



## Rental Family Reviews

[ALL CRITICS](#)[TOP CRITICS](#)[ALL AUDIENCE](#)[VERIFIED AUDIENCE](#)**Ty Burr**

Ty Burr's Watch List (Substack)

1d

**2.5/4**

A sweet, sentimental and fairly soggy drama with a novel dramatic conceit.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Michael Cook**

KARK-TV

1d

**9.5/10**

To see his [Fraser's] arc of becoming more connected with himself and other people is absolutely touching.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jana Monji**

Age of the Geek

1d

**4/5**

"Rental Family" is a film about family, biological and happenstance, that is distinctly not family-friendly fare due to adult themes. The film benefits from Brendan Fraser's puppy-dog like charm.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Marya E. Gates**

Cool People Have Feelings, Too. (Substack)



1d



A real old fashioned charmer.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Maxance Vincent**

Film Speak

2d



C-

Rental Family feels nothing more than an exercise in button pushing, where every emotional beat is the wrong one and most of the genuine connections Phillip makes fall flat by the time he tells them "the truth."

[Go to Full Review](#)**Lynn Venhaus**

Webster-Kirkwood Times

2d



B+

Hikari gently directs the film, showing tenderness and thoughtful interactions. One drawback is that we don't know as much about Phillip as we'd like to, but Fraser delivers sensitivity and understanding when others don't feel seen.

[Go to Full Review](#)**James Berardinelli**

ReelViews

3d



3/4

or viewers open to embrace the oddball premise—and willing to read more than a smattering of subtitles, since only about half the dialogue is in English—Rental Family offers roughly 105 minutes of solid, character-driven entertainment.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Al Alexander**

Movies Thru the Spectrum

3d



B+

There's a naturalness to Hikari's storytelling that heightens the authenticity of the transformation. You believe in these little miracles, as do her actors.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Sarah Knight Adamson**

Sarah's Backstage Pass

3d



3.5/4

The main goal of the film is to help a person to become happy and to spread joy, which is always a wonderful message.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Morris Yang**

In Review Online

4d



Rental Family keenly spotlights the mirth and frisson of human connection. For all the palatable cuteness the film puts on frank display, it also earns it.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Cain Noble-Davies**

CN

FILMINK (Australia)

5d



14.5/20

... soothes the heart at every turn.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Matt Pais**

MattPais.com

5d



D

So desperate to be cleansing it doesn't realize it's actually ointment, oily and only a mask for scars.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Sean P. Means**

The Movie Cricket

6d

**2.5/4**

The problem with "Rental Family" is that there are so many vignettes, so many clients, that no one story ever gets enough traction.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Cameron Meier**

MeierMovies.com

6d

**4/5**

It has the courage to ask – in an otherwise lighthearted film – what it means to interact with fellow humans and how the roles we play in life shape our reality and pseudo-reality.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Diane Carson**

DC

AWFJ.org

Nov 29



Japanese director/co-writer Hikari effectively dramatizes renting actors in "Rental Family" as unemployed American Phillip Vandarpleog (Brendan Fraser), living in contemporary Tokyo, must scramble for a job, landing work from a human rental agency.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Rendy Jones**

Rendy Reviews

Nov 26

**3/5**

Rental Family is a tender and affectionate drama elevated by Brendan Fraser's star presence and delves into the theme of human connectivity, despite its basic lighthearted demeanor.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Kiko Martinez**   
The Cinesnob Podcast  
Nov 26

**B+**

A reflective exploration of loneliness and the ways people find meaning in their lives through connection.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Tessa Smith**   
Mama's Geeky  
Nov 25

Utterly charming, and while it may not be perfect, Brendan Fraser delivers one of the best performances of the year.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Linda and Al Lerner**   
Movies and Shakers  
Nov 25

Fraser is pleasant, quiet and controlled in this sweet, heartfelt film. Hikari's film offers food for thought for a practical way to resolve the need for human connection. We think Rental Family deserves a long term lease.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Eric Marchen**   
Rogers TV  
Nov 25

**B-**

If it's any consolation, the ensemble dramedy earnestly seeks to advocate for the destigmatization of mental health issues in a part of the world where people would rather hire strangers to provide a form of catharsis than go to therapy.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Dom Fisher**

DF

**Geek Vibes Nation** 

Nov 25

 **7.5/10**

Rental Family is an endearing tour of empathy and compassion. Led by a genuine and heartfelt performance by Brendan Fraser, this tender exploration is not only a moving display but also a glimpse of humanity at its best.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Claudia Puig** 

FilmWeek (LAist)

Nov 24



The main reason to see it is Brendan Fraser. He is perfectly cast in this role.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Peter Rainer** 

FilmWeek (LAist)

Nov 24



It has a terrific premise for a movie, at any rate... But it's a missed opportunity to get under the surface.

[Go to Full Review](#)**G. Allen Johnson**

GA

**San Francisco Chronicle** 

Nov 24

 **3/4**

It wears its heart on its sleeve and is a bit too sentimental, but it is sweet and pleasing.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Adam Graham****Detroit News** 

Nov 24

**C+**

"Rental Family" seems reverse engineered to make people tear up and give them the warm fuzzies. Like the agency in the movie, it's providing a service. But how it arrives there could use a little tinkering.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Bilge Ebiri**

New York Magazine/Vulture

Nov 24



Rental Family might be a modestly likable, often uneven movie about a fictional American actor in Japan, but it's also a thoroughly fascinating movie about a very real actor in the midst of one of the strangest careers I've witnessed.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Brian Eggert**

Deep Focus Review

Nov 23



3/4

It's a movie whose schmaltz serves both the material's sentimentality and cleverly comments on how pretense can produce a genuine response.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Patrick McDonald**

HollywoodChicago.com

Nov 23



4/5

The film has a lower keyed tone, but emergent emotions, especially with the Japanese cast, taking unusual turns towards a spiritual space for all. Fraser had good chemistry with his daughter character, even as connection is movie quick. W/dir interview.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Jared Frank**

JF

MovieJawn

Nov 23

It's hard to criticise a film for succeeding at what it sets out to do, and that presents such an enjoyably gentle tale. But it is hard not to wish for something more than pleasantness.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Sarah Vincent**

Sarah G Vincent Views

Nov 23



While some may find "Rental Family" treacly, and television fare, others will walk away inspired.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Martin Carr**

CBR

Nov 23



9/10

Rental Family embraces Japanese culture and seeks to explore emotional connections in an open and honest, using Brendan Fraser's performance as a launch pad. Cementing this film with audiences who will soon acknowledge it as a contemporary classic.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Rich Cline**

Shadows on the Wall

Nov 22



4.5/5

Japanese filmmaker Hikari and her cowriter Stephen Blahut create remarkably honest characters, each with their own issues and specific journeys through a narrative that is thoroughly engaging.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Don Shanahan**

Every Movie Has a Lesson

Nov 22



4/5

With those glowing and disarming traits, the lovable Oscar winner could capture the hearts of the most bulletproof and armored tickers of any crowd.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Rick Bentley**   
RB KGET-TV (Bakersfield, CA)  
Nov 22

 A

"Rental Family" is a touching story of respect, love, aging and the addictive need to be connected to others.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Susan Granger**   
SSG Syndicate  
Nov 22

 8/10

Japanese-American filmmaker Hikari delivers an insightful glimpse into coping with loneliness in a foreign culture, while soft-spoken Brendan Fraser's sensitive performance recalls why he won an Oscar for 'The Whale.'

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **John Urbancich**   
JMuvies  
Nov 22

 3.5/5

The "TIFF Tribute Award for Emerging Talent" sounds like a reasonable fit for a filmmaker who mostly knows how to embrace an audience with smart characters and such gently appealing images of the huge Tokyo metropolis to match.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Christopher Lloyd**   
The Film Yap  
Nov 22

 3.5/5

Tender, a bit treacly, but always has its heart in the right place. Brendan Fraser, as a sad man who finds his own joy in bringing it to others, continues his bravura third act.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jeanne Kaplan** 

Kaplan vs. Kaplan

Nov 21



One of the most endearing and heartwarming movies to come along in quite a while, RENTAL FAMILY, starring Brendan Fraser as an American actor living and working in Tokyo, reminds us of the importance of human connection.

[Go to Full Review](#)**David Kaplan** 

Kaplan vs. Kaplan

Nov 21



RENTAL FAMILY is filled with humorous moments but its real strength is the authentic human joy that permeates the entire story.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Dana Han-Klein** 

We're Watching What?!

Nov 21

 4.5/5

A beautiful and meditative film on connection, family, and culture. Not once does it approach any of its characters with judgement. HIKARI's lovely script and directing helps continue the Renaissance!

[Go to Full Review](#)**Richard Roeper** 

RogerEbert.com

Nov 21

 3.5/4

This is a beautiful and contemplative film, with lovely messaging and a couple of sly twists.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Michael Walsh**

MW

Nerdist 

Nov 21

 4/5

We all just want to be seen. This movie fundamentally understands, with clear eyes, why that's true of all of us, no matter our age, our experiences, or where we come from. And for that reason you should see Rental Family.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Stephanie Merry** 

SM

Washington Post

Nov 21

 2.5/4

The arc of the film seems clear; we're about to witness people rediscovering the importance of human connection. Grab the tissues!

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Stephen Silver** 

Splice Today

Nov 21

\*

An oddity, one that aims for the heartstrings, but mostly devolves into predictable schmaltz

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Peter Travers** 

The Travers Take

Nov 21

 2.5/4

Brendan Fraser excels as a failed American actor adrift in Japan. Is his film a shameless soap opera or a far flintier look at human frailty? It's more like both.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Kent Turner** 

Film-Forward.com

Nov 21

 2.5/4

You get sap with the sake.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Siddhant Adlakha** 

JoySauce.com

Nov 21



The form it takes is far too straightforward to explore such an intriguing and loopy concept, so despite its stellar performances, its drama suffers.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Chris Bumbray** 

JoBlo's Movie Network

Nov 21



Brendan Fraser is great in this low key drama

[Go to Full Review](#)

AK

**Ariel Kras**Discussing Film 

Nov 21

 3.5/5

Brendan Fraser delivers an irresistibly charming and tender performance in *Rental Family*, which saves it from being just another feel-good comedy.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Micheal Compton**   
Bowling Green Daily News  
Nov 21

 B

Anchored by the perfectly cast Brendan Fraser, "*Rental Family*" is a sweet tale that packs an unexpected emotional punch.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Fred Topel**   
United Press International  
Nov 21



Dramatizes a unique service found in Japan into a story with universal relevance. As star, Brendan Fraser brings sincerity to the delicate balance of tear-jerker and morality play.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Bill Newcott**   
The Saturday Evening Post  
Nov 21

 4/5

Fraser, through Phil's sympathetic eyes, helps us see beyond our Western aversion to such high-stakes cosplay and ultimately embrace a culture's mechanism, however convoluted, that endeavors to scatter the stigma of loneliness and rejection.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Mark Dujcik**   
Mark Reviews Movies  
Nov 21

 3/4

[Brendan Fraser is] quite good here, understated in every way. The whole film is like that, too.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 **Alan Zilberman** 

AZ  
Spectrum Culture  
Nov 21

 **1/5**

It skirts the ethical and moral implications of its premise, just so it can indulge in the drama at a surface level. These are messy, bizarre, grotesque situations that are sanitized for Hallmark card poignancy.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Nate Adams** 

The Only Critic  
Nov 21

 **C**

Fraser is warm, grounded, and compelling, and it's good to see him back in full leading-man form. I just wish the movie around him had the courage to look its own ideas in the eye.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Russ Simmons**   
KKFI-FM (Kansas City)

Nov 20

 **3/5**

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Nell Minow**   
Movie Mom  
Nov 20

 **A-**

One of the most heartwarming and humane films of the year.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Robert Denerstein**   
Denerstein Unleashed



Nov 20



In short: Enjoy it. Then go about your business.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Kyle Smith**

Wall Street Journal

Nov 20



It's a strange idea for a movie that, while lacking such structural niceties as an obvious goal to be met, proves an oddly touching experience, somber yet slightly absurd.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Paul McGuire Grimes** 

Paul's Trip to the Movies

Nov 20



4/5

Director Hikari asks you to go in with an open mind and an open heart. Its extremely heartwarming and exactly the movie you may need to put a little extra inspiration in your day.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Randy Myers**

San Jose Mercury News

Nov 20



3.5/4

It's a testament to the cast, the screenwriting and Hikari that all these narrative threads weave together for an uplifting message about our need to connect with others and be part of a community.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Oscar Goff** 

Cambridge Day

Nov 20



2/4

The film as a whole is suffocatingly saccharine, wringing every drop of pathos with a nonstop, maddeningly twinkly score.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Peter Sobczynski** 

PS Auteurist Class (Substack)

Nov 20

\*

The film is almost embarrassingly manipulative at times and not even Fraser, doing his best amid st dire circumstances, can quite sell it.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Katie Walsh** 

Tribune News Service

Nov 20

 3.5/4

wonderfully life-affirming and quietly resonant

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Tara McNamara** 

Common Sense Media

Nov 20

 5/5

Fraser's inherent sweetness is the spoonful of sugar that turns a potentially stomach-churning practice into an emotional milkshake.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Rebecca Murray** 

Showbiz Junkies

Nov 20

 A

Rental Family is a beautifully executed and heartfelt story of finding family where you least expect it.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Johnny Oleksinski**

New York Post

Nov 20

3.5/4

Ultimately "Rental Family" doesn't aspire to be much more than genial, lovable and small. But not everything needs to be a whale.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jeannette Catsoulis**

New York Times

Nov 20

Rental Family is as sweet and tender as spring lamb.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Neil Pond**

Neil's Entertainment Picks

Nov 20

3.5/5

Hits home with its themes of loneliness and emotional need, wherever home might happen to be, and whether we need a bit of drama to spice up our lives or just "someone to look us in the eye and show us we exist."

[Go to Full Review](#)**Mark Keizer**

MK

MovieWeb

Nov 20

3/5

Hikari is not afraid to splash around in morally murky waters, even if the results can be cloying and crowd-pleasing.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jocelyn Noveck**

Associated Press

Nov 20



2.5/4

The broader message may simply be that genuine connection, that holy grail we all crave, can sometimes be found in the oddest of places -- even in a bizarre no man's land between fake relationships and real ones.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Michael J. Casey**

Michael J. Cinema

Nov 20



2/5

"Rental Family" is a sweet movie full of saccharine bromides with little interest in uncovering the causes or conditions of loneliness.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Richard Crouse**

Richard Crouse

Nov 20



3.5/5

Low key and heartfelt, Rental Family succeeds because of star Brendan Fraser's innate ability to portray an expressive soulfulness without slipping into performative mawkishness.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Karen Gordon**

Original Cin

Nov 20



B+

A sensitive performance by Brendan Fraser anchors a sentimental movie about loneliness, connection, and finding purpose, while acting out therapeutic roles for real people in Japan.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Edward Douglas**

The Weekend Warrior (Substack)

Nov 20

 8.5/10

Warm, sweet and wonderful, this is certainly a welcome exchange from the dark and cynical world in which we currently live.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jeff Nelson** 

WeHo Times

Nov 20

 3.5/5

The morals behind "Rental Family" aren't so easy to unpack, and it's in this complexity that Hikari finds a story truly worth telling.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Ruth Maramis** 

FlixChatter Film Blog

Nov 19

 4/5

Fraser is perfectly cast as a gentle and good-natured expat in this touching and funny fish-out-of-water tale. Hikari beautifully showcases the essence of human connection and chosen family.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Carla Hay** 

Culture Mix

Nov 19



Emotionally moving but utterly predictable, Rental Family is elevated by talented performances. This drama struggles with balancing two separate storylines, but the film has a lot to say about the importance of genuine human connections.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Mike McGranaghan** 

Aisle Seat

Nov 19

 3/4

An enjoyable feel-good movie with tear-jerker elements.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Barry Hertz**  
Globe and Mail

Nov 19

\*

This is a movie so tiny and inoffensive that it immediately evaporates from memory.

[Go to Full Review](#)

BT  
**Brian Truitt**  
USA Today

Nov 19

3.5/4

As it bounces between dad movie, film lovers flick and workplace comedy, “Rental Family” also makes its own connection between Fraser and the audience, reminding us he's a beloved Hollywood figure on quite a heartwarming hot streak.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Patrick Beatty**   
ABC4 Utah  
Nov 19

This is a warm blanket of a film, and exactly what Brendan Fraser does best as an actor.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Charles Koplinski**   
Reel Talk with Chuck and Pam  
Nov 18

3/4

The success of the movie relies heavily on the inherent appeal of its lead. Likable and vulnerable, Fraser is the perfect choice for Phillip, the actor's unassuming nature complimenting his character's easy-going demeanor.

