

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl – Review

"If this was a touching, romantic story..." begins protagonist Greg at various points during *Me and Earl...*, only to **shatter** the preconceptions of what a film such as this should be like. And what **should** a film such as this be like? Based on the debut novel of the same name by Jesse Andrews, it tells the story of how a young, **awkward** but not unpopular high school student is **coerced** into **befriending** a girl who has just been diagnosed with leukemia. It may not be romantic as such, but instead finds value in exploring platonic relationships, and manages to not only be very funny, but very moving, too. (Greg got that part very wrong.)

This is in large part down to the excellent casting. Greg, in the hands of any other actor, may come off as self-interested to the point of being **unlikeable**, yet Thomas Mann plays him just right: as a conflicted young man who masks his insecurities with cool **detachment** - someone who has lots of **acquaintances** but no real **friends**. Even Earl, a fantastic RJ Cyler, with whom he has made ridiculous, gloriously stupid "remakes" of classic films with for most of his life, he refers to as his '**co-worker**.' ("Dude's got issues," Earl correctly asserts.)



Then there's the 'dying girl', Rachel, whose character is **embodied** by Olivia Cooke in a **brave**, **subtle** performance. The chemistry between the three is undeniable, while Nick Offerman and Jon Bernthal do a fine job as Greg's hippy, food-obsessed **father** and **approachable**, tattooed history teacher, respectively.

Some criticism has been levelled at the film for focusing too much on its protagonist; a perceived failure to add colour and **shade** to Earl and Rachel's characters by director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon, even in its title. This is arguably part of the film's design, however, and watching the young cast's **relationships develop** and evolve is a real pleasure. There is plenty to enjoy in the duo's homages to classic cinema, which **provide** a lot of the laughs in the first **half** of the film, before it gradually turns into something more profound over its back end. Although it struggled to find an audience in the US - quite the opposite of the similarly-themed, enormously successful *The Fault in Our Stars* - it received a standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival, and it's not hard to see why.