

## Scrambled' takes a humorous approach to a stressful subject

Written by gallupsun  
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Rating: 3 out of 4

Running Time: 97 minutes

This picture from Lionsgate opens exclusively at theaters in Albuquerque and other markets on Friday, Feb. 2.

For many, it is getting more and more difficult to have a baby. Having a busy life that includes juggling a career, finding the right partner, financial concerns and many other issues can push starting a family into the background. That is, until age and other health complications can force a decision into a priority. To some degree the stressful subject hardly seems the source of hilarity, but Scrambled attempts to tackle this subject with a humorous bent.

Nellie Robinson (Leah McKendrick) is a cash-strapped, 34-year-old woman who has left behind a long line of exes. Always the bridesmaid at weddings, her aging father (Clancy Brown) pesters her about grandkids and settling down, despite the fact that the lead's brother Jessie (Andrew Santino) is unlikely to be a dad anytime soon. Truth be told, Nellie's lifestyle choices don't get much support from anyone other than her mother (Laura Cerón) and best friend, Sheila (Ego Nwodin). But when her doctor (Feodor Chin) informs her that her ability to produce eggs is rapidly diminishing, Nellie considers the expensive procedure of freezing them, should she decide to have children at a later date. The process is incredibly rough and stressful for the protagonist, who must also deal with attending events for friends and acquaintances who are further along in their lives.

McKendrick is not only the star of the picture, but the writer and director, basing the story on her own experiences. She's a winning lead who is clearly familiar with the plight of the protagonist and plays the comedic and dramatic character beats more-than-convincingly.

Of course, for the sake of laughter several events seem to be exaggerated. Nellie's brother couldn't be more obnoxious and constantly makes appalling comments, especially his offer when she asks to borrow cash for her medical procedure. But while some bits may feel over-the-top, there are effectively biting and blunt observations on acquaintances who seem to

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be gloating over others while throwing themselves celebratory parties.

A large part of the picture is also made of Nellie reconnecting with exes in order to see if one of them might have matured and become a potential father. This results in plenty of scenes involving various, well, eccentric personalities. Almost none of the men in Nellie's past come off looking like anything less than a horror show (several have the nicknames to prove it), but their weird quirks and sometimes unhinged behavior frequently delivers laughs.

And on a more serious note, the movie also does an excellent job of detailing just how long, painful and psychologically taxing the process of freezing eggs truly is. There are many detailed steps involved, including a series of unpleasant injections, with one that must be timed down to the very minute. None of them are easy, nor do they guarantee success. These experiences do result in a few humorous comments, but as the story progresses the tone becomes more somber and earnest. This ultimately allows Nellie to deliver a very effective and poignant lecture about her trials that others will be oblivious to.

The job of switching gears from comedy to heavier drama toward the final act isn't always smooth, but thanks to the work of the star, most of the transitions work efficiently. If one were to nitpick, the movie does feel compelled to find a clear and defined resolution between Nellie and most of those whom she has had conflict with. But of course, this is primarily a comedy and so an upbeat resolution to the majority of the relationships doesn't feel like too much of an overreach.

While elements are magnified for comedic purposes, many elements of Scrambled do feel authentic and the movie comes across as an earnest and often hilarious comedy. It will also enlighten viewers about how rough the process of conceiving, or even considering having a child at a later age, can be. And if anyone has been through some of the events depicted, the film may even eke out a few tears. In the end, this is a strong feature and one that its creator can be proud of.

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