

Still Alice – Review

*“I still have moments in the day of pure **happiness** and joy. And please do not think that I am suffering. I am not **suffering**. I am struggling. **Struggling** to be part of things, to stay connected to whom I was once. So, ‘live in the moment’ I tell myself. It’s really all I can do: live in the moment.”*

Julianne Moore plays the titular Dr. Alice Howland in Richard Glatzer and Wash Westmoreland’s **deeply**-felt new film about a **proud, renowned** academic who is diagnosed with Early-onset Alzheimer’s at 50 years old. (The above quotation is taken from one of its key scenes). At this year’s Oscars she finally, after four previous nominations, won Best Actress for the role. Seldom has an award been more richly **deserved**. A consistently **brilliant** actress,



from her breakthrough in Paul Thomas Anderson’s *Boogie Nights* in 1997 (for which she received her first nomination) to parts in Robert Altman’s *Short Cuts* and even the latest *Hunger Games*, she has brought to each film uncommon **dignity** and **grace**.

She has also, arguably, never been better than she is in *Still Alice*. Upon discovering that she has a genetically passed-on **variant** of the **disease**, the challenges her character faces illustrate what a cruel and merciless illness it is - especially for a person so driven, **intelligent** and **ambitious**. Her family deal with the numerous implications of her condition collectively, but with understandable difficulty. Alec Baldwin does a fine job as her **husband** John Howland (who makes some difficult decisions over the course of the film), while Kristen Stewart is superb as her **daughter**, a **young** woman pursuing a career in acting of which her **mother** does not entirely approve.

The **strong** bonds that Alice shares with her husband and daughter - as well as her other children and gently encouraging doctor - are deftly drawn by Glatzer and Westmoreland, who adapted Lisa Genova’s 2007 novel for the film. *Still Alice* is a **subtle**, empathetic work about the effects of a debilitating illness, featuring some clever techniques that depict Alice’s swift deterioration as well as an admirably committed ensemble cast and outstanding lead performance. Moore gives Alice’s attempts to “live in the moment” - to “master the art of losing” - a heartbreaking resonance; one that lingers long after this moving film’s credits roll and the screen goes black.