

by Kimberly_Gadette

Movie Review of "BECAUSE I SAID SO"

It's time for Diane Keaton to consider roles other than the matriarch of a warm, loving, slightly wacky family. She was a wonder in "Something's Gotta Give," perfectly fine in "The Family Stone," but now, in this third rendition of Mommie Dearest, it's time to call a moratorium on this mother. (Dear Mother of God, I see that in her next two movies she's at it again, starring in "Mama's Boy" and "Smother.") Ms. Keaton, it looks to be time for an intervention.

Diane Keaton and Mandy Moore star in "Because I Said So". Mother and daughter Keaton and Mandy Moore play culinary experts in a movie that suffers from too many cooks in the kitchen. The result: neither soup nor stew, neither meat nor cake. The film starts off whip cream light, then quickly adds in sentimental goo, then slapstick, more goo, plus four hefty doses of anthropomorphic doggy when the comedy starts to evaporate. It even folds in overused laugh lines ("I love being reduced to a cultural stereotype"; "Stop being a helicopter you're hovering"). The end result? Empty calories.

But the words must have looked good on the menuâ€”how else to explain the number of talented actors who volunteered to be in the mix?

The long and the shortcake of it: an overbearing mother of three lovely daughters (Keaton) decides that youngest daughter Milly (Ms. Moore) is incapable of choosing Mr. Right. She decides to run a personal ad on her child's behalf. Mom interviews the applicants herself, deciding who's the most suitable of suitors. If this sounds slightly intrusive, oh, it gets worse. When she's not micro-criticizing daughter Milly, she's buying the girl her clothes, rearranging her furniture, and following her on dates.

Whenever there are two or more women on screen, their lines overlap into one big screech. Once, it's grim but bearable. Thirty times over, I wondered if I might be able use the theater floor's discarded popcorn for earplugs.

While the plot overreaches, the characters are either undercooked or underused: Oldest daughter Maggie (Lauren Graham) is quietly contained and strongâ€”the film could have effectively employed her far more. Youngest daughter Mae (Piper Perabo), channeling a mute Carrie Bradshaw, should fire someone immediately for putting her in a movie that gives her all the onscreen time of an extra.

As for Milly's potential mates, we first meet romantic interest/good guy Johnny (Gabriel Macht). We are given no back story, no explanation of his child's illness, nor do we know anything about his charming dad (Steven Collins), except that he's charming. All we know about Johnny (also charming, he must have inherited that from Dad), is that he's a decent fellow, even for a musician with a tattoo. Portraying the second romantic interest/bad guy Jason (Tom Everett Scott), what makes him a bad guy except for the fact that he loses his temper over an accident with Grandma's bric-a-brac? And HUGE plot non sequiturâ€”if he's supposed to be a smooth, brilliant rich guy and accomplished architect with the world at his feet, why does he pony up to meet someone's mother at a bar in the hopes that the mom will allow him to meet her daughter, a girl he's never seen?

The script is like the motherâ€”it tells us what to think, rather than presenting us with enough information so that we can make up our own minds. At the hands of a lesser actress, this matriarchal tyrant would have made the film unwatchable. It's interesting to note that in this vehicle, Keaton is at her best when she's simply allowed a quiet moment, free from lackluster lines and frenetic direction. Perhaps if this had been a silent film, sparing us scene upon scene of shrill recriminations, and maudlin monologues about selfless motherhood, we might have enjoyed watching pretty people on pretty sets, surrounded by even prettier food.

But having to partake of this particular serving of celluloid? It's a two-ton soufflÃ©.

Grading this movie on the curve of the Deschutes River: C-

[Click here to view the movie trailer of "Because I Said So".](#)

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Production Credits: "Because I Said So" Directed by: Michael Lehmann Screenplay by: Karen Leigh Hopkins & Jessie Nelson Cast: Diane Keaton, Mandy Moore, Gabriel Macht, Tom Everett Scott, Lauren Graham, Steven Collins, Piper Perabo Rated: PG-13 Running Time: 102 minutes Grade: C-minus

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