‘The Spy Who Dumped Me’ Didn’t Need the Spy Part

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on August 2, 2018 - 9:39pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – It’s been a long time since I’ve seen a film completely stolen by a supporting character, but Kate McKinnon in “The Spy Who Dumped Me” managed to do just that… which was fortunate because the “spy” part of the story is a seen-it-before kill and gun fest that felt like the first draft of a James Bond knock-off.

But McKinnon provides the comic relief, and reels off a series of what sounded like improvisation lines that sort of makes fun of the spy part while oddly participating in it. There are 28 (plus/minus factor of five) quality kills in this film, from the dependable neck twist to a henchman being run over by a bus to the old reliable head shot with a gun. It was not only out of place in what could have been a funnier buddy comedy, but it was boring to boot. Yet with McKinnon, “The Spy Who Dumped Me” is an okay (albeit R-Rated) diversion, which was ironically “dumped” into a post-summer-blockbuster August release. Let’s hear McKinnon laugh all the way to the bank.

Audrey (Mila Kunis) is a directionless worker bee for a coffee shop, whose boyfriend Drew (Justin Theroux) has just dumped her via text. She laments at her birthday to bestie Morgan (Kate McKinnon), because she can’t get over the abruptness of the break up. Meanwhile, Drew is shown to be a James Bond-like spy operative, who is trying to escape from pursuers in Eastern Europe.



Morgan (Kate McKinnon) and Audrey (Mila Kunis) Pose in ‘The Spy Who Dumped Me’
Photo credit: Lionsgate

Among the items Drew left behind is a fantasy football trophy. It turns out that a vital thumb drive is hidden inside, and both the Russian mafia and international spy rings are gunning for it, including British spy Sebastian (Sam Heughan). The women decide to take matters into their own hands, and travel to Prague to rendezvous with a drop off connection. That is interrupted with a massive shoot-out, which begins Audrey and Morgan’s excellent European spy adventure.

That spy story was straight off the pulp fiction rack, with virtually no style or substance. Wow, a Russian gymnast that turns out to be an assassin? Call Roger Moore. The random killings were creepily out of place for a spy farce, as well as the explanations they had to keep giving to catch everyone up (“Luckily we have our passports in the glove box from our trip to Tijuana”). The satire needed to be sharper, to compliment the verbal gymnastics of our gal Kate McK.

Which is why credit is due to lead actress Mila Kunis, who mostly played straight-person to McKinnon’s antics. Hell, the whole movie played straight-person to Kate. It was like she was airlifted in to save the picture, and did it by coming up with bizarre asides (“My teeth are very strong. I had braces for eight years”), as if she was doing a Mystery Science Theatre 3000 riff while portraying a character.

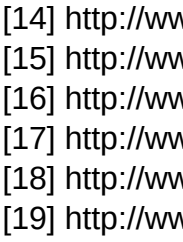


Sebastian (Sam Heughan) Joins the Gals in ‘The Spy Who Dumped Me’
Photo credit: Lionsgate

Justin Theroux was an outside-the-box choice to play Drew the spy. For one thing, he looked older than his 46 years, which contrasted awkwardly to Mila Kunis looking younger than her 34. British hunk Sam Heughan (whose credits include “A Princess for Christmas”) was a victim of the plodding story. Was he a good spy or a bad spy? Maybe we should ask the Wizard of Spies (Putin).

But yeah, it’s the Kate McKinnon show in “The Spy Who Dumped Me,” and that was enough for a half star over the minimum recommendation. Maybe I’m the only one that understands my star system. Perhaps I should put the explanation on a thumb drive and hide it in my “Thumbs Up” trophy from a Roger Ebert celebration. The Mighty Wizard of Rog would get the joke.

“The Spy Who Dumped Me” opens everywhere on August 3rd. Featuring Mila Kunis, Kate McKinnon, Justin Theroux, Sam Heughan, Paul Reiser and Jane Curtin. Written by Susanna Fogel and David Iserson. Directed by Susanna Fogel. Rated “R”

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