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Robert Kojder**

Flickering Myth

Nov 18

2/5

There is a message regarding found family and the power of human connection that is admirable, and there is no denying the power of Brendan Fraser, but this is a story that is renting emotions rather than earning them

[Go to Full Review](#)**Adam Nayman**

Toronto Star

Nov 18

1.5/4

What's gruelling, then, is the way Hikari -- a talented visual stylist with an eye for urban landscapes -- belabours the various plot points. It's as if she's worried that if she doesn't hold our hand at every turn, we'll get lost.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Tim Grierson**

AV Club

Nov 18

D+

Fraser walks through this aggressively sappy drama with the aura of simple goodness that has served him well. But such concentrated radiance starts to feel like a denial of the painful reality *Rental Family* ignores.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jon Negroni**

InBetweenDrafts

Nov 17

 8/10

HIKARI continues to cement herself as one of the most empathetic filmmakers working today. The film may not change the world, but it might nudge you to text your mom and at least look twice at the stranger sitting across from you on the train.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Joanna Langfield** 

The Movie Minute

Nov 17



With its not so sly nod to the loneliness epidemic, Brendan Fraser's sweet crowd pleaser packs an unexpected, poignant punch.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Laura Clifford** 

Reeling Reviews

Nov 17



B-

The phenomenon has been made into a film before, but few have probably seen Werner Herzog's 2019 "Family Romance, LLC"...like one of those sentimental films Miramax specialized in in the 90's

[Go to Full Review](#)**Yasser Medina** 

Cinefilia

Nov 16

7/10

Hikari delivers an entertaining and moving film that benefits, to some extent, from Brendan Fraser's superb performance to reflect on loneliness, the acting job, and what it truly means to belong when human empathy still exists. [Full review in Spanish]

[Go to Full Review](#)**Leslie Combemale** 

AWFJ.org

Nov 7



Hikari knows her way around a character arc, building a story centered on the struggle with loneliness and the need for connection that leads to catharsis for the audience without getting sentimental or maudlin.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Jack Martin**

Film Feeder

Nov 6



4/5

It's delightful stuff, so much so that one can envision this existing in the same universe as the Paddington movies, for their shared warmth and universal charm.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Serena Seghedoni**

Loud and Clear Reviews

Oct 24



5/5

Hikari's Rental Family is an ode to all the people out there who are lonely, grieving and in pain, a lesson on how healing comes from within, and a reminder that we are alive. It's irresistibly human, and it's the best film of the year.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Brian Susbielles**

BS InSession Film

Oct 24



A

Rental Family is a comedy-drama that is surprisingly heartwarming as it is touching on the artificials that could cause more harm than good, which concerns Phillip in the beginning.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Amelia Harvey**

That Hashtag Show

Oct 23



80%

Rental Family has more layers and bite than the marketing material suggests. While it treads a well-worn road and doesn't try to take risks, it's an effective melodrama about cultural loneliness, authenticity, and ethics.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Christopher Llewellyn Reed**

Hammer to Nail

Oct 23



The ending is profoundly cathartic in the kind of restrained way that resonates far beyond the final moments. Come for the intriguing premise, stay for the lingering insights.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Robbie Collin**

Daily Telegraph (UK)

Oct 22



4/5

It might not sound like much of a compliment, but Brendan Fraser is extraordinarily convincing as a marginally talented actor a few years past his sell-by date.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Sherin Nicole**

Geek Girl Riot

Oct 22



Loneliness loosens its grip through thematic ‘touch therapy’ in Rental Family, a film where life is a multiverse of finding yourself in other people

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Helen Hawkins**

HH

The Arts Desk

Oct 20

Hikari keeps the pacing steady, throwing in some nifty twists in the final reel. He gets a genial performance from Fraser, a big lumbering presence here, but one with a gentleness and sweetness to it.

[Go to Full Review](#)



Travis Hopson

Punch Drunk Critics

Oct 20



4/5

It's a film that runs the gamut of emotions, with Fraser delivering a sensitive performance that ranks among his best.

