

# It should be once in a lifetime

Last night I saw the film "Twice in a Lifetime."

It was the anatomy of a divorce, and it explored the consequences of one man's extramarital affair on the people he was supposed to love most.

Gene Hackman (Harry) and Ellen Burstyn star as the divorcing couple. Ann-Margret (Audrey) is the woman Harry falls for, and Amy Madigan (Sonny) is the couple's oldest married daughter. She is one of three children, and she has the most violent reaction to her father's affair.

I would have reacted like Sonny.

She storms into a bar, with her mother in tow, and makes a scene.

She can't believe he could really leave



The Blank Page

Karen Cubie

But Harry's affair is not just a passing whim. He leaves his family and moves in with the woman. It is a lasting romance he shares, and he sees it as one of the best things that ever happened to him.

When he walks into Audrey's

life, he walks out of his family's lives.

"We've got to grab it with both fists and run with it, Audrey," he tells his lover in one scene as she contemplates ending the relationship to avoid causing more pain.

But Harry's heaven is everyone else's hell. All of his children are grown, but that doesn't make it any easier.

It's what makes the movie so frightening.

Not just the young

Divorce doesn't happen only to young, struggling married couples. It can break apart even well-established families that seem to have everything.

As a child, divorce was one of my biggest nightmares.

I couldn't stand to hear my parents fight. It terrified me to think one of them could walk out.

The two people that started my family have the most precarious relationship. They didn't have the blood tie between each other that bound me to them and to my brother and sister.

I couldn't choose whom I would be related to.

They could.

My parents didn't fight any more than the next couple. I think they have a good marriage.

They've had some bad times, but they worked through them. I'd like to think they were strengthened by them.

They taught me the value of loyalty and commitment, because no marriage can be successful without both of these conditions.

The movie was scary because the marriage was murdered by boredom rather than by fury.

No one knew it was over until it happened.

Harry and his wife settled down, fell into a routine, and forgot about needing each other.

The divorce was nobody's fault, and the affair was the catalyst rather than the problem.

But I don't think adultery is ever permissible — not even as a solution to boredom.

The marriage didn't have to end the way it did.

Harry escaped into another relationship as firmly rooted in infatuation as the first one must have been. The other woman was fresh, new, and exciting.

He should have tried to make his marriage fresh and exciting.

He recognized the warning signs before anyone else but he never tried to save the marriage. He never looked at why he was struck by boredom.

A good marriage is not based purely on feeling. Somewhere along the line you have to make a decision to love someone, and you have to stick to it.

A certain amount of passion is needed to make marriage worthwhile, but passion comes and goes and comes again, in swells. If you spent your whole life walking around in the throes of ecstasy you'd be a blubbering idiot.

Falling in love is easy, but staying in love is hard work.

My parents fought, but they stuck it out.

I'm sure at times they were bored silly by each other, but it's easy to get bored with anyone from time to time.

I'm not saying there's never any reason for divorce, but we live in a disposable society, and we often have disposable marriages.

So many people marry once, twice, three times, and then decide marriage isn't worth it.

I guess I'm old-fashioned.

I believe, in most cases, marriage should only come once in a lifetime.

MY OPPONENT IS TOO WEAK TO COPE WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN UNDER MY LEADERSHIP OF 20 YEARS'



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