

## You're ugly too – Review

Aidan Gillen and young **newcomer** Lauren Kinsella play a makeshift family navigating each other's **guarded** feelings in Irish writer-director Mark Noonan's debut.

Will (Gillen) is released from prison on **compassionate** leave to care for his **niece** Stacey after the death of her mother. As they both head into the sleepy Irish midlands and attempt to be a family, they suffer a series of **setbacks**. Stacey is refused admission to the local school because of her recently developed narcolepsy, Will repeatedly comes close to breaking his prison-ordered **curfew** and his attempts at being a father figure to her prove **disastrous**.



Shot in the **lonely** Irish midlands where the writer-director grew up and infused with an evocative sense of place, the film showcases lovely, unforced performances from Gillen and Kinsella as an **uncle** and his orphaned niece who start out as strangers but form a connection probably destined to **endure**.

While the production has a no-frills feel, it's also **polished**, from cinematographer Tom Comerford's **soulful** images of the nowhere setting to David Geraghty's wistful, mostly acoustic score. The meaning of the somewhat ungainly title becomes clear only in an old joke told by Will at the very end of this tender snapshot of damaged lives **intersecting**. The film's poignancy **creeps** up on you, echoing the cautious development of the main characters' **mutual** affection.

Some people will find “You’re Ugly Too” **frustrating**. There is no happy endings, and no great tragedy, just a **series** of small victories and **defeats**. We see small **excerpts** from the lives of the protagonists – life goes on, sometimes better, sometimes worse. Without Gillen and Kinsella, the film could have descended into **irrelevance**. Instead, “You’re Ugly Too” is, for me, a return to how films should be made. I’m already looking forward to Noonan’s next film.