

Judy Berlin

The new film *Judy Berlin* has standard “American indie film,” written all over it. It’s located in a small town (in Rhode Island), shot in black-and-white, filled with plenty of earnest chat, and combines the “relationship” picture with the “coming of age” picture.

Told from the point of view of young David (Aaron Harnick), who has come back home after failure to click in Hollywood, the film traces his interaction with his family and the people in his life. Sadly, this character--a stand-in for novice director Eric Mendelsohn--is a cipher who reveals less than nothing about himself. It’s a flaw of the writer-director to assume this character, because he might have gone through something of what the writer-director himself did, is of any interest to the audience.

The movie just has is too many longueurs to make up for a few fine moments and some nice performances. The most intriguing of the latter is the now very hot Edie Falco (Carmela Soprano in the HBO series “The Sopranos”) as the eponymous Judy, an unsinkable would-be actress who is going--against all odds--to try her luck in L.A, thus reversing David’s journey. Falco makes Judy’s wide-eyed yearning to “make it” all at once pathetic, comedic, and valiant. You can only wish her the best—and hope she gets better roles in her new life than the one she has in *Judy Berlin*.

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