

Rating: ««

out of «««««

Running Time:
96 minutes

This feature from Vertical Entertainment is now in theaters.

Everyone is familiar with romantic-comedies and their numerous tropes. The new film *Maybe I Do*
attempts to add some wrinkles to the formula by making the parents of a troubled young couple the centerpiece of the story.

Unfortunately, it is an unexpectedly muted affair that doesn’t take full advantage of its unique elements. The impressive cast is wasted and it comes across as contrived. In fact, it feels like a stilted stage play, even though it was written directly for the screen.

Michelle (Emma Roberts) is a young woman growing tired of her boyfriend Allen’s (Luke Bracey) attempts to avoid the topic of marriage.

After an incident at a friend’s wedding, Michelle delivers an ultimatum to her man. She tells him

that the relationship is over if he doesn’t propose. The two then go their separate ways for the rest of the evening. Michelle seeks counsel from her parents Howard (Richard Gere) and Grace (Diane Keaton), while Allen discusses the prospect of marriage with his bickering guardians, Monica (Susan Sarandon) and Sam (William H. Macy).

Realizing that they have never introduced their families, Michelle and Allen set up a dinner party before making a final decision. Little do the two know that their elders are already involved with each other.

This synopsis sounds intriguing and promises a lot of conflict and humor, but the picture sets itself up in an awkward manner. After the blow-up between the young lovers, we see lengthy separate secret interactions between Howard and Monica in a hotel room, as well as an evening with Grace and Sam.

There are some amusing comments and concerns brought up by all the individuals, but the scenes don’t play as dynamically as they should. Everyone discusses the potential danger their dalliances might cause with their partners, but we don’t feel any stress or tension. And, as Michelle and Allen fade into the background, viewers become less than invested in their issues.

The second act includes Michelle and Allen having heartfelt and overly earnest discussions about marriage with their parents. It’s only in the final third when the movie tries to deliver on its promise of an awkward, humorous dinner between adults who share a complicated history. But once again, the movie fails to capitalize on the concept.

The performers bug their eyes out at each other, behave oddly and leave to have private discussions with their secret partners about how to proceed. It’s impossible to believe that any individual wouldn’t immediately take note and confront their spouse for behaving this bizarrely. It’s all so unconvincing that this reviewer was initially convinced the source material must have been clumsily adapted from the stage.

While there never is much reason to care about Michelle or Allen, the rest of the cast are extraordinarily talented and manage to eke out a funny line or two from their predicament.

Still, it all comes across as flat and unimaginative. Perhaps taking a non-linear presentation would have worked more effectively. Or getting the entire group of characters together much earlier in the story and pushing them to hide their infidelities or displaying more outrage at their spouses might have energized things.

It would also have been fun to see an extended family member at the household and see their reaction to these secrets coming out. But sadly, this never occurs. The viewer is always more informed and a step ahead of the protagonists, minimizing any suspense or surprise during their interactions.

It’s nice to see all these great actors share the screen together, and some individual observations on the institute of marriage are intriguing, but things wrap up in an overly genial and predictable manner. *Maybe I Do* is a missed opportunity to humorously display some of the difficulties of maintaining a marriage. The movie lacks big laughs and doesn’t deliver enough surprises, nor does it even provide a warm and fuzzy romantic feeling. In the end, it might be better to pass on this offer.

VISIT: ***WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM***

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun