

'Over Her Dead Body' movie review

Contributed by Roger Moore
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Flick proof afterlife romances should stay off screen.

That narrow window TV stars have to pick a plum film project to shoot around their ongoing "day jobs" provides a ready excuse for "Over Her Dead Body," a wan, sad-eyed romantic comedy that has Eva Longoria Parker playing a ghost who tries to keep a psychic from unscrupulously taking up with her fiance.

The generally stiff "Body," which features Paul Rudd as Henry, the fiance, and Lake Bell as the sham psychic, conjures up just a handful of laughs, no more.

Longoria Parker is Kate, the micro-managing bride-to-be who is comically killed on her wedding day. She shows up in the afterlife with "unfinished business." But she's too busy complaining about her situation to get all the details on that business. Thus, when she's sent back, "haunting" her groom-to-be, she's not what sure she's supposed to do.

Hint: Prove your love by helping him move on.

She is with him when he meets the ditsy caterer-psychic Ashley (Bell) who wants to help. Ashley can help. She can hear Kate. But both women are torn. Kate seems to want to hang onto Henry, and Ashley develops an almost instant conflict of interest. She digs the guy.

A war of wills ensues, with the ghost comically tormenting the psychic (shades of "Ghost") and the psychic torn between using unethical short-cuts to win the guy's heart, or doing the right thing.

When writer-director Jeff Lowell runs out of things to recycle from other afterlife romances, he turns to the most generic romantic-comedy cliches. Ashley's gay catering assistant/best pal/confessor is played by Jason Biggs, who struggles to wring a laugh out of an exhausted romantic comedy "type." Rudd, at least, still has the comic timing to make his few zingers sing.

"So, do you bring all your psychics home?" Ashley purrs after a date.

"You shouldn't have to ask" is his perfectly timed comeback.

His raised eyebrow at folks who listen to "psychics" and listen to "Torri Aaaa-mos" music (they're one and the same, he says) is worth a cackle.

Stephen Root, as the drunken ice sculptor who causes all this grief, steals a couple of scenes.

And our "Desperate Housewife"? She didn't have much to work with and doesn't really commit to what little there is. "Over Her Dead Body" didn't give her enough scenes to be responsible for "carrying" the movie. A mere two costumes and two hairstyles and a few weekends of work was all it cost her.

Oh, and one "Desperate Housewives" hiatus.

"OVER HER DEAD BODY"

Critic says: 2 stars

Rating: PG-13 for sexual content and language

Running time: 1 hr. 35 mins.

Starring: Eva Longoria Parker, Paul Rudd, Lake Bell, Jason Biggs

Showing at: Carmike 10, Cinemark 16, Cinemark Greeley Mall
