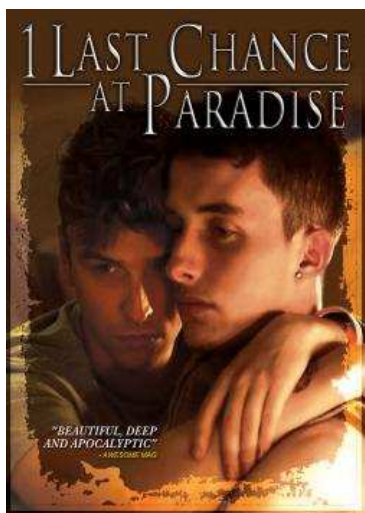


1 Last Chance At Paradise

by Kilian Melloy
Sunday Jul 6, 2014

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Wade Radford's "End of Days / Gay Romance" concept is filmed by director Jason Impey on a tattered shoestring (IMDB gives an "estimated" budget of the film as £30, and they're not being facetious), but offers a slowly-building resonance that leaves you musing.

Radford co-stars as Kai, one of a pair of teen male lovers; his boyfriend is Tobi (Connor Paganini), whose mother (played by punk singer Honey Bane) hasn't taken the news too well that her son is gay. It's the end of the world (or maybe just the end of Buckinghamshire, England; the film doesn't specify), and the boys are trapped in Tobi's flat. What's happened is a mystery: All we glean is that some sort of poison gas has killed everyone outside.

The film is set entirely in one indoor location, so there's not a whole lot of shock to the news. We never see these guys out and about, or at school, or at Kai's home, though we hear about how Kai's family -- who are much more accepting -- love Tobi.

But they also have a happy memory to hold on to: A weekend when Tobi's mother was away and they had the flat to themselves. "Found footage" from Kai's phone provides flashbacks to that weekend, as they tease each other, read poetry, and act like a couple of kids in love.

What's not "found" is the footage of the two waiting out the aftermath, struggling with terror and privation. There are also scenes set before the catastrophe, as Tobi's mother grows suspicious that he might be gay and then, when he admits to it, harangues him, claiming that being gay is an illness.

There's little action here aside from motherly panic and one tender sex scene. The camera work is claustrophobic and amateurish, and the dramatic tension slackens when scenes play on too long. The editing is well done, though, and the performances are better than expected. The valuable kernel at the film's core is the observation that it's important to spend your life doing something that seems authentic and meaningful. For these two very young men, the only possibility left for achieving that is to love each other as best they can.

"1 Last Chance At Paradise"
DVD
\$19.95
LiveWire Entertainment

Kilian Melloy serves as EDGE Media Network's Assistant Arts Editor, writing about film, theater, food and drink, and travel, as well as contributing a column. His professional memberships include the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association, the Boston Online Film Critics Association, and the Boston Theater Critics Association's Elliot Norton Awards Committee.

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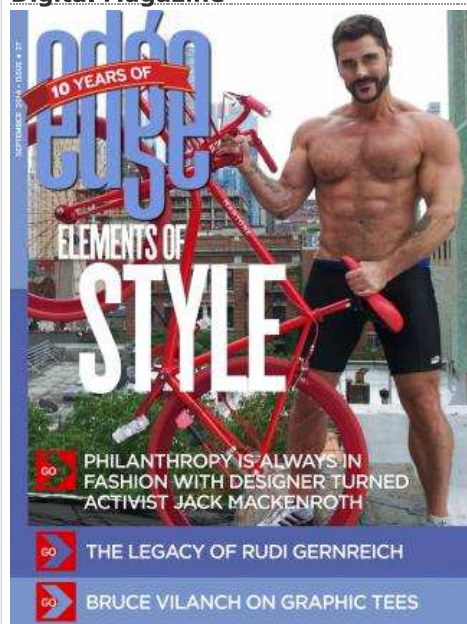
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