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REVIEW: Still Mine

Posted By: Richard Crouse · 5/1/2013 7:35:00 AM



"Still Mine" will likely be thought of as heartwarming, but instead of wringing tears from its tale of an elderly couple near the end of their time tighter, it uses a ripped-from-the-headlines story to paint a portrait of how true love conquers all—including government, death and taxes.

Based on the true story of a New Brunswick man who fought for the right to build a retirement home, "Still Mine" sees James Cromwell and Genevieve Bujold playing an elderly married couple battling dementia and government interference.

When they outgrow the house they've lived in for 61 years farmer Craig Morrison (Cromwell) decides to build a new, more manageable house on a piece of his 2000 acre farm. As wife Irene's (Bujold) memory fades Craig begins to build, only to run up against a persnickety building inspector (Jonathan Potts). Faced with fines and jail time he must decide to follow the law or his heart.

"Still Mine" has a slow pace that echoes the leisurely pace of life of the film's setting—the sleepy village of St Martins, New Brunswick. It's a gentle movie about tough people, farmers who have lived peaceful, fulfilling lives on their own terms. At an age when most people are rocking on the porch, Craig is living his life the way he always has—observing the old ways with a hearty regard for the traditions of his family and community. "Age is an abstraction, not a straight jacket," he says as he begins to build the house using the techniques his father, a shipbuilder, taught him.

As his rights, as he sees them, are eroded away by government meddling—"When did we become a country of bureaucrats?"—a quiet steeliness comes over him. This is where the movie really succeeds. Cromwell is stoic and determined, but always with a gentle undercurrent. It's a subtle performance that plays nicely against

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Bujold who hands in a fragmented performance that captures the onset of dementia.

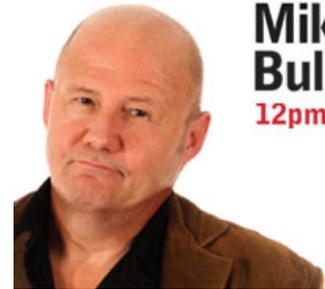
"Still Mine" is about many things— bureaucracy, love, determination but above all it is about a life well lived—right to the end.

Cromwell delivers a touching speech about a handmade table that nicely sums up the film's take on life and aging. At first it pained him to see a mark or a dent on the piece that he had worked so hard on, but, he says, "as the years went by and the scars added up the imperfections turned the table into something else—it holds a lot of memories."

That story, like the movie, is a gentle reminder that it isn't the easy parts that make life worth living, but also the flaws.

3 STARS

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