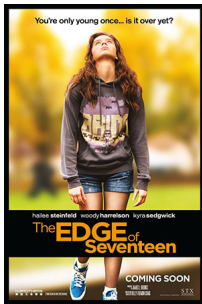


## 'The Edge of Seventeen' — A decent enough coming-of-age movie

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun  
Friday, 18 November 2016 07:03

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**Rating: «« out of 4 stars**

**Running Time: 102 min.**

First things first: despite being called *The Edge of Seventeen*, you're not going to hear the famous Stevie Nicks tune over the course of this film. I suppose it's a strange thing to take notice of, but when you name a movie after a song, you just kind of expect to hear it at some point. Regardless of how that didn't happen, this effort is a decent enough coming-of-age movie. In fact, it is more than likely to entertain young viewers. However, as someone from an entirely different demographic, this feature offered little more than some decent performances and a few scattered laughs.

Nadine (Hailee Steinfeld) is an awkward, socially anxious teen who has struggled to make friends all of her life. Thankfully, she's always had Krista (Haley Lu Richardson) on her side, through both good times and bad. But Nadine finds herself at a crossroads when Krista starts seeing her brother, Darian (Blake Jenner). Deeply offended by their budding relationship, she goes on the warpath. This involves rebelling in her own, unusual way and causing strife for her mother, Mona (Kyra Sedgwick) as well as irritating her favorite teacher, Mr. Bruner (Woody Harrelson).

Because she's so frustrated and lashing out at others, Nadine veers dangerously close to being completely unlikable. It's a difficult role for a young actor; having to display teenage disdain and not cross into obnoxiousness. Steinfeld does manage to pull it off, although not without a few stumbles (as a result of the occasionally stilted screenplay). Yes, she's clearly acting out by

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throwing out insults whenever she feels threatened, but her comments eventually do begin to feel more tired than amusing. And when she's forced to deal with her issues like her fragile mental state, the realization arrives too easily. It's like a light switch being turned on and with little blowback from any of the other characters.

At least Harrelson helps tremendously. Not only is his character the voice of reason, he lands every comedic line he's given for maximum effect. His deadpan manner, bluntly poking fun at his frustrated and anxiety-ridden student result in the film's best scenes and biggest laughs. A potential boyfriend named Erwin (Hayden Szeto) also gets a few chuckles thanks to his awkwardness around Nadine (even if the quirky banter does come across as forced at times).

All this results in some chuckles here and there before the family drama reaches a head. Unfortunately, the resolution comes too quickly and easily and doesn't resonate or make as big an impact as it should. There isn't much to learn from the story either, as Nadine simply comes to accept certain realities about her life. There isn't a big message here and older viewers won't glean much from what they're seeing (other than the fact that listening to the music of Billy Joel can have dire consequences).

Obviously, we've received several teen comedy/dramas over the past few years. *The Edge of Seventeen* is a little better than average compared to many other titles within its genre. However, it doesn't stand up to comparisons with *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* (2015) or *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012). Those efforts brought big laughs and packed just as much of an emotional punch. If you're a teenager simply looking for a fun flick it'll do just fine, but if you're an adult, you may want to hold off.

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