

Oedipus Wrecks Mom's Love Life in Dysfunctional Family Dramey

Written by Film Review by Kam Williams



Cyrus

John (John C. Reilly) is a sad sack who has been hoping to reconcile with his wife ever since she dumped him a half-dozen years ago. But Jamie's (Catherine Keener) announcement that she's about to marry Tim (Matt Walsh) sends the socially-awkward loser into a tailspin that leaves him as lonely and depressed as ever. So, half out of pity, half hoping he might meet finally someone new, Jamie invites John to a party where he proceeds to drive away ever woman he meets because of his transparent display of emotional neediness.

Then, while urinating into a plant instead of a toilet, he is approached by Molly (Marisa Tomei), a fellow reveler who doesn't hide her admiration for his endowment. Nevertheless, John still has such low self-esteem he can't believe this gorgeous gal would even want to talk to a guy whose face favors Shrek, let alone leave with him at the end of the evening.

Yet she does exactly that and most enthusiastically, leading the two to share what at first blush looks like just a lusty one-night stand, given the way she slips out of his apartment before daybreak without saying goodbye. However, when Molly does return for another roll in the hay, she remains elusive about her personal life which she only describes as "really complicated." Smitten, John decides to do a little detective work by following her home and staking out the premises.

As it turns out, the only complication is Molly's unemployed, 21 year-old son, Cyrus (Jonah Hill) who has a bad habit of sabotaging his mom's romantic relationships before they have a chance to blossom. The aspiring musician rarely ventures outdoors, preferring to fritter away his days making mixed tapes in his "studio" with the approval of his concerned but enabling mother.

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John can see right through Cyrus, so he and the manipulative momma's boy soon begin to butt heads. Will Molly wise up and cut her dysfunctional son's umbilical cord? Or will Cyrus be able to manipulate his gullible mother into breaking up with another suitor? Co-written and co-directed by siblings Jay and Mark Duplass, Cyrus' storyline sounds a lot like Step Brothers, superficially, which by the way also starred John C. Reilly, except that there he played one of the interfering sons along with Will Ferrell.

But where that knee-slapper relied on silly slapstick to generate laughs, this relatively-sophisticated affair is a thoroughly-engaging dramedy with a droll sense of humor. For, the plot is plausible, and each of the principals is an empathetic figure exhibiting an endearing vulnerability in his or her earnest quest for fulfillment on the road too resolution.

Oedipus wrecks!

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated R for profanity and sexuality.

Running time: 92 Minutes

Studio: Fox Searchlight Pictures

To see a trailer for Cyrus, visit:

<http://www.foxsearchlight.com/cyrus/#/Videos>

Or: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0G0bYpMQ-fl>