

# In and Out has ups and downs

## Movie Review

*In and Out*  
Starring Kevin Kline and Joan Cusack  
Directed by Frank Oz  
Playing at Hollywood 16  
Rated R  
★★ 1/2

By Aaron Meier  
Features editor

Ah, the memories — It just seemed like yesterday when Matt from "Melrose Place" was the only homosexual in the media.

Today however, is different. Over the past nine months, gays and lesbians have come to the forefront of the national media. First, Ellen DeGeneres "outs" her character on prime time television. Then *Chasing Amy* is released, a film about a guy who falls in love with a lesbian. As if that wasn't enough, even the actor who played Jonathan from the '80s television series "Who's the Boss?" announced he is gay. Poor Angela.

In the new film *In and Out*, Kevin Kline plays Howard, the proverbial Streisand-loving, musical-watching, disco-dancing homosexual. He just does not know it yet. Some people are the luckiest people in the world.

The film opens with Howard's hometown abuzz with the upcoming Academy Awards. It seems a local boy named Cameron Drake (Matt Dillon) has been nominated for an Oscar. Hello, gorgeous!

Cameron wins the Oscar and in his acceptance speech thanks none other than Howard, who was his high school English teacher. Then Cameron an-

nounces Howard is gay. After the Oscars, the town is shocked by the news, including Howard and his fiancé Emily, played by the perennially funny girl, Joan Cusack.

Soon, the town is mobbed by reporters eager to get the scoop on Howard, who only wants things the way we — I mean they — want. *In and Out* is neither the "out and out" comedy as the trailers proclaim, nor is it a sappy tale of closeted homosexual. It is simply, mildly cute film with a charming cast that doesn't deliver.

Kline does a fine job as the repressed Howard. While he makes the character believably effeminate, there is something lacking in his performance. The humor the role is there, but knowing Kline's past performances in films such as *A Fish Called Wanda*, *In and Out* is below par for Kline.

A tremendous supporting cast accompanies Kline. Cusack delivers *In and Out's* most memorable role. Her character's mental fragility and sexual confusion bring out Cusack's tremendous acting abilities. Her acting toward the end of the film is the best female comedic performance of the year. The audience sees this woman who wants the simple things in life. What this woman needs is a good circus; send in the clowns.

Debbie Reynolds, Tom Selleck and Wilford Brimley all contribute to the ensemble cast, but the glimpses of them are too small to be satisfying.

Frank Oz, of Muppet fame, directs the film with the crisp line and brightness it deserves. What he does not flinch at *In and Out* subject matter, he does treat it lightly, as a comedy should be treated.

In the end, *In and Out* just does not add up. A promising cast, a legendary director and a funny premise should deliver a solid movie. The only thing that delivered is a limp film.

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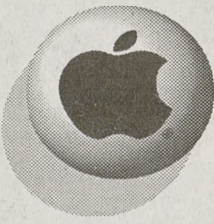
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