



## A MILLION HAPPY NOWS

DIR ALBERT ALARR 2016 USA 80 MIN

All the world's a soap opera, and all the men and women merely players, even daytime diva Lainey Allen (Crystal Chappell). She has enjoyed two decades of stardom (and won a Daytime Emmy Award) and has a blissful relationship with her beautiful partner, Eva (Jessica Leccia). But now Lainey is having difficulty remembering her lines—both on set and off.

Are the florid writing and torrid story arcs to blame—or is it something else? She decides to retire, and she and Eva move to a little house perched on a bluff overlooking the ocean. But without the distractions of work, it soon becomes apparent that something is not quite right. A visit to the doctor confirms it: Lainey is suffering from early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

*A Million Happy Nows* is the ultimate meta-melodrama, playing with notions of memory, identity, and same-sex relationships that echo shows and characters past. Fans of the long-running (but now-canceled) *Guiding Light* will recognize Chappell and Leccia as the groundbreaking couple affectionately known as "Otalía." However, this film is more than a genre film. It is a sensitively portrayed, lustrously shot paean to memory: creating it and saving it, but not being a slave to it. As feisty, funny Lainey grapples with her new reality—sometimes seeming to slip into her old soap opera character, "Vivian"—and Eva tries to help her, they both come to understand the importance of the happy Now.

—LUCY LAIRD

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