

## Everything Went Fine

From French director François Ozon comes “Everything Is Fine” (*Tout S’est Bien Passé*), a powerful family drama in which a daughter is forced to reconcile with her father and their shared past after he stuns her with a devastating final wish. Parisian art collector André Bernheim (André Dussollier), is a gay man who had two daughters while married to Claude (Charlotte Rampling), but they are long estranged. He has also had a tempestuous long-term affair with Gérard, whom he has since spurned. The trigger to the plot happens in the movie’s first minute, when he suffers a debilitating stroke.

His daughters, the older Emmanuèle, a writer (Sophie Marceau) and the younger, Pascale, a teacher (Géraldine Pailhas), rush to aid a man who has been a difficult father to them both, especially Emmanuèle, (we see brief flashbacks of his indifference to her as a child). After release to a new rehab hospital, André tells Emmanuèle that his “future life is not worth living” and asks her to help him “end it,” putting the onus on her to help him commit assisted suicide. Since the act is illegal in France, she and Pascale must struggle to grant this last wish.

Since France is not an option, the sisters look to Switzerland to find an institution to perform the procedure. Their facilitator, a sweet older woman, gets right down to business on the serious paperwork required (she is played by the great Hanna Schygulla, a one-time muse of director Rainer Werner Fassbinder). Even with some wavering from André, the girls book a private ambulance for the journey to Bern. A last-minute kerfuffle (which plays out like a chase movie) almost botches the whole semi-secret plan when the French police are told of the project, and the sisters are taken in for questioning—though the plan moves on.

Ozon, known for his varied and subtle films (“8 Women,” “Swimming Pool,” “Franz”) tackles this delicate subject with exceptional intelligence and understanding. Based on Emmanuèle Bernheim’s 2021 fictional memoir of the same name, the film uses a plain, matter-of-fact style that renders its otherwise weighty—and potentially sentimental--topic more accessible and genial. It doesn’t make light of the moral arguments of euthanasia but instead focuses on the reckoning Emmanuèle must make with an ornery father who needs help but refuses to accept it.

“Everything” also moves smartly, with a semi-restless camera that zips its protagonists briskly around Paris while still giving them their due in more dramatic and calmer moments. The film’s score, too, relies on classy piano music, including piano sonatas by Brahms and Schubert, which adds poignancy to the work. Ozon also handles a solid and well-rounded cast with a sensitive

touch, though he really excels in eliciting stunning performances from veterans Marceau and Dussollier.

André Dussollier, 77, is an icon of French cinema, having worked with almost all its major filmmakers for over 50 years. He has been nominated for the equivalent of the French Oscars (the “Caesars”) eight times, winning three over the years. Here he takes on the tough role of a gruff, addled man of 85 trying to sort out the remainder of his life. Physically, too, he must take on the task of looking like a stroke victim—with a sagging mouth and body-- and pulls it off splendidly.

Sophie Marceau has a resumé almost as long as her co-star, having been in almost 50 films since she first broke through as a teenager in the early 1980’s. She has mastered a myriad of roles and here takes absolute control of another, an injured daughter forced to confront a surly, ineffective father. She does it with grace and poise while looking gorgeous.

*(The film, in French with subtitles, opens at Bethesda Row Cinema. It is not rated and runs 113 minutes.)*

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