

Never Again

Rating:4

They say Americans are living longer and getting older. So a film about all-natural, surgically unenhanced sexy seniors might not be a bad idea. Eric Schaeffer's *Never Again* is all that and more: a funny, raw, touching, ridiculous, outrageous and heartbreaking romantic comedy, wrinkles and all. Christopher (The *Larry Sanders*' Show's Jeff Tambor) is a fiftyish New York City exterminator by day and jamming jazz hobbyist by night. Down in the dumps and dismayed by his growing lack of erotic interest in a succession of very young one-night-stands with the opposite sex, Christopher begins to wonder if he might just be gay and not know it.



Confounded in multiple ways by sexual-identity and midlife crises, the perplexed bug buster heads to the nearest local gay bar to test the waters. There he encounters Grace (Jill Clayburgh), a contemporary who has sworn off men, and is equally distraught after her only daughter has gone away to college and empty nest syndrome has set in.

Grace has ducked into the gay bar after fleeing a blind date with a midget who finds her deficient. (It's a long story, but utterly fascinating.) Since Grace is just about the only female in the bar, it's not far-fetched for Christopher to assume he's hitting on his first transsexual. A relationship built on such overpowering negative chemistry can't go wrong, even though everything else around them does.

The odd couple is soon drawing up talking points on luncheonette table napkins as to why it's advisable to stay as far away from each other as possible, and never again suffer the slings and arrows of intimacy. Older but no wiser, Christopher and Grace are soon turned into alternately giddy and clumsy recycled adolescents, trying out the latest in designer leather kinkywear from the sex toy shop on the corner, when not clinging to or breaking up with one another in rapid succession.

Never Again may be about single-parent infatuation, but the emotion, passion and very funny bouts of lust that fuel the story are more freshly conceived and exhilarating than most teen romances glutting the multiplexes. The delightfully off-color yet nuanced performances of Tambor and Clayburgh work their

subdued magic throughout. And the refreshing humor that comes from midlife characters settled in their ways but suddenly battling a relapse of raging adolescent hormones that was not supposed to be on life's chronological menu is plain irresistible.

The Equation: Kissing Jessica Stein + 40 Days And 40 Nights + Viagra
Prairie Miller