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A HONEYMOON ADVENTURE

MOVIE REVIEW: CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC



BUY, BUY BABY

Confessions of a Shopaholic is Frothy, Timely Fun

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Having read the *Shopaholic* series, I was super-excited to check out the film. So much so that Navdeep and I splurged and went to go see it, since we missed the (very limited) screenings.

Very rarely does a book translate well to film. And even more rarely is a film better than a book. But in the vein of *Shopaholic*, one such case was *the Devil Wears Prada*. Yes, the book was a bestseller. But it was hardly a literary triumph. The film adaptation had nowhere to go but up. Granted, it took five writers to knock that sucker out of the ballpark, but in the end, it was a fun, frothy, feisty little movie and earned Meryl Streep an Oscar nod to boot.

Now the writers on *Shopaholic* (only three this time) did have their work cut out for them. While the book series has a light, lively voice that charms readers, there is a lot going on that would leave movie audiences scratching their heads. So, the screenwriters smartly eliminated certain trivial plot points and really streamlined the storyline, leaving out some of the more inane elements. Case in point? In the book, our heroine, Becky Bloomwood, is being courted by the not-so-dashing cousin of her roommate Suze. In later novels, said cousin, Tarqie, marries Suze. (Apparently they're distant cousins?) In the film, several book plots are combined and streamlined, so that Suze and Tarqie's wedding happens in the film, and no mention of the semi-incestuous-ness of their relationship is made.

Another example: in the book, Becky is already a financial journalist, and her love interest, Luke Brandon, is a financial publicist. In the film, Becky ends up at *Successful Savings* magazine as a pit-stop on her way to *Elette*, a fashion magazine. And Luke just happens to be her thrifty-because-he's-trying-to-downplay-nepotism boss. All of which makes the plot of the film move a lot more quickly, cleanly and easily, with none of the double-takes the book might garner.

All this is not to say that the film makes a complete departure from the book. Not at all. The bones are still there (as are all the more memorable characters – including the villainous Alicia "Bitch" Longlegs.). But so too is the spirit. Despite the minor plot tweaks here and there, the movie still captures the essence of the book series. The voice of *Shopaholic* Rebecca Bloomwood is very much alive and well here.

And as for readers who may be wondering about the seemingly ill-timed release of the film – after all, we are officially in a recession – well, here's the thing: yes, Becky Bloomwood is a spendy girl. And yes, there's no doubt, despite the *Shopaholics* anonymous meetings – a nice plot device that doesn't exist in the novels, by the way – she's hardly reformed. But, like many of us (closeted) shopaholics, she's trying really hard to reform her ways. And in the end, that makes her a worthy role model indeed.

