

MOVIES

MATERIALISTS

Despite many promises, director Song's latest release leaves a lot to be desired



SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

When I heard that Celine Song was delving into the world of Hollywood rom-coms with an all-star cast, I was beyond delighted. I reached the theatres in New York the week after its release, with a bucket full of expectations and absolutely ready to walk out with a heavy heart. Unfortunately, I didn't. This is not to say that the movie did not meet any of my expectations. I was ecstatic that I was watching a fresh romance movie with many great attributes along with the added bonus of a tongue-in-cheek Marxist lens to look at the stunning scenes through. But something felt amiss.

Lucy Mason (played by Dakota Johnson), is a calculative young matchmaker in New York City. Quite early in the movie, she mentions that she will only enter a new relationship if she finds someone a viable financial match. We then observe her meeting a 'unicorn' match, Harry Castillo (played by Pedro Pascal) at one of her clients' wedding, where he begins to court her with subtle persistence, until they eventually begin seeing each other. Amidst all this, Lucy's ex flame, John Finch, (played by Chris Evans) is a quietly looming character who always finds himself around Lucy when she needs him.

While I will not spoil the very predictable ending, my issue was not with said predictability, but the lack of connection that led to the ending. In other words, the actions of the characters at the end felt uncharacteristic for each of them. I understood their actions, but I would have liked to have seen more of their motivations and who they were specifically, that led to their choices.

In *Materialists*, a lot is said and even more is done, but without the same level of investment, or the imperceptible longing that would inevitably lead to the sequence of events that unfold.

The movie does a great job of reviving a genre that has so much to offer, and deals with some extremely important social issues. It checks off all the boxes of a great romance film, and movies like these need to be made more common. However, even though it is just a romance film, it felt like the spark was missing.

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