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City of Angels touching on a heavenly scale

The prospect of a Hollywood remake of Wim Wenders' haunting and intensely passionate 1988 masterpiece *Wings of Desire* is a truly frightening one indeed.

It is easy to see how Wenders' beautifully crafted film could be co-opted and turned into cloying, overly sentimental tripe. After all, Hollywood has a disturbing tradition of cannibalizing original screenplays and turning them into

manipulative and hideously unwatchable pieces of trash.

Well, surprise, surprise, *City of Angels* isn't such a film.

This remake, which the authors insist is only loosely based on Wenders' film, is far from the debacle it could easily have been.

In *City of Angels*, Nicolas Cage plays Seth, an angel who, after meeting the girl of his earthly desires in the guise of a dedicated cardiologist named Maggie (Meg Ryan), longs to be human.

Even though he has a pretty good job helping the dead and dying find eternal peace and hanging around the public library all day, every day with



Screen Scene

Stuart Green

his celestial pals, it's not enough.

Seth wants to know what it's like to touch, to feel, to love, in human terms anyway. That's where Maggie fits in. She, like him, is strangely incomplete. Despite a successful career and a devoted boyfriend, she needs more.

So, with the help of a former angel now an earthbound soul named Nathaniel Messinger (*NYPD Blue's* Dennis Franz), Seth learns how it is he too can become human. But he also has

to learn what the potential drawbacks are. Equipped with an effective score and moving soundtrack, *City of Angels* is a surprisingly romantic and touching film that successfully utilizes the chemistry of its stars to augment Dana Stevens' fresh and sweet screenplay. Only at the film's climax do things get too sentimental for their own good.

But that's a small part of an otherwise effectively paced and hugely entertaining romantic comedy.



Meg Ryan and Nicolas Cage get romantic in *City of Angels*.

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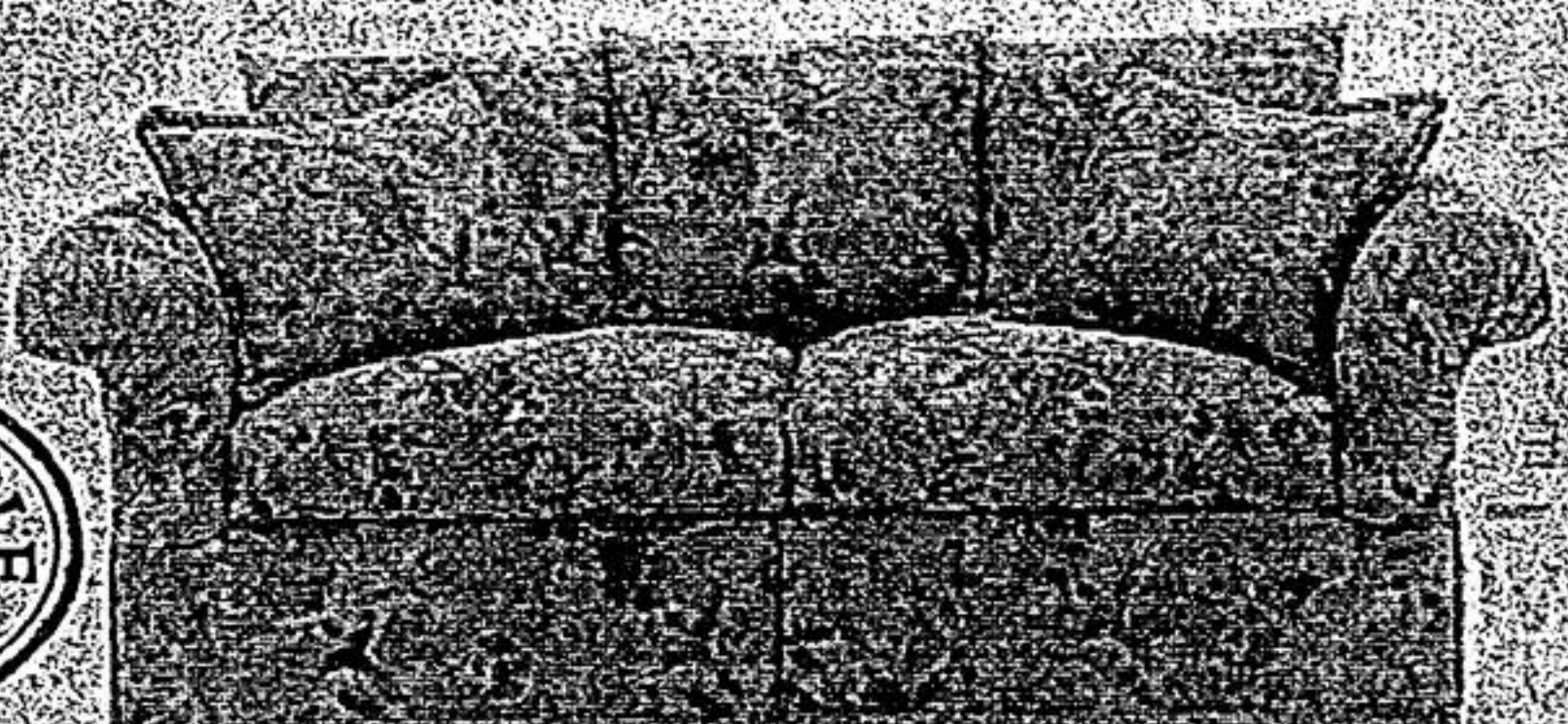
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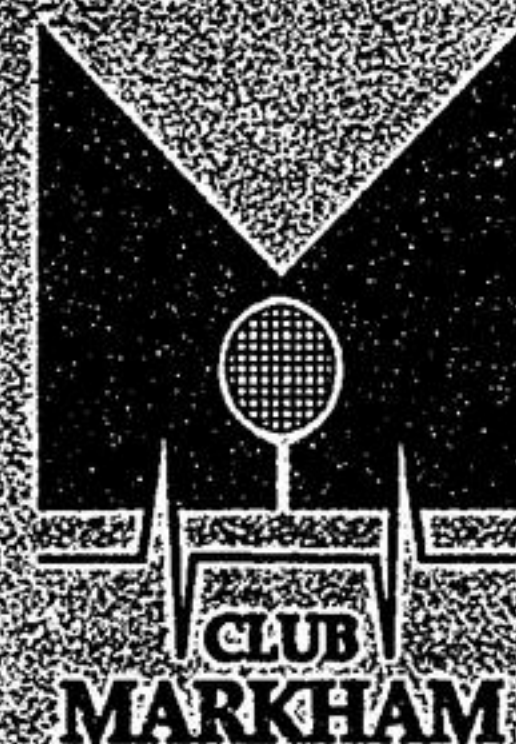


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