

Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg Bring Home the Laughs in Daddy's Home

By Paula Tudor

At one time Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg probably seemed like the most unlikely comedic duo; however, five years after *The Other Guys*, they are back at it again in *Daddy's Home*. Will Ferrell plays Brad Whitaker, a man who finally has the family he always wanted, a beautiful wife, and two stepchildren. Believing he is incapable of fathering his own children, Brad desperately wants his stepchildren to look at him like a real dad. Just when he starts to make progress, he walks the children's biological father, Dusty Mayron, played by Mark Wahlberg. As one can imagine, Brad immediately feels threatened by Dusty, and rightfully so. It is obvious from the beginning of the film that Dusty wants his family back and is willing to go to great lengths to make that happen. Exceedingly charming, Dusty has a way of manipulating Brad into letting him stick around, giving him full access to his ex-wife and children. Brad, however, soon catches on to Dusty's plan and the competition begins.

Most of the humorous moments in *Daddy's Home* are easy to see coming, but fortunately that does not make them any less funny. Also, the trailer revealed way too much about the movie, featuring many of its best parts. This, of course, spoiled some of the enjoyment in watching the film. Despite that, it is difficult to find anything wrong with *Daddy's Home*. It is well written, funny, and full of heart. Making it all the more enjoyable is the fact that Ferrell and Wahlberg seem tailor-made for their roles. I found their comedic chemistry much more appealing in this film than in *The Other Guys*. In fact, it would not surprise me if a sequel were already in the works.

Daddy's Home provides more than comedic relief. It addresses the age-old question of what makes a parent. Brad is involved in every aspect of his stepchildren's lives. He volunteers for crossing guard duties, takes the kids to all of their extracurricular activities, and participates in the PTA. He even makes the kids' lunches everyday, leaving inspirational notes tucked inside their lunch boxes. Dusty, on the other hand, has not been around much. It is never stated what he does for a living, though it is implied that he might be a mercenary of sorts. Once Dusty decides he wants to fight for his family he finally gets a taste of the domestic life.

Despite the competition between Brad and Dusty, it is obvious the two men could learn a lot from each other. They both have vastly different approaches to parenting, but the one thing they have in common is the love they have for the children. Put them together and they might just make the perfect dad.

Daddy's Home was released on Christmas Day, the perfect time to release a film with this subject matter, when so many families face greater difficulties with co-parenting. This film is undoubtedly relatable, albeit on a grander and likely more humorous scale; and though it could be considered a family film, audiences will

need to use discretion with younger children due to language and adult situations. It is rated PG-13.

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