

## ‘I Love You, Beth Cooper’ Inspires Hatred For the High School Genre

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 10, 2009 - 2:11pm

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – In what could be the worst mainstream release of the summer, “I Love You, Beth Cooper” wastes talent, production values and ultimately time in a cliché-ridden mess that produces little or no real love.

What begins as a promising premise – the nerdy high school valedictorian, Denis (played by a dull, smirking Paul Rust), breaks bad at his graduation speech and proclaims his love for unattainable cheerleader Beth Cooper (Hayden Panettiere, who also plays the cheerleader on TV’s “Heroes”) – devolves into humorless story impossibilities.



The Gang's All Here: Left to Right – Paul Rust, Lauren Storm, Hayden Panettiere, Jack Carpenter and Lauren Landon in ‘I Love You, Beth Cooper’

*Photo credit: TM and © 2009 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp*

After making his proclamation, he and his best buddy Rich (Jack Carpenter) throw a post-grad party that of course has no guests, when lo and behold, Beth Cooper shows up with her two girlfriend entourage. They are of course followed by Beth’s “real” boyfriend, an ROTC man who proceeds not only to beat up Denis fairly savagely but blithely destroys his parent’s kitchen.

The girls help Denis and Rich escape, and throughout the wild rest of the night have adventures including funny underwear, group showering, avoiding the increasingly violent boyfriend and a convenient cabin in the woods (oh, for the sting of Jason from "Friday the 13th").

This is a film of presumptions. I had to presume that there is no legal authority in town, so Beth Cooper could drive like a madman (ha-ha) and wreak further, rather significant property damage at another grad party. I had to presume that trying to figure out whether Rich is gay or not can hold up as a running gag (it doesn't) and finally I had to presume that Beth Cooper would eventually cradle Denis in her ample bosom despite his creepy and anti-social behavior.



Entourage: Lauren London, Hayden Panettiere and Lauren Storm in 'I Love You, Beth Cooper'  
Photo credit: TM and © 2009 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp

Women are fairly well objectified in this narrative, either as dim bulbs (Treece, one of Beth's pals) or the schizophrenic Beth, whose object-of-desire character blew with the wind, vulnerable one moment and a wild woman the next. But all the girls are body baring fabulous, with costuming or sexy actions filling in for any integrity. That seems to be a woman's lot in summer movies.

But the main sin of I Love You Beth Cooper is that it's simply not funny. The screenplay practically bleeds trying to wring a laugh, but the physical comedy is cruelly impractical (and would put most people in a hospital) and the nerdy nature of Denis and Rich – with his is-he-or-is-he-not-gay routine – is borderline offensive and gets boring fast.

It also should be noted that when the three lasses decide to shower at the school gym, it is the presumably gay Rich who joins them, Denis being too chicken. And later, when Denis goes off to have the sunrise "love chat" with Beth, it is Rich that canoodles in a cabin bedroom with the two gals left behind. Right.

The direction of veteran Chris Columbus was apparently his attempt to do this generation's Ferris Bueller, even down to casting old Cameron (Alan Ruck) as Denis's father. Larry Doyle's screenplay, adapted from his novel, proves again that there is a dearth of material in Hollywoodland.

Will anyone like this film? Anyone? Anyone? Bueller?

*'I Love You Beth Cooper' opens everywhere Friday, July 10th, and stars Paul Rust, Hayden Panettiere, Jack Carpenter and Alan Ruck, directed by Chris Columbus. Check local theaters for showtimes.*



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