

Glasgow Film Festival 2015: Still Alice (2015)



There isn't a critics circle or academy around that have doubted the heart rending latest performance from Julianne Moore. The American actress has, deservedly so, spent the past few months picking up award after award for her role as Alice Howland – a woman slowly facing her worst fears as she develops Alzheimers.

A linguistics professor with three children has began to slowly lose her vast memory of words for seemingly unknown reasons. After neurological tests, she faces the reality of a life with early on set Alzheimers; a hereditary form that is set to destroy her children's lives as much as hers.

As someone who has witnessed first hand the effects of a neurological disease, Julianne Moore creates her character in a movingly authentic manner. A fully formed professional woman in the film's initial scenes, her degradation is depicted with irrefutable authenticity. Directors Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland have moulded a woman; not a subhuman creature, and so watching this devastating disease truly take hold is even more heartbreaking.

It has been a year of great work for supporting actress Kristen Stewart. Playing Alice's independent actress daughter who, through her own lack of life commitments, is brought home to care for her slowly disintegrating mother. Following on from her versatile approach as a Guantanamo Bay prison guard in Camp X-Ray, she remains a vision of her usual self here; the beer drinking, sulky aging teenager. Her ability here is seen through her settling into this potentially rather shapeless character. Stewart provides a beautifully

understated performance as a young woman with an all too clear understanding.

Still Alice has the room to be expansive, complex and soul shatteringly emotional, and yet decides to hold itself back perhaps a little bit further than it should. Although effective, its simplicity sometimes translates into safety. It holds itself back and refuses to truly let go; ending dignified rather than the somewhat distraught nature Alzheimer's sufferers experience.

There is no doubt that the highlight of the simple, inspired Still Alice is the remarkable central performance gifted to the audience by Julianne Moore. Often sombre and filled with a humanistic loss of yourself, this is a testimony to Moore's great talent.



Still Alice plays at the Glasgow Film Festival on February 21st. It opens nationwide on March 6th.