



Katie Holmes & Josh Duhamel Discuss 'The Romantics'

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One of the most glitzy films to come out of the 2010 Sundance Film Festival was **Galt Niederhoffer's** adaptation of her own novel, *The Romantics*. It's not really a glamorous film; in actuality it's the exact opposite. After all, how often does a movie with a cast that includes pretty people like **Katie Holmes**, **Josh Duhamel**, **Anna Paquin** and **Malin Akerman** deliver a serious narrative that offers a realistic look at love? The answer is "not that often" and since the studio system generally refuses to make films that deal with relationships authentically, we turn to the voices of independent film to fill that void.

Although *The Romantics* isn't a bubbly film fantasy guided by the statistics that a marketing team dug up, it does have the golden look of one thanks to its star-studded cast - which also includes **Elijah Wood**, **Adam Brody**, **Rebecca Lawrence** and **Jeremy Strong**. They were all present at the press junket for the film which was held at the Gansevoort Hotel in NYC, where they answered questions about their take on love, the experience of making the film and much more. Read on for quotes from the conference and make sure you check out *The Romantics* when it hits theaters in limited release this weekend before expanding on September 24th.

Q: Congratulations on such a great cast. That's really something. For Josh and Katie, Laura seems to know that Laura and Tom are a perfect match. Is that a true thing? Or do they observe each other because they're not great people, or are they great people when they're together?

Katie Holmes: Sometimes you gel and sometimes it's not your ideal match. Sometimes your head drags you in one direction and your heart pulls you in another. I think that these two characters are pulled by those two forces. And in turn, the two characters are pulled toward one another and then maybe they're not different at all times.

Josh Duhamel: This is an interesting question, because a lot of times people end up settling for somebody who's safe. Somebody who is not going to demand as much from them. And I think that's what my character does in this movie. Throughout this movie, he knows that the one who brings out the best in him is Laura's character. It's just tough coming to terms with that, and it's where his indecision comes from -- whether or not he should go with the girl that makes him better, or the girl who makes things easier.

KH: I think that this love triangle that's going on is really one of the things I found wonderful about the movie -- these complex relationships are something that many people go through. It makes for a good film.



Q: For Elijah Wood - Did you feel like your character was both an alcoholic and a romantic? And also, where have you been? Haven't seen you in awhile.

Elijah Wood: I'm right here. (laughs). I don't know if Chip is an alcoholic just yet. I don't think he's acting out. I think he grew up in a context of a very well-to-do family, and he's sort of against the nature of his upbringing. And he's trying to find his way, and alcohol and pills might just be one of the paths.

Q: Could Katie talk about her role as executive producer? Any stories you want to tell about things you were able to do as executive producer versus if you weren't?

JD: Lots of cup cakes and coffee. (laughter)

KH: That was really it. (laughs). Let's see. I was really flattered when I was able to have this position and I just tried to help when I could. Cheering people on. That's really what I did. I actually used this time to learn a bit more, from everyone, from the producers, director. It was really wonderful. I appreciate it.

Q: Is there anything you learned that you'll want to take with you onto your next projects?

KH: You never get off. You just keep going. Making films is very challenging and you just have to keep going.

Ron Stein (producer): She's being very modest. She helped out a bunch as executive producer, attending all the meetings and really participating. She basically came up with the whole marketing plan. She was on the phone every week, at night, talking about the plan and coming up with the plan. She's being modest here. It was quite different than other films where stars executive produce and actually don't executive produce. She really did. She's been involved ever since production stopped. She's great.

Q: Can you talk about the importance of the J. Crew photo shoot? Did it help with the marketing of the film? Did it

help with the mood of the film?

Galt Niederhoffer: I think I need to speak more clearly on this because it was really part of the design of the movie. Because this is a story about people who like to express themselves through their clothing, with costume design, we did our best to think together about the color and how that complicates the ingredients of the film. When we were finished, we were looking for ways to be innovative, and as Katie says, keep pushing. So we thought, what would be a company/partnership that would allow us to do that? To do this indie film with as many people as possible? We thought really quickly of J. Crew because it's a good company whose clothes you can use in the film and they had the spirit and integrity that I admire. It's been a really happy partnership, a really happy marriage of art and commerce. Because what began as a website together to help promote the film, turned into something that allowed us to reach an entire new audience.



Q: What were your initial reactions to the script?

JD: I didn't like it at first (laughter) because when I first read the script, I was like, "I don't like any of these characters (more laughter)". I really didn't. When you really look at it, I just felt like it was just a bunch of selfish people who were making much bigger deals of their problems than they really were. Then I read it again, and I liked it much more because I felt like it's a reflection of what people are like anyway, what friends are like, what relationships are like, what groups are like. That's where this all comes from. We're all messed up in some way. We're all blah. I think that's what drew me to it -- the imperfection of all these people just trying to make it work.

I've got a group of friends who I've had for a long time who have been pretty dysfunctional -- not making out with each other's wives -- but you know, I think everyone can relate to the imperfections of these characters in some way. And I think that's why I wanted to do it.

KH: I really loved it when I read it. I loved the feeling. To me, it felt a lot like *The Big Chill* and also a little bit like a *John Hughes* film, and I loved those movies growing up. And then I met Galt and I thought that she was so smart and the cast that started coming together was really exciting. It was really exciting.

Q: Were you always going to play the part you played? Did you have a choice in the part you played?

KH: I was selected to play Laura from the start.

Q: How has your view of love and romance changed?

Malin Akerman: I think when you're younger, the appearance is the first and foremost. When you're a teenager, you see the hot guy in school and you think, what would it be like to date them. But I think over time, as it should, you grow into telling the difference between real love and infatuation and it's so funny to look at the men I find attractive now versus the ones I did when I was a teenager. I would cringe at those men if I were younger, but I think it's infatuation. You see people for who they are when you grow up. When you're looking for a mate for life, you need more than appearance obviously. You need someone who challenges you and wants to grow and grow together in life.

JD: I'm not the best person to ask. (Laughs). I'm just playing. I think she was right on. You grow up and realize that it isn't just about the aesthetic. You realize whether or not that person makes you better, makes you happy. You're lucky if you can find it.

Q: Were you able to take any personal experiences from your own wedding as inspiration or a reflection?

JD: Yeah. It makes me appreciate my wedding. It makes me appreciate that I was confident going in. The idea of not knowing for sure -- this guy didn't know whether or not he was going to go through with it -- and I think that's the worst possible nightmare you can have. Especially for me. But again, that's why this works. I think a lot of people have this time or age where they decide to step up and be a man or not. And that's what he does.

GN: I just wanted to jump in here and talk about the term, likable character. It's a word that you hear a lot. Likable is a word that's come to mean heroic or passive. What I think about likable, personally, what I find so exciting and interesting about great characters in any movie, I think with this is because people are real. They're kind. They're needy. They're petty. They're generous. They're incredible, all in a given day. And that's true life.

KH: I think that's the beauty of friendships and that's what you see in this film. When you have people who are friends, you can be all of those things and people love you. That's what feels good about watching this movie. And that's what felt good about being in this movie and portraying these people. You get to be people who are real. Who have their ups and downs and they have this family around them that's been through it all. If you're lucky to have people like that in your life, it's wonderful. This film also celebrates friendship.

MA: And what happened with that was we, the cast, all became friends like that. This group a people became a family. Probably because we were all away together working on the film together, but something happens when you're with people and you have a common goal and a director you trust who creates that environment. (trails off, inaudible).

Jeremy Strong: In movies today, there's a lot of idealization of people, so talking about the likable thing, I feel like most people I know are still trying to figure things out. This gave us a chance to represent, in a non-idealist way.

EW: I'd also say the complexities of these characters made them real.

Q: Would you tell us about the book? How you found time to write a book in between producing movies and having a family and all?

GN: I finished this book three days before my second child was born. I tend to write well during my pregnancies. I

wrote my first book during my first pregnancy. I write with a pretty rigorous schedule. I try to keep 10-2 for my writing time.

Q: This question is for everybody. So much of the narrative relies on the collective backstories of *The Romantics*. I just wanted to know how much time was spent and how much of the story was talked about in pre-production. So many characters intertwine and intersect in so many different ways.



GN: We each had approaches to creating the characters and their backstories and made sure it contributed to their front story.

Rebecca Lawrence: We definitely discussed the courtship and the different timeline of how we knew each other. And to me, personally, it reminded me of friends. I had great, great friends that had a strange dynamic in college, so I used that to bring that to the table, going off of that.

Q: In reference to the title of the film, what are some romantic gestures your loved ones have created?

KH: My husband has red roses for me everywhere we go, everywhere we travel.

Q: Where do your characters go from here? Do you move on? Do you recover?

Adam Brody: I think so. I think we're sort of ready for it so because of that, we work through it. At least for awhile.

RL: I don't know. I also don't know how that night ends with you.

Q: Are there any differences between the book and film, if so, why?

GN: It's pretty loyal to the book. I looked at the book with a careful eye when I was adapting it. When you're writing a book you're looking for description, and here you're looking for monologues and psyche and things that don't move. And when you're writing a script you're looking for things that move across the screen, things that enact drama and action. I think when I write books, I think a lot in terms of a screenplay because I've been working in this profession for so long as a producer, so I think I'm already influenced by the movie structure handling. It was a chance to correct some of the mistakes I think I made in the book. I actually lost two characters.

Q: Do you think this role will define Katie Holmes as a mature actress?

KH: I really don't know, but I really enjoyed my time with my daughter and my family. And it was also wonderful to work with this director and this cast. These guys are such incredible actors. It was really inspiring everyday because you'd watch somebody do a scene and you'd be like, wow, okay, I didn't know that's what it was about. It brought lots of things differently and wonderfully. It was such a great time and I think that's why we all still hang out.

GN: I'm going to just add a little anecdote that I think you might enjoy. The day that we shot the part of the movie that takes place during the dinner. In that scene, every one of these characters that these actors play basically perform a soliloquy about the bride and groom, but also reflect themselves. That day we sat in a room filled with 80 other people and it was really hot, but it was freezing cold outside. And we watched each other perform, and it was magical. It was impressive. It was revealing to see these guys perform for one another.

JS: It was an incredibly warm and safe environment, too. We can be there for each other. It's quite beautiful.