Written by Gallupsun Staff
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Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 88 minutes

With Valentine’s Day approaching, it isn’t a surprise to see a new rom-com arriving in theaters. *Isn’t It Romantic* tries to provide a few new wrinkles to the formula with a lead character who hates the movie genre and all the falsehoods it projects. Of course, the film can’t help but end up repeating some of the elements it attempts to make fun of. Still, thanks to an entertaining lead and the film’s breezy charm, there’s enough amusing material here to earn it a recommendation.

After being told as a child that Hollywood romantic comedies are a complete lie, an adult Natalie (Rebel Wilson) works as an architect at a Manhattan firm. Closing herself off from others, she struggles to get noticed for her talent and rebukes the attention of co-worker Josh (Adam Devine). Of course, Natalie also complains to her rom-com addicted assistant Whitney (Betty Gilpin) how much she hates the genre and its ridiculous story elements.

After taking a knock to the head, the protagonist awakens in an idyllic New York, as seen in these films and desperately searches for a way out. In the process, she must deal with the advances of billionaire businessman Blake (Liam Hemsworth). This may be the first leading role for Wilson and she makes the most of it. There are some great (and for this reviewer, relatable)

lines early on as Natalie dissects all of the genre clichés and is forced to deal with some terrible treatment by others.

She also sells the physical comedy, in particular during an extended mugging which leaves the character engaged in a very long and awkward attempt to keep hold of her purse while the attacker grapples with her, trying to escape.

It all serves as a very funny contrast to the cleaned up, PG-13 rom-com world, which is shot in a bright and vibrant manner. Naturally, in this fantasy world everyone lives in large spotless apartments, where seemingly impossible coincidences occur, and no one ever swears. The character’s initial reactions and desperation to get out of this happy but unsettling place are extremely entertaining. And there’s also plenty of chemistry between cast members, who play well off of each other, selling a couple of lines that may not have worked otherwise.

However, there are some minor flaws present. While the screenplay amusingly deconstructs some aspects of the genre, it ultimately can’t help but adhere to other elements. By the final third, the story is forced into addressing the various relationships and romances, and these bits aren’t as sharp or funny. And admittedly, since viewers are assuming all of this is happening within the main character’s unconscious state, there isn’t as much drama and tension onscreen as there might be otherwise.

The film’s message and moral are nice, but are stated fairly explicitly and as such, the revelation isn’t much of a surprise.

Still, the movie’s concept is solid. It moves at a quick clip and the lead actress and other cast members have first-rate comic timing. That means that there’s plenty here to enjoy, and even some amusing bits for those who aren’t enamored with romantic comedies. *Isn’t It Romantic* may not be a classic, but one could certainly do much worse than visit with this light, breezy and fun effort.

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By Glenn Kay
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