[Go to Full Review](#)

India Block

IB

London Evening Standard

Oct 17



3/5

It's a deceptively fiddly role, an actor playing an actor, who winds up acting out various roles for real people. But it's a part made for Fraser and his lovely big, sad eyes.

[Go to Full Review](#)



Linda Marric

HeyUGuys

Oct 17



4/5

This is gentle, crowd-pleasing drama comedy powered by Fraser's heroic comeback. It won't break your heart — but it might quietly mend a small piece of it.

[Go to Full Review](#)



Calum Cooper

In Their Own League

Oct 17

 3/5

While "Rental Family" teeters on the edge of mawkishness at times, its sentiments are elevated by Hikari's tender direction and a magnificently sincere lead performance from Brendan Fraser.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Katie Smith-Wong** 

Flick Feast

Oct 17

 4/5

Rental Family is only Hikari's second directorial feature but Fraser's gentle performance and the screenplay's light humour shape this heartwarming tale into a guaranteed crowdpleaser.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Sarah Marrs** 

SM

Lainey Gossip

Oct 8

Rental Family wants to pluck your heartstrings, and it does so with charm and humor and humility, and grace for the lonely souls who yearn to connect, whatever form that connection may take.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Doug Jamieson** 

The Jam Report

Sep 23

 3/5

While the film itself occasionally falters, leaning too heavily on sentimentality and a loose, episodic structure, Brendan Fraser's performance elevates the material into something quietly resonant.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Audrey Fox** 

Looper.com

Sep 21

 7/10

Hikari's "Rental Family" is an earnest and sentimental exploration of loneliness and the longing for human connection.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Chase Hutchinson**

The Inlander (Spokane, WA)

Sep 21



Though ultimately built to be an earnest crowdpleaser, there are many intriguing and thorny moments where it's as if a fantastic Fraser is playing the chaotic good version of Nathan Fielder from *The Rehearsal*. It's this that ensures it cuts a bit deeper.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Kathia Woods**

Cup of Soul

Sep 21



7/10

Fraser gives another deeply human performance that confirms he remains one of the most emotionally dependable actors working today.

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Rachel Wagner**

Rachel's Reviews (YouTube)

Sep 16



very sweet feel-good story. Better than I expected

[Go to Full Review](#)



**Max Covill**

It's The Pictures

Sep 15



B

This sweet little film will be admired by many

[Go to Full Review](#)

**Monita Roy Mohan**

Geek Girl Authority

Sep 14



Rental Family is a lovely, feel-good film. With a Japanese creator at the helm, the film navigates the complexities of Japanese culture for global audiences without mocking it. Despite some heavy elements, the humor is never far, nor is it forced.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Kayleigh Donaldson**

KD

Pajiba

Sep 12



This is a highly endearing film that has hints of [Hirokazu] Kore-eda, although it lacks the Japanese icon's layered darkness.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Robert Daniels**

Screen International

Sep 12



In a role requiring far less artifice than his physically transformative Oscar-winning performance in *The Whale*, Fraser puts a face to forlornness in an unconventional, endearing crowd pleaser.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Peter Howell**

Toronto Star

Sep 12



Hikari's fluid filmmaking is alert to nuance, humour and wisdom in unexpected places, and she makes Tokyo look absolutely luminous.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Ross Bonaime**

Collider

DD



Sep 12

7/10

Fraser gets his first lead role since his Oscar win in a movie that leans right into his lovable nature and big-heartedness that made his win such a welcome surprise.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Radheyen Simonpillai**

Guardian

Sep 12

The new film from co-writer and director Hikari is enamoured (or even consumed) by the very artificiality it's about, and too timid to scratch past the surface in a way that might threaten the easy laughs and mawkishness it's ultimately after.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Rachel Ho**

Exclaim!

