

H is for Happiness

By Kylie

H is also for Horse, but we'll come to that.

Candice, played by Daisy Axon, is 12 and she's 'unusual', but she is not autistic – just ask her. She is, however, relentlessly optimistic, resilient to the bullying of mean – but as it turns out also miserable – Jen Marshall, and is boundlessly kind. Just before the inward-looking teen years strike, Candice is trying to make everyone in her life happy, with a little financial help from Rich Uncle Brian. She is also to save Douglas Benson from Another Dimension from certain death. Douglas Benson, played by Wesley Patton, is planning to jump from a great height in order to return to Another Dimension.

As events gallop towards the Year 8 theatrical extravaganza in which each of the students must perform a letter of the alphabet, Candice is determined to mend her parents' Richard Roxborough and Emma Booth's marriage and to heal her father's relationship with Rich Uncle Brian, played by Joel Jackson. She is also helping her teacher, Miss Bamford, the brilliant Miriam Margoyles, do something about her scary, uncontrollably-roving eye and, generally, putting all the ills of her entire 12-year old world to rights.

The film is set in Albany, WA, whose sweeping coastline and countryside is breathtaking. It is directed by John Sheedy and written by Lisa Hoppe, both of whom have created a sensitive, quirky and entertaining film with some perfectly-pitched and beautifully imagined scenes. The era is uneasily unidentifiable and, although the art direction is cheerful, I found it distracting. Unsurprisingly, the Director John Sheedy has a theatrical background and has adapted some Australian classics for the stage, including *Storm Boy* and *Jasper Jones*.

As for the horse, well, you'll have to go and see the film to find out – I'm not going to ruin the surprise!