

Movie Review: '27 Dresses'

by David_Elliott

"27 Dresses" only seems like a lobotomy. In fact, this is public surgery to install a new vacuum tube for airheads into the generic chick flick, model 2008.

'27 DRESSES' - Newspaper reporter Kevin (James Marsden) offers a helping hand to fallen bridesmaid Jane (Katherine Heigl) in the romance film '27 Dresses.' CNS Photo courtesy of Barry Wetcher. RATINGS

4 STARS - Excellent.

3 STARS - Worthy.

2 STARS - Mixed.

1 STAR - Poor.

0 - Forget It (a dog.) Katherine Heigl, who is herself like a new model (of Ashley Judd, with a petal or two borrowed from media dandelions Britney and Paris), stars as Jane. A New York office workaholic, her real-life mission is to make weddings perfect. She always appears as a bridesmaid, and florid dresses jam her closet.

Jane is wry, creative, lovely, adorable, but naturally her caring, sensitive boss never notices her crush on him.

No, George (Edward Burns) is too busy being adorable himself. And bypassing Jane for her sister, Tess (Malin Akerman), a grabby blond who is like cellophane with teeth.

Tess purrs and lies her way into George's affection, which pinballs Jane toward stud Kevin (James Marsden). Kevin hates weddings and calls marriage "legal slavery" but is, of course, the top wedding columnist for a newspaper. He does hanker to write about Third World labor abuses.

Jane ditzily resists Kevin until they get drunk and rock the bar with a sloshy improv on Elton John's "Bennie and the Jets." And she never takes George aside for a discreet talk about Tess' current gambits and past revels with "Euro-trash boyfriends," opting to stage that revelation as a public rite of humiliation. Sort of a wedding shower with acid rain.

Director Anne Fletcher, sinking even below "Step Up," makes a marriage with Aline Brosh McKenna in pure concept hell: bride-on-a-toilet gags; a line clueing us in that Burns is "ridiculously handsome"; Jane's snarky assistant (Judy Greer) eager for a party where randy guys "bring tequila and bubble wrap!"; a joking Unibomber reference; a sitcomical Jewish-Hindu wedding; Jane having a naughty tantrum, yet with the stinger of her expletive deleted.

Oddly, the low point is neither the Elton John ripoff worthy of "Coyote Ugly" nor the creepy tell-all that wipes out Tess' wedding dream. Nor even the criminally U-turned rapprochements at the end. It is when Pedro, the Hispanic kid whom saintly George bonds with as Big Brother, is recruited by Tess as a domestic cleaner (this must be her idea of Big Mother).

How can you, without benefit of coma, forgive people who make a movie this bad? How can you understand anyone needing to see it? If this is comedy in 2008, then Sly Stallone can follow his new "Rambo" with a remake of "Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot."

A 20th Century Fox release. Director: Anne Fletcher. Writer: Aline Brosh McKenna. Cast: Katherine Heigl, James Marsden, Malin Akerman, Edward Burns, Judy Greer. Running time: 1 hour, 37 minutes. Rated PG-13.

0 stars.

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