

Cruel Intentions: Sex, lies, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer

by Will Jordan
editor in chief

Cruel Intentions is an entertaining, seductive tale about upper class teenagers on summer break. It is a screen adaptation of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, the classic novel by Pierre Laclous. The novel as well as the movie portray sexual manipulation and romantic war games. The main characters Kathryn (Sarah Michelle Gellar) and Sebastian (Ryan Phillippe) are two wealthy and manipulative teenage stepsiblings. They are from the upper class district in Manhattan.

There is a basic yet sinister plot in the movie *Cruel Intentions*. Sebastian has slept with every girl that he has

set out to get up until this point. His next conquest arises when he and his stepsister place a little wager between each other. To win the bet he must have sex with the new headmaster's daughter, Annette (Reese Witherspoon). An added bonus to this little game is that he gets to corrupt the naive girlfriend Cecile (Selma Blair) of Kathryn's ex-boyfriend Court Reynolds. The added bonus is Kathryn's way of getting back at her ex for dumping her and hooking up with a completely clueless girl in Cecile.

The stipulations of the bet are that if Sebastian loses, Kathryn will get his mint 1956 Jaguar and the shame of defeat. However, if Sebastian wins, he will receive unbridled pleasures from the one girl that he could not

have, Kathryn.

The plot is very misleading at times, alluding to hot passionate sex scenes and leaving the viewer hanging. Even though there is one real sex scene, the only nudity in the entire film is Sebastian's bare behind. I am sure that all of the women who go to see this film will enjoy seeing this but it wasn't exactly the high point for the men in the audience.

The film is directed by Roger Kumble. Kumble also wrote the screenplay. He puts several twists in the plot which add to the entertainment of the film. Comedy is present in almost every scene that Selma Blair is in. Although the ending of the film is an unexpected one, all in all the film is very entertaining. I give this film two and a half stars.



Kathryn (Sarah Michelle Gellar) and Sebastian (Ryan Phillippe) are conniving stepsiblings who make a bet that lands them in an entangled diabolical web in the Columbia Pictures presentation, *Cruel Intentions*.

Thinking about seeing *Analyze This*?...Fuggeddaboutit!

by Deanna Symoski
staff writer

Take one legendary wise guy and one lovable comedian and what do you get? Ripped off. It's a combination that isn't always a marriage made in Hollywood Heaven and *Analyze This* proves it.

Robert DeNiro stars as (what else) an infamous Mafioso crime boss named Paul Vitti whose violent childhood memories resurface after he witnesses his best friend's murder. Keeping all those feelings bottled up can't be good for anyone—even a gangster—so when the panic attacks start, Vitti goes looking for a quick fix. Ben, played by Billy Crystal, is the psychiatrist who, through a

misfortunate fender-bender, becomes Vitti's saving grace. He's got two weeks to cure Pauly for a big meeting, avoid getting shot and/or arrested, deal with his own family's dysfunction and marry his pretty fiancée played by *Friend-ly* Lisa Kudrow.

That's all fine and good, but would somebody please explain the word genre to Harold Ramis, who co-wrote and directed this film, because I don't think he gets it. I couldn't tell if *Analyze This* was trying to be an action movie starring a couple of comedians, or a comedy about violent criminal. I don't even think the cast knew because it seemed like DeNiro and Crystal were acting in two different movies: *Goodfellas* and *What About Bob?*

However, this really isn't anyone's fault but the casting director's. DeNiro is a great wise guy—even a good stalker on occasion—but when he's playing a mobster don't try to make him be funny, because, guess what, he's not. He's dangerous and sometimes that's kind of fun, but this film is begging for a softer thug to play along side Crystal's straight man. DeNiro's ruthlessness is what we love in movies like *Casino*, but here it actually makes me afraid for poor Crystal, who appears as though he really has been kidnapped by the Mafia. The fear in his eyes looks real and appears real and becomes sort of unsettling for the viewer. You can't help but think Joe Pesci's going to come walking in

and together he and DeNiro are going to start wailing on this guy with a baseball bat.

And I would tell you more about the plot except I'm still "analyzing" its multiple personalities. Had this film just picked a story line and gone with it, *Analyze* might have made better sense. But so many subplots are hinted at then abandoned, I wasn't sure why I was supposed to be watching the film at all. For example, Ben has some unresolved issues of his own—with his father, his ex-wife, even his own son it seems—and yet none of those things are fully realized. And if Ramis wanted to run with the humor, he could have more fully explored the fact that the FBI started

watching Ben. Who wouldn't like to see the zany antics of a bunch of bumbling agents and an unsuspecting family man? Instead the film goes from funny to sad to violent so quickly it pushes you to laugh during scenes that would have given DeNiro an Oscar for dramatic acting in any other film. The audience is forced to ride a high-speed roller coaster of emotions so that they don't feel anything long enough to get to know the characters and are left feeling rather dizzy.

And that's really too bad since the first ten minutes of the film had such promise. Vitti tells the story of how all the bosses around the country got together at a farm house in the 1950s and how the Feds raided the meeting

before it even got started. The final scene depicts his father and one of the Gambinos getting away on a tractor that they commandeered from a local. I wish the whole film had been about that.

Analyze This did have some funny moments and would be worth seeing for a dollar. But when you consider the talent loaded into this film: Billy Crystal, Robert DeNiro, Lisa Kudrow—even a cameo appearance by Tony Bennett—the film simply should have been better. Despite featuring actors who are all fantastic on their own, *Analyze This* manages to come up a few good fellas short of good.

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- 1 Strip on the highway
 - 7 Trodden track
 - 11 Saloon
 - 14 Nevertheless
 - 15 Opera song
 - 16 Baseball stat.
 - 17 Florida city
 - 18 Molly of "The Breakfast Club"
 - 20 Full of foliage
 - 22 Temperature increments
 - 23 Glaswegian
 - 25 Musical gift
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 - 28 Pipe buildup
 - 29 Latticework for vines
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 - 67 Hit by the Kinks
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 - 21 Gabs
 - 23 Knights' chargers
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 - 26 Arrives like the tide
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 - 34 In actual truth
 - 37 Endorsements
 - 41 Comprehend
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 - 48 Easily led
 - 52 Philanthropist
 - 54 John Smith, perhaps
 - 55 __ d'etat
 - 56 High point
 - 57 Jack of talk-shows
 - 58 Spanish painter
 - 60 Square measure
 - 62 __ Clemente, CA
 - 64 Actor Marvin
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