

Anne Hathaway, Jake Gyllenhaal in Unbearable 'Love and Other Drugs'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 24, 2010 - 1:36pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Love and Other Drugs” celebrates everything that is wrong with America, wrapped in a package with two “it” stars doing a disservice to their emerging careers. The love depicted is random and somewhat damaged. The drugs are simply a cynical proclamation on how great Big Pharma is.

Jake Gyllenhaal stars as Jamie, an only-in-the-movies stud who opens the film working in a stereo store in the mid-1990s (lots of boom box jokes). He is sacked for diddling a co-worker while he should be selling components, even though he’s the top salesman. He laments his fate back at home with brother Josh (Josh Gad), physician father (George Segal) and mother (the late Jill Clayburgh, deserving better). Apparently the doofus Josh is a software millionaire (the new go-to character) and has connections that can get Jamie a job as a pharmaceutical salesman.

He begins training with Pfizer Pharmaceutical. We know that because the rest of the film is basically an infomercial for the company. He goes through the Rocky-like montage of training, which is painfully embarrassing for adults, and emerges with a territory that is selling Zoloft, a psychotropic drug. On his beat is a vulgar partner, Bruce (Oliver Platt, cashing a paycheck), who gives him tips that are basically reasons for Jamie to score with all the receptionists, including Cindy (Judy Greer). It is through her that he able to throw away rival drug Prozac from the sample area, and infiltrate superstar doctor Stan Knight (Hank Azaria).

While Jamie pitches his wares to Dr. Knight, while pretending to be an intern, a stunningly attractive patient, an artist named Maggie (Anne Hathaway) is in for a check-up. It seems she has first stage Parkinson’s Disease, and also gets to flash her breast at the doctor and fake intern at the same time. This is the “Meet Cute” for Jamie and Maggie’s romance.



Coosome: Jake Gyllenhaal as Jamie and Anne Hathaway as Maggie in 'Love and Other Drugs'
Photo credit: © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

In the midst of the wooing, the very naked lovemaking and Jamie's brother coming to shack up with him (which all software millionaires would do), Viagra is invented and rolled to the soft world. Jamie's money-making abilities go through the roof and his relationship with Maggie deepens. Will Parkinson's, Viagra and an ability to get pristine video quality in the 1990s as they tape their lovemaking get the couple over their obstacles? I guess so.

Is this suppose to be the feel-good film that will make us forget the recession? A crass reminder that a sex drug for males is the second coming of pharmaceutical Jeebus? This film is fake, crudely cavalier about how females are observed and completely and utterly false. Besides that, Mrs. Lincoln, how was the play?

Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway are two fine young actors who have shown exceptional promise in many roles previously (Hathaway was resplendent as the White Queen in this year's "Alice in Wonderland"). How then got talked into this one I'll never know. Forced to dribble out mostly dreary dialog, they also cash in their nudity card for a film that will haunt them forever in the slums of Career-ville. Seriously, I'm sure every straight male in the world wants to see Anne H. naked, but in this film we can almost imagine the negotiations based on how much is revealed. I've seen less of a tease at a pasties convention.

And then there is the subject of Anne's character having Parkinson's. It's as if the film is trying to karmatically balance the rest of crudeness by becoming a sounding board for victims of this difficult and much-more-complex-than-presented disease. This is part of the frustration of the film. It just didn't belong. But then again, if it wasn't there, how would stud Jamie have any conflicts?

By the way, Josh Gad, Jonah Hill is preparing a lawsuit as we speak for the complete larceny of his persona. It reminded me of an episode of "The Simpsons," where Mr. Burns hires Steven Spielberg's Mexican equivalent, Señor Spielbergo. Josh Gad is the Spielbergo of this film, or should be the Jonah Hill-o. As crass a film as this is, Gad manages to make his character that much crasser. Software millionaire, indeed.

Speaking of The Simpsons, Hank Azaria (the voice of Moe the Bartender, Apu and others) is constantly topping himself in playing repellent human characters, ever since he debuted his workout body in "Along Came Polly." His Dr. Stan Knight has broken the meter for sheer idiocy and blight. This doctor is suppose to be the best and a hero? The film may be mocking him, but I couldn't tell. Azaria needs a new agent.



The Merry Profiteers: Jake Gyllenhaal and Oliver Platt as Bruce Stiffly Celebrate Viagra in 'Love and Other Drugs'
Photo credit: © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

There is only two reasons that Love and Other Drugs gets a one statue rating. First, the voyeurism of seeing Anne Hathaway (straight male alert) and the slim, slight possibility that this whole thing might be the broadest of satire. But alas, if it is, it doesn't work and it massively fails as any other type of entertainment. At least you know what to miss this big movie weekend.

An American film that celebrates drug companies, their products, wealthy misogynists and doctors who implant themselves with testosterone to score is going in the wrong direction. But then again, we might already be part of that celebration and unable to come back.

"Love and Other Drugs" opens everywhere on November 24th. Featuring Anne Hathaway, Jake Gyllenhaal, Oliver Platt, Hank Azaria, Judy Greer, George Segal, Jill Clayburgh and Josh Gad. Screenplay by Charles Randolph, Edward Zwick and Marshall Herskovitz, directed by Edward Zwick. Rated "R"



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