She gave a great dramatic performance, and with a character full of comical eccentricities. Witherspoon excels at these kinds of dramatic roles, which allow her to show us her dynamic range while simultaneously letting her show accents of comedy that comes off as effortless and lands every time. You don't get any of that in this film. Instead, she joins other great actors in this film that were either criminally underused or used incorrectly, such as Candice Bergen and Michael Sheen.

"Home Again" opened everywhere on September 8th. Featuring Reese Witherspoon, Nat Wolff, Lake Bell, Michael Sheen, Candice Bergen and Pico Alexander. Screenplay by Hallie Meyers-Shyer. Directed by Hallie Meyers-Shyer. Rated "PG-13"



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