

Ben Affleck, Jennifer Aniston, Ginnifer Goodwin Nearly Save 'He's Just Not That Into You'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 6, 2009 - 1:01am

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – If you've ever been speed dating or even just on a series of dates in a short period of time, it's not that different from the back and forth between good and bad in the latest romantic comedy, "[He's Just Not That Into You](#) [17]," a mixed bag of cliches, comedy, coincidences, and cute coupling starring [Jennifer Aniston](#) [18], [Ginnifer Goodwin](#) [19], and many, many more.

Just recapping the "Short Cuts"-esque plot of "He's Just Not That Into You" practically requires a flow chart to keep track of all the characters and how they are coincidentally related or hooked up. The film is narrated by and most of the characters spiral off of Gigi (Ginnifer Goodwin), a poor woman stuck in the cliches of dating that we're taught from an early age like "he's mean to you because he likes you" and "don't call him, he'll call you."



Justin Long stars as Alex and Ginnifer Goodwin stars as Gigi.

Photo credit: Darren Michaels/New Line

Gigi is cute but also pretty damaged by a string of dates that went nowhere and men who never called her back. After a good first date with real estate agent Conor ([Kevin Connolly](#) [20]), Gigi obsessively watches the phone and goes as far as dropping by Conor's regular hang-out just to see if he's there.

As his bar-managing friend Alex ([Justin Long](#) [21]) brutally tells poor Gigi, he's just not that into her. Of course, being a romantic comedy, it's only a matter of time before the callous Alex falls head over heels for sweet Gigi.

The story of Gigi and Alex may be enough for one romantic comedy, but it's just the tip of the candy-covered heart in "He's Just Not That Into You". The reason Conor wasn't into Gigi is because he still loves Anna ([Scarlett Johansson](#) [22]). Anna runs into the married Ben ([Bradley Cooper](#) [23]) at the convenience store and the two start a dangerous flirtation.

Ben is married to Janine ([Jennifer Connelly](#) [24]), who happens to work with Gigi. Ben is also good friends with Neil ([Ben Affleck](#) [25]), the longtime boyfriend of Beth ([Jennifer Aniston](#) [18]), who ALSO happens to work with Gigi and Janine. The pile-up of coincidental characters is one of the biggest failings of the script for "He's Just Not That Into You". I longed for a major character who wasn't one degree of separation from every other major character.

When her younger sister announces her engagement and Gigi convinces her that Neil will never propose, Beth kicks her man out of the house. Meanwhile, a friend of Anna's named Mary ([Drew Barrymore](#) [26]) bemoans the loss of personal contact in a world of MySpace, Facebook, and instant messaging.



Scarlett Johansson stars as Anna and Bradley Cooper stars as Ben.

Photo credit: New Line

Even with its overly complicated plot, there are elements of "He's Just Not That Into You" that completely work.

First and foremost, it's refreshing to see a romantic comedy that doesn't rely on pratfalls, bodily humor, or montages set to the latest pop tune. There's a conscious attempt to avoid those kind of cliches in the script for "He's Just Not That Into You" by Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein and it's nice to see a romantic comedy with people you actually root for unlike the hateful jerks or morons that usually populate the genre in films like "What Happens in Vegas," "Fool's Gold," or the entire filmography of Dane Cook

It's also interesting to see genuinely talented actors trying to inject two-dimensional characters with a bit of realism. Goodwin, Affleck, and Aniston all give interesting, likable performances. As for the rest of the cast, Cooper isn't bad, but his role doesn't feel believable, serving more as a plot catalyst for the two women he impacts with his stupid choices than a real person. Most surprisingly, Connelly seems lost, unable to figure this character out.

What holds back "He's Just Not That Into You" is a lack of pacing by director Ken Kwapis and his writers. No romantic comedy ever needs to run nearly 130 minutes long and Kwapis pitches the whole film at the same tone. There's a surprising lack of rising action.

There's also an unusual emotion that "He's Just Not That Into You" is more likely to produce than romance - depression. Are we really all so driven to find love that we make the same stupid mistakes over and over again? "He's Just Not That Into You" should have been more fun. Believe it or not, people do actually get together without so much angst.

And this ensemble, despite some beautiful people in its cast, is surprisingly un-sexy in plot and tone. These people may be obsessed with dating, but it's hard to believe they know what to do after a few dates.

With all of that in mind, romantic comedy fans could still do a lot worse than "He's Just Not That Into You". With some good performances and conscious avoidance of a lot of the trappings of the genre, audiences are likely to fall for this romantic comedy, even if they don't feel good about it in the morning.

'He's Just Not That Into You' stars Ben Affleck, Ginnifer Goodwin, Jennifer Aniston, Kevin Connolly, Jennifer Connelly, Scarlett Johansson, Bradley Cooper, Drew Barrymore, and Justin Long. It was written by Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein, and directed by Ken Kwapis. It opens on February 6th, 2009, and is rated PG-13.



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