

# *Keeping Mum*

Film reviews



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by Ivika

*Keeping Mum* is a British black comedy film, which was released back in 2005, and directed by Niall Johnson. The film tells a tale of a problematic British family. But then, their new housekeeper arrives, and all their problems somehow get resolved mysteriously. In my review, I'd like to talk about the message of this film, the humour it contains, and the acting it presents.

The message of this film is that we have to hold our families dear to ourselves. People can be problematic, but they can change. This is particularly true with the new housekeeper Grace Hawkins, who manages to twist the Goodfellows family in the direction of the mum's liking. In other words, she does everything she can to keep the family together and keep their mum from running off to America with her new lover.

This film, as stated above, uses lots of black humour, but also sarcasm, irony, and more such. My favourite part of the film is when the mum's golf instructor calls her to whisper distant dreams into her ear, but instead, the housekeeper picks up. I absolutely loved her reaction to it, despite the whole situation being a bit of a cliché.

The acting was top-notch. In the behind-the-scenes video, we could see most of the actors talking about how their roles were a new territory for them. Nevertheless, they all did an amazing job with bringing the characters to life.

In the end, I really enjoyed this film, as I do like comedy films. It was a lot more serious comedic film than I'm normally used to, but the difference isn't unnecessarily bad. It doesn't ruin the film; rather, it enhances it, and makes it stand out from the rest of the kind. I recommend this film to anyone who wants to watch a comedy film that differs.



by Sander

The movie starts with Rosie Jones riding on a train. Upon the train's arrival, she gets taken into custody and later tries for double homicide. After getting released, she starts anew as a housekeeper for a lovely family in Little Wallop. Rosie, now known as Grace Hawkins, begins to wreak havoc on her new neighbours in secrecy.

The movie is fabulous. It made me giggle throughout the film. The plot was marvellous, and the ending was everything you could want. The film explores such problems as miscommunication, bullying, secrecy, and many others. The main message of the movie is to put a family before everything else. It also tries to hint at the saying "Like father, like son", but differently – "Like mother, like daughter".

The humour in the movie is remarkable. A couple of phrases needed some thought, but for the most part, the jokes were hilarious. Frankly, the dirty jests were the best ones. The quips are well-made for a wide range of audience.

The music, too, is the thing that made certain scenes pop. The comedic sections were greatly enhanced by the subtle music. The high spot was the loud and intense part of a classical piece playing during the meeting between Grace and Lance.

I would recommend this film to anyone who is up for a good giggle and is old enough for the sexual innuendos. It is also worth watching for people who are going through tough times with their families.



by Hanna Helena

*Keeping Mum* is a British black comedy film, which came out in 2005. It is co-written and directed by Niall Johnson, and it stars Rowan Atkinson, Kristin Scott Thomas, Maggie Smith, and Patrick Swayze.

The story focuses on a family of four. Walter Goodfellow, played by Rowan Atkinson, is the vicar of a small town and his wife Gloria has become disillusioned in their marriage. So she turns to seek comfort in her American golf instructor. There are also their two kids, dealing with their problems. Then they get a new housekeeper, Grace, who is set on helping the family find their way. But unbeknownst to the family, Grace is a serial killer, which heavily influences her way of dealing with problems. The film focuses on family and romantic relationships.

The film is a comedy, but it is very different from a classical American laugh-out-loud comedy. Most of the film's comedy comes from the English dry wit, which the characters use perfectly, and situations they are put into. But also Walter, the husband, is trying to incorporate jokes into his sermons, which lets him use more formally structured jokes, as well. The film uses comedy fantastically, blending it in seamlessly and making the viewer think about it to get it, making it a rewarding experience.

The film does a good job on all fronts. The sound production and use of music are executed well. The sound effects bring some scenes to life or create a really good atmosphere. The camera work is solid, but nothing not seen in any other movie. The film is well-produced and of good quality. On the other hand, from a production standpoint, while solid, it is nothing ground-breaking or especially noteworthy. Still, it is not a bad thing, as it just lets the story shine through more brightly and clearly.

This film is aimed at an adult audience. The film heavily includes sexual themes and delves into the inner workings of relationships. The film is also not the most realistic, so if you are a person who likes clever and witty jokes and doesn't mind some unrealistic character behaviour, this movie is perfect for you.



by Laura Eva Helena

The film I am going to review is *Keeping Mum*. It is a comedy film, made in 2005, and directed by Niall Johnson. The film stars Rowan Atkinson, Kristin Scott Thomas, Maggie Smith and many others. *Keeping Mum* is a great example of a British black comedy.

