

## THE SQUID AND THE WHALE:

Bernard Berkman is a jerk. Joan Berkman likes to fool around. He is a slob. She is mannereed. Bernard is self-centered and self-righteous. Joan worries about her two sons. Bernard's career as a writer is going downhill. Joan career is taking off and has just been published in "The New Yorker" magazine.

What do they have in common? Well, they are a miserably unhappy couple.

Bernard (played by Jeff Daniels) and Joan (played by Laura Linney) use words as swords against each other.

Writer/director Noah Baumbach has created a rough and tumble marriage that has gone bad. He has presented a picture that delves into modern break-up, divorce and joint custody.

The film is well written (if you like this sort of thing) and Daniels and Linney have done a magnificent job of acting. One son Walt (Jesse Eisenberg), about 16, is going through a coming-of-age crisis and wants to be with his father. He despises his mother for fooling around. Frank, (Owen Kline), on the other hand, is about 12 years old, and wants to be with his mother.

Joan is having an affair with tennis pro Ivan (William Baldwin). Bernard is tempting fate with a young co-ed student Lili (Anna Paquin).

Walt is discovering his first "love" Sophie (Halley Feiffer). Ah, if we could all have that moment back again!

And young Frank is...well, I'll leave that to your imagination.

Director Baumbach has created a family that cares about each other, but is going their separate ways. One gets the feeling, that even with their current turmoil, they are a unit that one day will become friends.

While the acting is rock solid and the script is believable, I found this movie hard to take at times. Do I really want to see another film in which I hated all the characters (other than the likeable Sophie)? The producer of this film was Wes Anderson, whose film "The Royal Tennenbaums" was a royal pain in the a--.

This film is about as caustic as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor' "Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Need I say more?

88 Minutes

MPAA Rating: R (for strong sexual content, graphic dialogue and language)

**RATING: B-**

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