

At the Cinema.....

The Invention of Lying

Kathleen Girvan



I'd be lying if I told you this film was a great invention.....

Ricky Gervais's latest attempt at a Hollywood blockbuster is a romantic comedy with a unique concept- a world where everyone tells the truth.

This premise has the potential to be comic genius but, for the most part, it fails to deliver, and laughs are few and far between.

I approached the film with a little trepidation, not being a huge fan of Ricky Gervais, who became a household name after the success of his hit TV series "The Office" and "Extras". Gervais wrote, directed and stars in the film- his second after his big screen debut "Ghost town".

Gervais plays the lead role of Mark Bellison, one of life's losers, who is one step away from losing his job as a screenwriter, and being kicked out by his landlord. His date with the beautiful Anna (played by Jennifer Garner) goes disastrously wrong when she bluntly informs him he is ugly and overweight.

Things go from bad to worse. Mark rushes to his dying mother's side and he finds himself telling her about heaven, and the sudden realisation dawns on him - he can lie! Mark exploits his new found ability with delight, becoming rich and living a life of luxury.

The rest of the film, however, descends into watching Mark's futile attempts to win the love of fickle Anna, who has fallen for the perfect Brad (Rob Lowe). This tends to drag on, and I found myself checking my watch on more than one occasion.

On the whole, Gervais is woefully miscast as the lead role; he has little or no charm or likeability and is thoroughly unconvincing as the lead in

a romantic film, not least due to his appearance; he lacks the pretty-boy good looks of a conventional leading actor. This may not have been a bad thing, however, if he had any charisma and was able to pull off a leading role, but it simply makes him look out of place.

Garner's character Anna is also difficult to warm to - we are left wondering why Mark would even want to be with someone so superficial and why he's even bothering, which doesn't bode well for the film.

Cameo roles from the likes of Ed Norton provide a spark of interest; however the comic talents of the brilliant Tina Fey (star of 30 Rock) are wasted in a small role as Brad's secretary.

Gervais' trademark humour does provide some genuine laughs, such as the old folk's home renamed as "a Sad Place for Hopeless Old People", the bar called "A Cheap Place to Drink", and the advertisements which always tell the truth; "Drink Pepsi - if you can't get any Coke"

"The Invention of Lying" overall is mildly funny, and is a great concept, but poor delivery makes it distinctly unmemorable

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Out soon on DVD

Kathleen Girvan