Sep 11

6/10

While not all films about loneliness need to be solemnly serious, HIKARI's approach to 'Rental Family' hits a saccharine note that nearly moves the film into Lifetime territory.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Rachel West**

RW

That Shelf

Sep 11

While it never pushes beyond comfort viewing, Rental Family works best as a sweet, soft-edged tale about belonging, anchored by Brendan Fraser's easy-going, warm performance.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Alexander Mooney**

AM

Slant Magazine

Sep 10

 1/4

The few glimpses we get of the supporting cast suggest a more exploratory film, but these strands only exist to be woven back into Philip's formulaic journey of self-discovery.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Will Hume**WH  Flickering Myth   
Sep 9

Rental Family is one of the best films of the year and barring The Mummy and its sequel, this is the best film of Brendan Fraser's career

[Go to Full Review](#) Alise Chaffins MacGuffin or Meaning (Substack)  
Sep 9

4/5

Rental Family is life-affirming in ways that I didn't fully expect, particularly if you're willing to engage with a movie that is incredibly earnest in its ambitions.

[Go to Full Review](#) Joey Magidson Awards Radar  
Sep 9

3/4

Rental Family is a gentle and quiet work with an affecting turn from Brendan Fraser.

[Go to Full Review](#) Jeanine T. Abraham VisAbleBlackwoman (Medium)  
Sep 8

 4/5

HIKARI has created a film that is an ode to Japan. The cinematography is stunning, crafted with love as it transports the audience to the land of the rising sun.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Nadia Dalimonte**Next Best Picture 

Sep 8

 8/10

“Rental Family” shines as a love letter not just to the nature and culture of Tokyo, but also the people there, who collectively face extreme stigma around mental health and therapy.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Christopher Schobert** 

The Film Stage

Sep 8



It seems silly to come down too hard on this good-natured comedy-drama--especially for offering a much more impressive performance than the one that earned Fraser an Oscar.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Brian Tallerico** 

RogerEbert.com

Sep 8



its blatant sentimentality is thematically in tune with the plot.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Abe Friedtanzer** 

Awards Buzz

Sep 8

 8/10

Through both serious, heartfelt moments and much lighter, comedic ones, *Rental Family* succeeds at showing that there's always a chance to fix things, even if swapping out someone in an equation might be necessary to make it possible.

[Go to Full Review](#) 



CGMagazine  
Sep 7

 9/10

*Rental Family* is the perfect feel-good movie of the year for me, bringing tear-jerking and heartwarming feelings to my soul.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 David Ehrlich 

IndieWire  
Sep 7

 B-

This is a nice movie: the kind that's lit brighter than a dentist's office, scored by the lead singer of Sigur Rós, and aimed towards a heart-stirring conclusion about empathy, isolation, and the power that we all have to affect each other's lives.

[Go to Full Review](#)

 Kevin L. Lee 

AwardsWatch  
Sep 7

 B+

Hikari doesn't shy away from some of the moral thorniness. How do we know that our actions will represent our intentions, when so much of what we feel is deeply internalized instead of being communicated out loud?

[Go to Full Review](#)

 Mae Abdulbaki 

Screen Rant  
Sep 7

 9/10

It's a heartwarming film that asks thoughtful questions, and I promise you won't be disappointed by its answers.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Jackson Weaver**

CBC News

Sep 7

4/5

Feeling more like disjointed but interdependent parables than anything on the market today, [Rental Family] is also wholly unique and utterly refreshing in scope.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Gregory Ellwood**

The Playlist

Sep 6

B-

Hikari knows how to push enough emotional buttons without the audience sensing they are being manipulated. And, for many, those talents mean "Rental Family" will lead to genuine tears.

[Go to Full Review](#)**William Bibbiani**

TheWrap

Sep 6

It's easy to see what attracted Fraser to this material, since it's almost mechanically designed to make him look good as an actor, and enchanting as a star.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Pete Hammond**

Deadline Hollywood Daily

Sep 6

This is a gentle film, the kind of lower-key humane comedy we don't see often these days.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Frank Scheck**

**The Hollywood Reporter** 

Sep 6



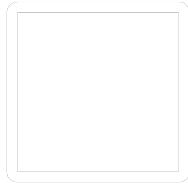
...a dramedy that proves a charming surprise balancing poignancy and humor with rare delicacy.

[Go to Full Review](#)**Peter Debruge** **Variety**

Sep 6



A movie like “Rental Family” lives or dies by its tone, and the one Hikari strikes is reflected in the concerned creases of Fraser’s forehead: It’s maudlin and unconvincing, means well but isn’t above manipulating us for the desired emotional outcome.

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