

'Life' turns out to be fairly ordinary after all

Given the uniquely twisted cinematic vision British director Danny Boyle has demonstrated with his two previous films, *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*, you wouldn't think he'd be capable of making a routine romantic dark comedy.

And while *A Life Less Ordinary* is hardly routine by Hollywood standards, Boyle's first film for a major studio contains far less of the dystopic mayhem we've come to expect from his work.

Ewan McGregor stars as a disgruntled office cleaner and would-be trash novelist who "kidnaps" the sultry daughter (Cameron Diaz) of the wealthy tycoon (Ian Holm) who has just laid him



Screen Scene

Stuart Green

off and replaced him with a robot.

It's hardly the perfectly pre-conceived act of a criminal mastermind, however, and in order to make it work, the victim, bored with her life and seeking a thrill, becomes his accomplice.

The two set out to bilk her father for millions of dollars in order to start life anew.

What starts out as a pretty straightforward caper turns into a surreal Bonnie and Clyde-style gangster romance with the introduction of a number of oddball characters; Canadian character actor Maury Chaykin being one of the more interesting.

What you don't know, however, is that the two haven't come together by accident, it's been a painstaking chore orchestrated by two angels (Holly Hunter and Delroy Lindo) working on God's orders to repair the dismal state of affairs in the marriage department.

If this sounds silly, it's because it is.

The angel angle was probably seen as a way to give the film a offbeat edge and show that hey, it's not really a typical Hollywood movie after all.

But for whatever reason, Boyle and writer John Hodge seem to have dulled much of the film's potential edge to make it more palatable to the masses. *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* were hits in very limited circles and you can bet that 20th Century Fox wasn't looking for an obscure art house classic out of the team.

Now it's probably not fair to dismiss the film simply because it's not what we expect it to be. But it is fair to be disappointed that a director who has shown so much promise with his previous outings has either willingly or forcefully been co-opted by Hollywood convention, and that's unfortunate because there was an opportunity here to give Hollywood a real kick in the pants and perhaps be the catalyst for

ENTERTAINMENT

more adventurous filmmaking from the studios.

A Life Less Ordinary is an enjoyable film, but it's not the revolutionary piece it could or should have been.

GATTACA A MIXED BAG

With the recent revelation that cloning is currently underway, the timing for the release of *Gattaca* couldn't be better.

Ethan Hawke and Uma Thurman star as forbidden lovers in a sanitized George Orwell meets Ayn Rand near-future where destinies are pre-determined through science and naturally-born children are considered imperfect outcasts.

Hawke is one of those misfits who has acquired the identity of a genetically superior individual and secured a job as a rocket scientist. His dream to fly into space is put at risk, though, when he becomes the suspect in a murder case that threatens to reveal his true identity.

Gattaca sets itself up as some kind of deep philosophical film about the power of the individual to conquer all...blah blah blah.

But its message is mixed. If the individual is all powerful, why does Hawke's character so long to be accepted as one of the crowd?

Making an ambitious debut as a writer/director, New Zealand native Andrew Niccol knows how to set a mood and paint a pretty picture, but he has trouble fleshing out the story.

The film looks great and the acting is adequate, but it would have been nice to see all of this put toward something more substantial.

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