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Josh Brolin is Frank, an ex-convict, and Kate Winslet is his unwitting love interest in "Labor Day," written for the screen and directed by Jason Reitman.

'Labor Day' a Rural American Harlequin Romance

By Mark Jackson
Epoch Times Staff

The Romance Writers of America say the main plot of a romance novel must revolve around the two people as they develop love for each other and work to build a relationship.

Picture, if you will, a handsome, dangerous devil. He's running from the law.

Picture also, if you will, a lovelorn, lonely lady. A single mom, she is.

This man! Do you know what this man can do? Well, he can change a tire. He can clean gutters. Teach her early-teen boy to throw a baseball.

He's got a manly demeanor, yeoman limbs, a full head of sleek hair, and a dashing 'stache (well, prison-inmate goatee, but, really, what's the difference?).

What else? He fixes the squeaky floorboard and oils the door. And makes tasty, tasty chili. He can be taught to cha-cha in the living room and tango in the kitchen. He moves well.

He can stand behind the woman like Patrick Swayze behind Demi Moore in "Ghost," with his manly lantern jaw on her shoulder, and mush her hands around in a bowl of sugary peaches, with intent to produce a perfect peach pie. Inhale, if you will, the peachy aroma.

Take a wild guess—do you think there's a remote chance this woman will maybe fall in love with this man? To the point that her hands shake constantly? What are the odds?

Do you think it matters to her that he's a jail-break ex-con? An ex-con who, with sly menacing charm, coerces her and her son to take him home from the Walmart janitor closet he suddenly pops out of? That she's therefore harboring a fugitive?



Gattlin Griffith (L) plays Henry, son to single mom Adele, played by Kate Winslet in "Labor Day."

There's some business with friends stopping by, cops stopping by, and other close calls. There are flashbacks as to how this man got where he got.

How long will he stay? Will he board a train when his stitches heal (he's wounded, of course) and disappear forever?

So, furthermore, according to the Romance Writers of America, a romance novel must have an "emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending."

Does "Labor Day" meet this requirement? Well, we can't tell you that. That would spoil the fun.

Let's just say this movie is an example of why, when the world self-destructs, all that will be left is cockroaches and romance novels.

FILM REVIEW 'Labor Day'

Director: Jason Reitman
Starring: Kate Winslet, Josh Brolin, Tobey Maquire, James Van Der Beek
Run Time: 1 hour, 51 minutes
Release Date: Jan. 31
Rated: PG-13



And Keith Richards. Okay, never mind that last one.

Don't let the fact that Labor Day is a brazen movie-Harlequin-Romance stop you. Josh Brolin is a-hunk-a-hunk-a burnin' love, and Kate Winslet is a sweet bird with a broken wing.

The cinematography is cozy; the shots are rural America. The music is sometimes slightly overbearing.

Romance has been around since the dawn of human beings. What's not to like? Go like it. Like it on Facebook.

But then, "like" is too weak a word when describing what this movie will do for women who secretly harbor a penchant for fatalistic romance. That can only be summed up by Woody Allen in "Annie Hall": They will lurve it. They will loave it. They will luff it.

Inside Manhattan Center's Studios

The source of that movie music

By Sebastian Thaler

Did you see Ben Stiller's new movie, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," since it opened on Christmas Day? If you did, you might have noticed how the soundtrack added to the drama onscreen. But chances are good that you don't know the dramatic history of the space where that music was recorded: Manhattan Center's Grand Ballroom.

Along with the Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center operates New York City's most advanced independent recording studios and television production facilities.

The very first film score in the history of cinema—for Warner Brothers' "Don Juan," which

Academy Award-winning film scores and Oscar-nominated soundtracks have frequently been recorded at the Grand Ballroom.

starred the legendary John Barrymore and Mary Astor—was recorded at the Grand Ballroom in 1926.

The pioneering sound technicians of that era used Vitaphone technology—brand new at the time—to capture the sound of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 107 musicians strong.

Then as now, the Grand Ballroom's superb acoustics have assured that this magnificent venue is perfect for music recording. This is true whether the project is a full-blown orchestral film score, a live concert, or other kind of recording.

Academy Award-winning film scores and Oscar-nominated soundtracks have frequently been recorded at the Grand Ballroom. Since the mid-1990s, the film scores recorded or mixed at the Manhattan Center have included those for notable cinematic achievements such as "Interview with a Vampire," " Fargo," "Batman Forever," "The Red Violin," "You've Got Mail," "Everything Is Illuminated," "Tintin," "Frida" (for which its composer, Elliot Goldenthal, won an Oscar), and "Across the Universe."

The Log Cabin
A separate recording studio within Manhattan Center is called the Log Cabin.

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