

## TV Review: ABC's 'Mistresses' Cheats on Good Television

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 3, 2013 - 10:19am

- [ABC](#) [2]
- [Alyssa Milano](#) [3]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Jes Macallan](#) [6]
- [Mistresses](#) [7]
- [Rochelle Aytes](#) [8]
- [Television](#) [9]
- [Yunjin Kim](#) [10]

CHICAGO – At its worst, ABC's "Mistresses" feels like "Nicholas Sparks: The TV Series" with all the horrendous plotting and melodrama that implies. At its best, it feels like a "Desperate Housewives" knock-off, in which the charisma of its leading ladies get viewers past the writing flaws. It's mostly the former - a cliched, surface-level soap opera more reminiscent of a Lifetime mini-series than what used to qualify for network TV.



Television Rating: **2.0/5.0**

"Mistresses" opens with a sex scene and then shots of Alyssa Milano walking in slo-mo to a bar. They know what you're here for. *"Meeting someone?"* *"Well, I thought I was. But now that you're here, I'm changing plans."* Ooooh, sexy. Of course, it's immediately revealed to be a faux sexiness as the couple is revealed to be a married one role-playing and the sex scene turns to a discussion of ovulation. Here's the "Trying to Get Pregnant" couple. Each couple is introduced with similarly bland labeling. Here's the "Dying Young" couple. Here's the "Sleeping with the Boss" couple. Here's the "Getting Over Her Dead Husband" couple. Enjoy!



Mistresses

Photo credit: ABC

The problem is that all of these labels lead to characters who feel about as deep as a dime-store novel. It actually gets more and more frustrating as one realizes that this cast is far more talented than the characters and stories they've been given. Bad soap opera writing with bad soap opera actors is somehow more tolerable than watching talented people like Yunjin Kim from "Lost" getting sucked into something lesser than her talents. She's stuck here with the least dramatically engaging arc as a therapist who ends up sleeping with her dying patient (John Schneider) only to then hook up with his son after the inevitable. Gems of dialogue include *"I think that dying might be the best thing that's ever happened to me."*



Mistresses  
Photo credit: ABC

Milano is the actress given the most time — the Teri Hatcher of the group, if you will — as Savi, a woman whose husband seems to be growing more distant as they keep having trouble conceiving. She seems to be enjoying the lascivious behavior of her fellow attorney Dominic (Jason George), who is apparently allowed to sexually harass her because he's dreamy. Of course, the writers throw in story beats about how Savi's husband is spending too much time at work (possibly with the hostess of the restaurant he runs) and turning into a random, unbelievable prick to justify her inevitable straying.

In the most engaging plot arc, the beautiful Rochelle Aytes plays April, a woman getting back into the dating game after the death of her husband, who she actually believes is still calling him from the other side. There's the aforementioned therapist-father-son arc and, finally, Savi's sister Josslyn (Jes Macallan), the most vibrant of the four and the one openly sleeping with her boss until she realizes he's trying to sequester her to use her for sex. If Milano is the Carrie Bradshaw of "Mistresses," Kim plays Miranda, Aytes is Charlotte, and Macallan is Sam.

The comparisons to "Desperate Housewives" and "Sex and the City" shouldn't lead anyone to think "Mistresses" is anywhere near as interesting. It doesn't have the satire of the former or the truth of the latter. It falls somewhere in the boring middle. I didn't buy ANY of the emotional drama, particularly Kim's overwritten and embarrassing story, and there's not enough of the fun stuff. Almost everyone involved deserves better. You sure do.

*"Mistresses" stars Alyssa Milano, Rochelle Aytes, Yunjin Kim, and Jes Macallan. It premieres on ABC on Monday, June 3, 2013 at 9pm CST.*



[11]

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