

Cultural Daily

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Susan Sarandon, *The Perfect Meddler*

Evie Sullivan · Wednesday, April 20th, 2016

Susan Sarandon hobbles into the room, accompanied by two assistants who guide to support her every step. The Oscar-winning actress is obviously in pain but she smiles bravely and greets me with open arms. It's the Saturday Bernie Sanders supporters are marching in New York before the primary election and Susan is upset that she has to sit in a rather cold room in the Beverly Wilshire hotel in Los Angeles, promoting her latest movie, *The Meddler*, written and directed by Lorene Scafaria ("Seeking a Friend for the End of the World"). Wearing a beige dress that shows a lot of cleavage – bravo for ignoring Piers Morgan's mean comments after the SAG awards and strutting her stuff, she looks not a day over 50, even though it's common knowledge that she will turn 70 on October 4th.

This is the first movie in years where she can show her remarkable acting chops in a thankful leading role. She plays Marnie Minervini, a recent widow who has recently moved from New York to Los Angeles to be closer to her grown daughter, Lori (Rose Byrne), a successful but still single television writer. She not only calls and texts her daughter at any hour of the day and night, she also likes to show up with a bag of bagels unannounced at her doorstep. She has advice on everything, from Lori's breakup with her handsome boyfriend Jacob (Jason Ritter) to what Lori should tell her therapist – until Lori has to draw strict boundaries. Of course, Marnie doesn't think she's meddling. She just loves her daughter the way only a mother can. Armed with a comfortable bank account, her generosity spills over not only to her daughter but also to strangers she randomly encounters. When work takes Lori to New York, her mother faces the fact that being alone terrifies her that leads to her compulsion to help. When a retired police officer (J.K. Simmons) offers some solid presence in her life, things begin to change. Marnie surrenders to her goodness without the need to control her environment with her compulsive helper-syndrome.



As she sits down in a rather uncomfortable hotel chair, I want to know what happened that she needs to wear a cast on her left leg. "I was hiking, in Columbia after the Cartagena Film Festival with my eldest son," she says. "I paid such good attention for the first hour and a half when it was very tricky. And then at the very bottom when the worst was over of course, I just didn't pay attention and the next thing I knew I was on my knees and I fractured my ankle. I screamed in primal pain. In primal whatever. But what was funny was just as I fell and I was getting up, this car drove up and this woman got out and said, 'Susan Sarandon, we'll take you to our house.' as if they'd been waiting for me to come, you know. It was just so weird. And they were very nice. We put ice on it. But then, I was leaving. It was right at the end of my trip, so luckily, I waited until I got home to have my MRIs and everything done." Who wouldn't want to help Susan Sarandon? She's one of the most approachable and open-minded famous people in the world. It is a privilege to be in her company because she radiates such ease and self-confidence that's contagious. I

immediately feel the energy that comes from her, the unconditional love she emits.

Is Susan Sarandon a meddler with her three kids? Can she help herself not to get involved in their lives? “Oh, no, I meddle alright! The secret to being a meddler is just to do it from the very beginning so they think that’s normal. And I definitely do. And they meddle back. It’s a mutual meddling thing. But I do not show up with bagels constantly. But I do send things constantly. And I text. They don’t take my phone calls so I text. And, I send videos and music and they do the same thing and books and suggestions. That kind of meddling. But I don’t – I’m a big believer in making mistakes so I encourage my kids to fail constantly so they understand that they can come back. I always assume that they’ll get back up. And you know, if they ask me for advice I’ll give it but that doesn’t happen too often.”

Sarandon loves her sunny character Marnie, who is enjoying life as an older woman, is romantic and adventurous. Just like her. In the last few years, she was cast in supporting roles in movies. Her presence made these movies better, but these roles were still not good for her, like the one in the Melissa McCarthy starrer *Tammy*. But this time, she gets romantic with J.K. Simmons, who scored an Oscar for his mean music teacher in *Whiplash* last year.

Is Susan a romantic herself?

“You know, there is an old book out there called *Why Men Love Bitches*. I’m reading it right now. I did it all wrong, all my life, because I like nurturing the person I’m with. That’s romantic for me. I’m miserable on Sundays. I go out and I see everyone looks like they’re in love and I just hate them for it. But I am very romantic. I’m even romantic about my grandchildren. I think that’s what I miss about not being in a relationship. I don’t miss a person from an old relationship but I miss the being in love part. Because I do like that and I’m really good at it. I miss not being able to have someone to do that kind of stuff with.” Now, after having landed a plum role in *The Meddler*, we can only wish for her to find someone who makes her feel romantic again.

Top image: Susan Sarandon and Rose Byrne in The Meddler. Courtesy Sony Pictures Classics.

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