

Stark Raving Sane: On Romantic Comedies

By Catherine SWEET

Here's what I did over my winter break. For fun, I read three books, which is a record for me because in a year I rarely recreationally read that much. I replaced my blood with sugar. Finally, I watched a ton of movies. So basically, I became the poster child for Sedentary Living Magazine. It was gross.

There were five movies I wanted to see. Two of them were romantic comedies. That's a high percentage. Just as I cannot stop myself from enjoying pop music, I'm drawn to romantic comedies.

There's something so cloying about them, though. Beautiful people, in beyond-their-means apartments with super-lame conflicts keeping them apart. For some reason the men all wear Armani and the women have access to Yves Saint Laurent haute couture. And the couple has perfectly coiffed hair, unless a dishevelled state of mind is reflected in a unbrushed mane.

It's all so cookie cutter, and I see that, and I still keep going back. I think I've become so jaded after falling in love with "When Harry Met Sally..." that I can't even conceive of appreciating another romantic comedy. I try the Tam Hanks/Meg Ryan combos, but it's all for nought.

More and more of these saccharine romantic comedies are the yin to war movies' yang. I've heard that all the fantastic movies (meaning basically beyond-chance plots, that go as far as trying to convince us that Keanu Reeves can have a Zen-like experi-

ence) coming out now are like the phenomenon of Shirley Temple's success. It's filling a hole in society where citizens can go to the movies to escape whatever ails them. Are movies this century's all-purpose tonic?

I've begun to watch old romances. Sometimes in these stories, lovers *don't* end up together because there's no way it would work. Please, please, please go rent "Casablanca" if you haven't already seen it. It is the most stunning bittersweet ending of a movie ever.

Also, if you want the snappy writing of a Niel Simon play with an early Oscar-winning performance from Richard Dreyfus, rent "The Goodbye Girl". I highly recommend it.

Here's where this beef originates. I saw "Two Weeks Notice" and I hated it. I felt let down and betrayed because hello! Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock- how adorable.

No. The writing was weak, the attempts at comedy were sad, there was no chemistry and there was a stupid tacked-on cat fight. And don't get me started on when she got drunk. It was a crap piecemeal of plot elements, none of which really fit together. Bo-urns on "Two Weeks Notice".

There's more romantic comedies slated out the next few months and I know I'm going to go see them. And I'm probably going to be disappointed, but I have to take the chance of finding another "When Harry Met Sally..." I hope there's one starring Luke Wilson. And they cast me opposite him. I need a better agent.



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