

Movie Review: 'The Game Plan'

by David_Elliott

The Rock - oops, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson - has the whitest teeth in the world. As he lobs vast, blinding smiles in "The Game Plan," we can admire every pearly tooth.

'THE GAME PLAN' - In 'The Game Plan,' Dwayne Johnson plays an NFL quarterback living the bachelor life who discovers that he has a 7-year-old daughter from a previous relationship. CNS Photo courtesy of Ron Phillips. RATINGS

4 STARS - Excellent.

3 STARS - Worthy.

2 STARS - Mixed.

1 STAR - Poor.

0 - Forget It (a dog.) The Rock plays Joe Kingman, king of Boston football, a quarterback so egotistical he considers Elvis his only rival monarch. He preens in his high-tech apartment rich in deluxe Elvisiana, pointing out his \$40,000 sofa and his \$20,000 orthopedic bed (we never find out how much the teeth cost).

But he's no match for little Peyton, acted by Madison "The Pebble" Pettis. OK, Pebble she isn't, but her ego is a glowing chip off Joe's, as the little surprise announces she is his daughter. Mom's away, and Peyton proves

more of a challenge to Joe than Chicago running back Walter Payton could have ever been.

She's brash, verbal and gap-toothed adorable. She's a Disney child star, in one of the totally wired-for-laugh Disney products. She and Joe spar, then find the bond of love with cute help from Joe's bulldog. She even gets Joe to join her ballet class, with Roselyn Sanchez as va-voom teacher.

Director Andy Fickman and the writers (all women) tenderize The Rock as a Gibraltar of geniality. He does have charm, though a few bits remind us of Vin Diesel treating comedy as a sweaty workout in "The Pacifier." And scenes with Kyra Sedgwick as his boorishly aggressive agent (she provides the flatulence joke) are hard to take.

It romps on to fairly hysterical finales: a kitsch ballet worthy of Vegas, a big emotional twist about the absent mother, and Peyton getting badly injured Joe to risk his life in the Big Game. She glows her gap-toothed grin, but doesn't say, "Win one for the gapper." No big suspense about the outcome.

This could be the first movie that gives kids a case of dental envy. Even Bugs Bunny didn't do that, despite marvelous buck teeth.

A Disney release. Director: Andy Fickman. Writers: Nichole Millard, Kathryn Price, Audrey Wells. Cast: Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Madison Pettis, Kyra Sedgwick, Roselyn Sanchez, Morris Chestnut. Running time: 1 hour, 29 minutes. Rated PG. 2 stars.

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