The film tells a story about a family whose members all have their own problems. They are somehow too distant from each other... until their new housekeeper Grace arrives. Later, Gloria (Mother) and Holly (the daughter) find out that Grace (the housekeeper) is Gloria's mother. Grace starts killing people because she wants to protect her daughter and daughter's family. She gets started with a dog, but does not always kill. For example, she breaks the bicycle brakes of some naughty boys to stop their bullying of Petey (the son). Grace also helps Walter (Father) to find a way back to his wife. In the end, Grace leaves the house to protect all these family secrets and to avoid causing any further trouble. The film explores relationships and how to deal with them. Also, it helps to find new inspiration.

The humour in this film is harder to understand when you don't know enough vocabulary. Not every joke is crystal clear. But I think there's more than black comedy in it. For example, some scenes look like dry humour for me.

The acting was good. Maggie Smith played Grace in a way that made murder look like a normal thing to do – a thing which solves all your problems. The cast made their characters look interesting. So even without a big purpose, they all found a way to make things funny.

Everyone who understands and enjoys black comedy should watch this film, and also those, of course, who don't need a big twist, but just a little bit of craziness.



by Richard Miikael

There are many films and movies with dark humour. For some, it is the central core for the film. But there are few, which manage to use good British humour with a dark twist to them.

*Keeping Mum* talks about an elderly woman called Grace Hawkins, or alternatively known Rosie Jones, who commits several murders while being the housekeeper for the Goodfellow family. She commits a grand total two murders, causes a death via heart attack, and also becomes a puppy killer. Each murder is committed for the benefit of the Goodfellows and explores two questions: How far would you go for your loved ones? and "What makes an immoral deed moral?"

The humour in the film has a really dark twist when it comes to Grace. Grace's character is mentally insane, and due her insanity, she doesn't have almost any reaction when it comes to killing or committing bad deeds. She doesn't even see it as immoral. As such, she often doesn't realize what she has done wrong, and it naturally creates many humorous situations in the movie.

But the movie would be just a mediocre black comedy movie if it wasn't for the excellent actors. From the cold-hearted killer Grace to the nymphomaniac daughter Holly, each character has been played out magnificently.

The film is a great combination of humour and a crime-story. For someone who enjoys comedies and a healthy-dose of crimes in their films or books this is a great watch. The film also suits people who like to debate about philosophical topics, as it is what this movie is built upon.



by Leiki-Maria

The film starts with a lovely woman, Rosemary Jones, getting convicted in manslaughter. It appears that she has killed her husband and his mistress. She then is sentenced by the judge to be imprisoned. Later in life, she gets a job as a faithful housekeeper, now named Grace Hawkins, in a fairly miserable home.

I enjoyed the film quite a lot. The plot was great. Who doesn't love happy endings? Even though it wasn't my expectation of it, it still had a kick to it and made the movie excellent. The actors were brilliant!

The film's message is that family is everything. We can always find a way back to our happiness, even if the possible solution is completely bizarre. So the film talks about relationship problems and moral hypocrisy.

The humour was amusing. I found myself giggling frequently. The jokes were settling, unexpected, and sometimes even dirty or innocent. But I still think the jokes are suitable for many people.

I sincerely think the acting was great. I was surprised to see Rowan Atkinson so different, not in his so-called Mr. Bean form. He played his role in a very lovely way. Also, I always love seeing Maggie Smith in different films. She acted so much like my grandma, besides the murderous part. She was classy and caring. She is a natural!

I recommend this film to many! Maybe not children as they might not understand it, and it somewhat has borderline scenes in it. But I'm sure the film talked about real struggles most of us have to face, and it did so in a funny way.



by Enriko

*Keeping Mum* is a British black comedy film which was released in 2005. The film is directed by Niall Johnson and the roles in that film are played by some of the most famous British actors and actresses; for example, Rowan Atkinson and Maggie Smith.

I think the author of the film and the whole story wants to say that families need to stay together, and everyone has to be good and helpful to each other. The film shows a family life in a really strange and a criminal way, I would say. But I think that a black comedy does make people think a little bit more about different things and that this film stroke that point really well. It made me think about my life, too.

Black humour in this film was really good and easily recognizable. Moreover, the humour as such was everywhere in the film. If it were a typical crime film or something like that, the murderer would have declined that she had killed all these victims. But in this film, Grace just said with a numb face that, yes, she did it. Those numb faces made the film much funnier. Sometimes, however, I could not take the crying of the characters seriously.

The acting was very good. Well, there were some good British actors, too, and nobody can act like they can. Their acting in the film showed true professionalism. They were so good that sometimes it felt like it was a real life.

Honestly, this film is for everyone to watch. Being not particularly a family film, it still is a good film to watch with your friends.

