Is Love the Number One Goal in Life?

The opening scene to “P.S. – I Love You” shows the very modern, basic, and stereotypical relationship between a husband and wife. They are fighting after a night out with family, but at the end of the night they make up because they love each other. The story is about a young wife named Holly (Hilary Swank) losing her husband Gerry (Gerald Butler) to cancer and her dealing with the grief and moving on with her life. The love the main characters share is rich and pure. When Gerry passes away, Holly struggles with how to keep loving him without forgetting him. Through the search for his letters, Holly struggles through the obstacles of grief and being alone. Throughout the movie she still “feels him around” and searches for him through his letters to her and other loved ones. She tries to find out what she should do next in her everyday life based on where he is guiding her. However, what he is really showing her is that she can move on without him and take care of herself. “P.S. -- I Love You” is a must see because the acting, storyline, and content is authentically emotional and raw.

The acting in this movie is anything but flat and wooden. Swank’s acting makes the audience share the feelings of fear, sadness, anger, and happiness that they elicit. Swank’s character especially puts the audience through a whirlwind of emotions. The fear of losing a husband and not being able to go on in life is strongly shown in her acting. She goes on this “quest” that her late husband made for her and she deals with the true emotions that are very common with the grief and pain that widows go through in the real world. She’s afraid of being
alone and the letters make her feel as though she is not. The whole movie she is actively trying to fill the empty void in her life while also trying to find what she wants to do. Some thoughts that she has during the movie like, “it’s been a year and I don’t feel him around anymore,” resembles the thoughts that most widows have. There are many times throughout the film that Holly breaks down and starts crying and it is hard for the audience to not cry with her. Making the audience feel the emotions that the characters are feeling is what makes great acting.

The storyline is beyond well-developed and engaging. The way that the writers get you to keep watching is through the anticipation of Gerry’s letters to Holly. The intent of the storyline is to get the audience to live through the relationship between Holly and Gerry so that the death and grief that Holly is going through makes the audience feel like they had just gone through a loss as well. The audience begins to create an emotional attachment to the characters and starts to grieve with Holly and all of her loved ones.

The content of the film is much more complex than it appears. It’s very hard to make a great romance movie because it needs to be different and unique, yet it still needs to have all the emotion that the audience expects from a romance movie. In the film they show a unique way of dealing with grief that not many other films have shown. The adventure that Holly goes through when she gets a new letter from Gerry everyday takes the audience on an emotional rollercoaster. Neither the audience or Holly can anticipate what is going to be in Gerry’s next letter. One day she might be sad and then the next just angry. One main point that is shoved in the face of the audience is that she is alone. This really speaks to the audience because the feeling of being alone is so incredibly common. The lesson that the audience learns is that when there is a loss, even if it isn’t death, it is not the end of everything. Life may take us down a
weird path where we question everything and lose complete faith, but that just means we should live life to the fullest with no regrets. We should be thankful for all the memories and experiences we were fortunate enough to have been through.

According to David Keyes, film critic for signature series, “P.S. -- I Love You” is a sappy, “shameless and aggravating mess in every sense of the word.” Keyes could be right when saying the film is sappy and corny. He could be talking about the part in the movie when the writers introduce Gerry, he shares a story with Holly about sending out the signal “when life as you know it ends” and how he only sends it out when he thinks she might the one. This could be called corny but the quote is addressed multiple times throughout the movie and is affiliated with the theme that losing someone is not the end of life. Keyes also could be talking about how they add the serendipitous moment of finding each other in the pub in Ireland after meeting and saying that if we find each other it is meant to be. Also, he talks about a certain scene in the beginning when they are at Gerry’s funeral; He says that the scene “lacks tact.” The humorous scene is creating more character for Gerry and is celebrating life rather than only mourning it. Although this is not everyone’s favorite film, that doesn’t mean it is not a good one. Keyes may have his negative thoughts and opinions, however, this is an amazing film. The message is so strong that it overpowers all the negative comments Keyes and others may have. The last letter that Gerry writes to Holly exemplifies the lesson that the writers are trying to make up for all the sappy and corny writing throughout the film. The love Gerry’s character had for Holly’s character is so pure that it made his life complete. The strong theme of the importance of living life to the fullest is what makes this film go from a good one to a great one.
Work Cited

Keyes, David. “P.S. - I Love You / 1/2*” *signature series*, January 17th, 2013,