

“Home Again”

By Helen Lutz

Fun and funny movies have been made over the years involving parenting and dysfunctional family situations. Years ago “Three Men and a Baby” made audiences laugh and laugh and laugh some more; I still laugh when we play our DVD. We watched three smart, professional guys who were challenged with caring for a baby – a baby girl no less. The three guys and the baby stole the hearts of everyone who ever changed a diaper or fed a little one.



Fast forward from 1987 to the new Reese Witherspoon romantic comedy “Home Again.” Once again we have a story of three men and a babe (cougar). Alice Kinney (Witherspoon), the daughter of a famous director, and her two daughters leave her cheating music mogul New York husband (Michael Sheen) taking up residence in the expansive family home of her deceased father in Los Angeles. Obviously, money is not a problem. It’s Alice’s intention to start over pursuing a job that she loves (take it from me, not an easy thing to do).

Turning 40 in Los Angeles, Alice is coaxed out by friends. It’s time to party and have some fun – debauchery comes to mind. While drinking and doing shots – lots of shots – Alice and friends meet three twenty-something year old young men; Harry (Pico Alexander) an aspiring film director, Teddy (Nat Wolff) an actor and George (Jon Rudnitsky) a writer. The three experienced some success with a movie short and are looking for Hollywood financing to turn their little project into a full length feature film. Unfortunately for the guys this is not an easy thing to do, as they find themselves almost penniless as well as homeless (but they still have bar money) – not even enough cash to continue living in their flea bag motel.

Alice’s birthday party moves from the bar to her home with her friends and the guys in tow. Imagine Alice’s surprise when she awakens to find Teddy in her bed. It was a night to be remembered – or not. Wishing everyone well, Alice starts to send her slightly hung over guests packing, until mom shows up. Moms have a way of showing up at the most inopportune times and Alice’s mom, old time movie star Lillian Stewart played by Candice Bergen, walks in as the party is dispersing. It doesn’t take long for the situation to change as the boys begin making over how much they love Lillian’s movies. Lillian suggests that they stay, temporarily of course, in the guest house while they find a new place to live.

“Home Again” takes us through the trials and tribulations of a totally dysfunctional family situation where Alice must come to grips with having very young male house guests, raising her two daughters (who love the guys) and dealing with a New York husband who isn’t quite sure he’s ready to “break-up.”

When it comes to romantic comedies, “Home Again” offers nothing new. Witherspoon does her best to bring Alice to life, however her love interest Pico Alexander, isn’t up to the task and appears lost (unable to act his way out of a wet paper bag). The movie presents opportunities for humor, but doesn’t fully capitalize on them. We just never start caring about the characters and their seemingly rough and imperfect lives. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats ... I give “Home Again” TWO HARTS. I love Reese Witherspoon, but even she can’t fill the holes in the story line.