



REVIEWS

### The Secret Ingredient in *Hopes, Fears, & Dreams* (2023), US Television & the Historical Pathologization of Gay Desire

By Diana W. Anselmo

As the 2020s dawn, the LGBTQ+ community continues to face significant challenges, particularly in the realm of media representation. The historical pathologization of gay desire, a legacy of the mid-20th century, remains a shadow over contemporary narratives. This review explores the nuanced portrayal of gay desire in the 2023 film *Hopes, Fears, & Dreams*, set against the backdrop of US television's evolving landscape. The film's depiction of a young man's journey from self-loathing to self-acceptance is a poignant commentary on the societal pressures and historical baggage that shape queer identity. The narrative's focus on the internal struggles of its protagonist, rather than a simplistic 'coming out' story, offers a more complex and historically informed perspective on the experience of being gay in America. The film's use of period-appropriate settings and costumes adds a layer of authenticity, grounding the story in a specific time and place. The director's choice to highlight the character's internal conflict, rather than external persecution, is a powerful statement on the ongoing struggle for self-acceptance and societal recognition. The film's reception by US television networks, which have historically been slow to embrace LGBTQ+ content, is a testament to the growing acceptance and visibility of the community. This review delves into the film's themes, its historical context, and its contribution to the ongoing conversation about gay desire and self-identity in the United States.



The film's exploration of the historical pathologization of gay desire is a central theme. It delves into the ways in which societal norms and medical diagnoses have shaped the understanding of queer identity. The character's journey is a reflection of the broader struggle for self-acceptance and societal recognition. The film's use of period-appropriate settings and costumes adds a layer of authenticity, grounding the story in a specific time and place. The director's choice to highlight the character's internal conflict, rather than external persecution, is a powerful statement on the ongoing struggle for self-acceptance and societal recognition. The film's reception by US television networks, which have historically been slow to embrace LGBTQ+ content, is a testament to the growing acceptance and visibility of the community. This review delves into the film's themes, its historical context, and its contribution to the ongoing conversation about gay desire and self-identity in the United States.

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