

‘On the Rocks’ draws viewers in with engaging characters

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: ««« out of «««««

Running Time: 97 minutes

“On the Rocks,” an Apple Original Films and A24 release, is now playing in select theaters. Available on Apple TV+ Oct. 23.

Director Sofia Coppola has a history of working with actor Bill Murray, teaming up with the performer on the brilliant *Lost in Translation* as well as the Netflix special, *A Very Murray Christmas*. Their

latest collaboration comes in the form of the comedy/drama, *On the Rocks*

. After first viewing, I’m not certain that this follow-up is quite as moving and meaningful as their first pairing, but it still provides great entertainment and allows the filmmaker and her star to shine brightly.

Laura (Rashida Jones) is a New York writer struggling to get started on her new manuscript. She isn’t helped by having to take care of her young kids while her husband, Dean (Marlon Wayans), spends much of his time away from home on various business trips. Completely worn down and feeling insecure, she begins to suspect that her spouse might be cheating on her. After briefly mentioning these concerns in passing to her playboy father Felix (Murray), he does little to assuage her fears.

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In fact, Felix shares his views on infidelity, prompting her to take extreme measures. Laura and her dad end up tailing Dean in order to find out the truth.

It's all really just an excuse to team Rashida Jones with Bill Murray and watch some hilarious bickering between father and daughter. Felix is an eccentric charmer who loves telling stories to his daughter (or literally anyone who will listen) and the character is a blast to watch, whether he's giving questionable advice about relationships, explaining the significance and meaning behind gifts like broaches, chatting up servers at restaurants, or talking his way out of a traffic ticket in Manhattan. What Felix says on various occasions may not be sound guidance, but the character is a complete blast to watch from beginning to end.

Of course, Laura serves as a relatable lead to anyone who has ever felt down about themselves or self-conscious. The story seems to ultimately be about a woman learning to trust in her own choices and instincts, while in the process learning to keep a friendly, but reasonable emotional distance from her wilder and more impulsive pop. Over the course of the running time, her retorts and critical comments toward her father are equally amusing as they traipse across the city on stakeouts (which at times look amusingly absurd). The success of the movie depends entirely on the two leads and they're appealing and charismatic throughout.

The only place where the movie may not make as big an imprint as it could is during its final act. This is a low-key affair and one that speaks more about the minor frictions between a father and his adult daughter. It doesn't have a particularly potent or powerful emotional climax, only some small acknowledgements and understandings about their relationship and how it needs to change over time (signified in part by using one of Laura's personal accessories that is referred to a few times during the film).

Despite the movie not closing with a more powerful and poignant revelation, *On the Rocks* still ably addresses personal issues between family members, while providing a great many comedic moments and observations along the way. In a period of time where laughs seem hard to come by in general, this well-meaning title will engage most viewers with a pleasant escape for a couple of hours.

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