

Stylish ‘Crazy Rich Asians’ is a Bit Too Soap Opera

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 16, 2018 - 7:19am

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Crazy Rich Asians” is not meant to be anything but glitzy fun, but in the midst of the glamour, excessive wealth and beautiful people, there is a plot that ventures into Soap Opera land, and eventually becomes a distraction for the reason an audience goes to this show... to fantasize about living large.

Constance Wu and Henry Golding are the impossibly beautiful Chinese flowers who live in New York City, and they are placed into the middle of an over-the-top friend’s wedding of Golding’s character, complete with stoic Mom and hand made dumplings. The film is a celebration of Asian culture in all permutations, as long as everyone speaks a passable King’s English. It also revels in its excess, in a Great Gatsby sort of way (“luckily I have my [helicopter] pilot’s license”), which is for the most part done tastefully. But “rich” is in the title baby, so we better pleasure ourselves with the same avarice that got our Dear Leader elected. What is that famous Chinese blessing/curse? “May you live in interesting times.”

Constance Wu is Rachel, a Chinese immigrant in America raised by her single Mom and teaching Economics at NYU. She has been dating Nick (Henry Golding) for a year, and their relationship is heating up. She is unaware that her boyfriend is part of one the richest families in Asia (Singapore based), until he asks her to go to a friend’s wedding, which turns out to be the biggest social event in the whole of Asia.



Flower Drum Song: Nick (Henry Golding) and Rachel (Constance Wu) in 'Crazy Rich Asians'

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

When they land on the island nation, Nick and Rachel go through the looking glass to a land of excessive wealth, anchored by Nick's traditional mother, Eleanor (Michelle Yeoh). The matriarch seems determined to split Nick from his working class girlfriend, so Rachel seeks comfort from an old college roommate (a funny Awkwafina) and her wacky family, anchored by Wye Mun Goh (Ken Jeong). As Bill Murray would say, "this is one nutty nuptial."

The on again/off again nature of trying to split a perfectly fine couple up is ridiculous, but then again the characters needed something to do (I assume this was in the novel the film is based on). The movie could have had placed some organ chords in the soundtrack, as the story got soapy trying to find an excuse to have a reconciliation between Nick and Rachel (nice Anglicized names, by the way... what is this, "Friends"?). The comic relief, represented by Awkwafina as the old college friend and the ubiquitous Ken Jeong, saved the show from collapsing under its own bubbles.

The "dragon lady" mother is a bit of a stereotype, but veteran actor Michelle Yeoh gives her some nice spice. There is a great scene between her and Golding, when he needs to change his shirt after a wine spill... the Freudian implications were delicious. In fact, many of the handsome Asian lads are shirtless, with women and together. It wasn't quite the volleyball scene in "Top Gun," but let's just say certain gentlemen will love the film as much as their galpal fellow travelers.



Drama Mama: Michelle Yeoh in ‘Crazy Rich Asians’
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

The real star, however, is the wealth shown off in the film. There were fabulous hotel rooms with floor-to-ceiling views, homes on the hill with armed guards (oh, for the Hong Kong mafia to break it up a bit) and an ultra expensive wedding. There were traveling bachelor and bachelorette parties, the boys on a party boat complete with what looked like Trump’s Miss Universe contestants, and the girls on an island where the guests squeal and fight over shopping sprees with dresses made by Asian child labor. Hey, why should Americans have all the breaks through those sweatshops?

I kid the “Crazy Rich Asians.” They have it all... the wacky, the wealthy and the expatriate countrymen, who have strove for centuries so their children could learn to fly helicopters. As Confucius once said, “People who live in glass houses, should change clothes in basement.”
Hyyy-oooh!

“Crazy Rich Asians” opened everywhere on August 15th. Featuring Constance Wu, Henry Golding, Michelle Yeoh, Awkwafina and Ken Jeong. Screenplay adapted by Peter Chiarelli and Adele Lim, based on a novel by Kevin Kwan. Directed by Jon M. Chu. Rated “PG-13”



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