

# Love's labour not lost in John Hughes film

**She's Having a Baby**  
Paramount Pictures  
Capitol Square, Gateway, Westmall 5

review by June Chua

**T**hrow together some cute actors, put in interesting music, combine with standard marriage problems and a few funny moments—the result, a John Hughes film about “the labour of life.”

The film is a narrative about the life of Jefferson “Jake” Briggs (Kevin Bacon) from the inception of his marriage to Kirsty Bainbridge (Elizabeth McGovern) onwards. The marriage ceremony itself is fraught with problems: Jake is having second thoughts and opinionated relatives believe that the marriage will be a mistake. Nevertheless, the newweds are soon on their way. However, the movie seems to peter out the first hour, due to situations and jokes which are all too familiar, such as Kirsty making an undiscernable fish dinner for Jake. Also in the tried-and-true category are the meddling in-laws who badger the newweds about their housing, financial condition and whether they are going to have children.

The movie follows the couple through the evolution of their marriage, from their modest beginnings to a more upwardly mobile lifestyle. Despite the yuppie parallel, Hughes attempts to depict marriage and urban life realistically. Bacon gives Jake a harried, bumbling personality—hardly the dashing hero-type with which he is usually associated. For example, when Jake prepares for a night of lovemaking, he fumbles around nervously plumping pillows, spraying cologne, flossing teeth,

etc... Meanwhile, Kirsty ponders taking the Pill. In this manner, marriage and sex aren't romanticized; they involve fears and decisions. In addition, a block party reveals the trivialities of urban life, where the women talk about their children and the men talk lawnmowers.

Along realistic lines, Jake gives up graduate school, calling it a “high school with astrays”; realizing that a master's degree won't further his writing career. In fact, Jake ends up writing ads in order to provide for his family, a monotonous 9 to 5 job. The often boring routine of work is shown with shots of similar-looking men in three-piece suits: “mindless drones following the scent of money,” as Jake's boss puts it. Consequently, Jake begins to feel empty, sensing that he “stumbled into a marriage and drifted into a career.” He then fantasizes about having an affair and literally oozes at half-naked models when he stumbles into a dressing room. Still, Jake cherishes his marriage and plods onwards.

Elizabeth McGovern doesn't talk much in this film. Nonetheless, she does an admirable job with the little dialogue she is given. Her innocent, doll-like face virtually talks for her. One simply sympathizes with her character. Like Bacon, McGovern is not afraid to appear and act domesticized; her clothes are simple and she portrays a sense of familiarity in her interaction with Bacon. The result is an unspoken bond between the two actors just as any husband and wife would have. Moreover, McGovern gives a remarkable performance giving birth.

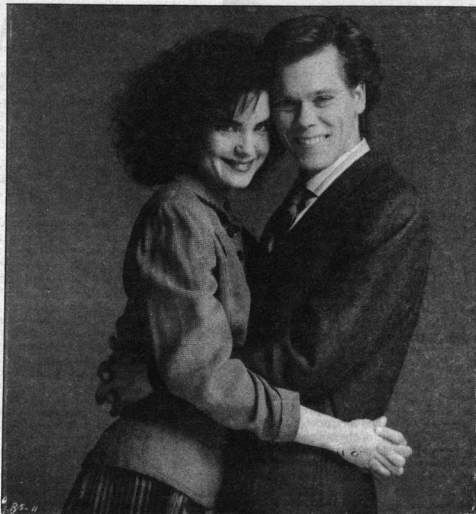
Many vignettes are interspersed through-

out: flashbacks or moments taken from the characters' minds and pictured. This is illustrated when Kirsty, while contemplating the Pill, recalls the first time she held a baby. Exaggerations of Jake's imaginative writer's mind are highlights, such as the time when he “sees” his neighbours doing a strange lawnmower dance.

Funny moments include the scenes in which Jake brings a sample of his semen to the doctor's office and the increase in Kirsty's size as her pregnancy progresses. At times, Hughes attempts to fill holes in the script with lame clichés such as “the fights, the jobs were symptoms but the disease was growing,” “my life was put on indefinite hold” and “I

was loved more than I loved.” The music is exceptional, though, featuring a soundtrack by Stewart Copeland (the Police) and other songs by Van Morrison, Gene Loves Jezebel and Kate Bush. A majority of the music is unique in rhythm and sound. Some songs do well to underscore the situations and thus set an emotional tone.

The film gets better toward the end, where Bacon displays his acting talents. His performance is touching, and one leaves the theatre feeling exhilarated and just plain glad. Otherwise, the storyline is thin; occasionally predictable if sometimes humorous. At best, *She's Having a Baby* reaffirms the sanctity and joy of marriage.



The perfect-looking newlywed couple Elizabeth McGovern and Kevin Bacon.

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