

## Document Citation

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# ANOTHER WOMAN

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(PG)

(ORION)

Color/1.85

82 Mins.

Cast: Gena Rowlands, Mia Farrow, Ian Holm, Blythe Danner, Gene Hackman, Sandy Dennis, Betty Buckley, John Houseman, Martha Plimpton, Philip Bosco, Harris Yulin, David Ogden Stiers, Frances Conroy, Kenneth Welsh, Bruce Jay Friedman, Michael Kirby.

Credits: Written and directed by Woody Allen. Produced by Robert Greenhut. Executive producers: Jack Rollins, Charles H. Joffe. Director of photography: Sven Nykvist. Production designer: Santo Loquasto. Edited by Susan E. Morse. Costume designer: Jeffrey Kurland.

**Woody Allen forsakes laughs once more, with static results.**  
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Another drama? Yes, Woody Allen has written and directed another drama despite the critical and box office failure of his 1987 angstfest, *September*. No one should begrudge the filmmaker's desire not to be pigeonholed in comedy, but few studio dramatic releases are as solemn and morose as *September* and, now, *Another Woman*. In a misguided instance of style matching content, this psychological study of a repressed philosophy professor is as frosty and aloof as its subject.

With the exception of Mia Farrow, the large cast is new to the Allen fold—beginning with John Cassavetes' wife and muse, Gena Rowlands. *Another Woman* bears some resemblance to Cassavetes' psychodramas, but without their rough-edged feeling of unpredictability. Allen's film is airtight and studied. Rowlands plays Marion, a college instructor on sabbatical to write a book. She rents a small apartment with a unique drawback—through an air vent, she can overhear the intimate revelations of the patients in the psychiatrist's office next door. One patient in particular haunts her—a despondent pregnant woman ironically named Hope, whose searing words echo Marion's own troubled state. An avid intellectual, the professor finds solace in great literature, music and art. But as she gradually comes to realize, those interests have become a barrier against her emotions. Despite a successful career and a superficially happy marriage, Marion—like the possibly suicidal Hope—views her life as one of self-deception.

*Another Woman* raises a quietly insinuating question we must all grapple with to some degree—how to become more engaged with life. But the film does so in a muted, lethargic way that fails to engage the audience. At first, the drama seems lively enough—

especially after the sensory deprivation experience of Allen's all-interior chamber piece, *September*. The opening party scene evokes *Hannah and Her Sisters*, as we meet Marion's genial physician husband Ken (Ian Holm) and her vivacious best friend Lydia (Blythe Danner). In a flashback, Betty Buckley gets to vent her spleen ferociously as Ken's bitter first wife. And later, Sandy Dennis stirs things up as a jealous old college friend Marion meets by chance. After these few diversions, *Another Woman* turns unrelentingly dour. Marion may be a recognizable New York type, but her crisis isn't made compelling—even her dreams, as dramatized here, are prosaic and listless. Whatever personal significance this woman holds for Allen is never communicated effectively.

Rowlands brings a natural grace and intelligence to her performance, though her cool voiceovers become wearing after a while. As Hope, Farrow—half the time heard but not seen—pours on the gloom. Gene Hackman is appealing as a novelist with an unrequited passion for Marion. Holm, Danner, Dennis, Martha Plimpton as Marion's stepdaughter and Harris Yulin as her brother are all seen to good advantage, and Sven Nykvist's golden-hued cinematography augments the film's restrained mood. After *Another Woman*, Woody Allen may have a harder time getting another chance to explore his curiously dreary dramatic side.

—K.L.