

Movie Review: 'Then She Found Me'

by Nina Garin

The simple dramedy "Then She Found Me" isn't the kind of thing we usually see at the start of the summer film season.

This is the time of year when big stars (Cameron Diaz) and superheroes ("Iron Man") take us as far away from reality as possible. That's why a movie like "Then She Found Me," with all its complicated emotions and messy relationships, stands out for being a little too real.

'THEN SHE FOUND ME' - Schoolteacher April (Helen Hunt) finds romance with the parent (Colin Firth) of one of her students in the dramedy 'Then She Found Me.' CNS Photo courtesy of ThinkFilm. RATINGS

4 STARS - Excellent.

3 STARS - Worthy.

2 STARS - Mixed.

1 STAR - Poor.

0 - Forget It (a dog.) It begins at the first scene when we see Helen Hunt, the 1990s TV and movie darling, with a face that's obviously untouched by Botox. Those laugh lines are real. So are the wrinkles around her eyes. Because, like it or not, most women actually look like this.

Hunt directs and stars as April, a 39-year-old schoolteacher who can't get pregnant, another issue many women will find relatable. April was adopted, and because of it, she's determined to have a child of her own.

April marries Ben, an immature colleague played convincingly by Matthew Broderick. Ben is one of those irritatingly immature guys who wear baseball caps even though they're too old for it.

That marriage doesn't make it much past the opening credits. But that doesn't stop them from having breakup sex every so often.

April barely has time to process the separation before her pushy birth mother, Bernice, comes around trying to force a chummy relationship. Bernice is a morning talk-show host and is colorful and loud, so it's no surprise that she's played by Bette Midler.

Enter Colin Firth, the thinking woman's heartthrob.

Usually, he'd be the one to take the movie into romantic comedy escapism. But he actually makes things more complicated as Frank, a moody single father who falls for April.

Frank and April's relationship moves fast even though they're both so raw with pain that they often yell at each other and get jealous when they shouldn't.

There's a lot going on in this script and it could have been easy for Hunt to turn this into something farcical. After all, for years she was the overly cutesy Jamie on the sitcom "Mad About You."

But she is surprisingly restrained here, especially when she deals with the infertility and adoption issues. Her quiet anguish is something more relatable than the over-the-top stuff in "Baby Mama" and "Knocked Up."

Hunt uses this subdued approach with all her characters, leaving us to identify with them, and this movie, in a more human way.

"Then She Found Me." Running time: 1 hour, 40 minutes. Rated: R. 3 stars.

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