

Film REVIEW – Short Term 12 (Destin Cretton, 2013)



Independent cinema is comfortably placed in two categories: films that are quite something, and films that try hard to be something that they're not. Thankfully, Destin Cretton's **Short Term 12** is a film that knows exactly what it wants to be – and achieves its goal blissfully.

The film follows Grace, a supervisor of a foster care home that looks after youths with troubled families and mental issues. As a new resident arrives in the home, she is forced to face her troubled past head on, accompanied by her co-worker and secret boyfriend, Mason.

On paper, Short Term 12 admittedly sounds like a film that has either been done before, or sounds too clichéd to work convincingly. Perhaps that's the source of the film's magic – its simplicity. For an hour and a half, you are presented with a group of human beings, not caricatures. It doesn't feel like a film, it feels like an insightful vision into the children and surprisingly, adults that society alienates.

The acting, especially on Brie Larson's part in the lead role, is sublime. Nothing feels overtly contrived or pretentious, it's a performance that is impressive in its natural approach. Her performance is already receiving a slight murmur of Oscar buzz, alongside Cretton's shining script. Masterfully crafted (by a relative beginner) to tell an innately chaotic story that is serene and beautiful on the surface. Although it may falter temporarily before the film's final moments, it picks itself back up with grace and poise.

Come Oscar season, Short Term 12 will be the little film that could. We can only hope that it gets its fine, deserved moment amongst its much more expected contenders.

Short Term 12 is showing at Filmhouse, Lothian Road from Fri 15th -Thu 21st November