



Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist:

One too many crude jokes

By Fiona Weeks

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Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist

Directed by Peter Sollett

Adapted Screenplay by Lorene Scafaria

Based on a novel by Rachel Cohn & David Levithan

This twist on the typical teen blockbuster follows a teenage boy and girl who are both trying to escape their exes but, more importantly, they are both trying to find themselves. When "Norah" (Kat Dennings), a quiet girl who goes to private school, randomly chooses "Nick" (Michael Cera) to pose as her boyfriend to impress a girl who happens to be Nick's ex-girlfriend, all hell breaks loose.

Nick's friends are absolutely convinced that Nick and Norah would be endlessly cute together, but Nick isn't so sure that he's ready to leave his ex-girlfriend behind. For her part, Norah isn't so sure she should trust Nick's friends to take care of her hopelessly intoxicated friend "Caroline" (Ari Graynor) while she's with Nick. Meanwhile, they're all trying to find the mysterious club where a rock band named *Where's Fluffy* will be playing a surprise concert.

The Cohn/Levithan book (adapted for the screen by Lorene Scafaria) makes an original story—action-packed and entertaining—that engages the audience at all the right moments (throwing a curve whenever the audience is about to lose interest.) Anyone familiar with Michael Cera's work, however, shouldn't be surprised at some of the crude humor in this otherwise cute film, but it is somewhat distracting.

Norah is a young woman of intelligence and integrity—a refreshing main character in a movie geared toward teenagers. She doesn't care for the alcohol/drug scene, but she still does her best to take care of her friend Caroline (who unfortunately does). The reason Norah frequents New York clubs is quite simply for the music. Her desire to be her own person and break free of her famous father's shadow is also admirable. However, the choices she makes in relationships undermine her character. She repeatedly returns to an exploitative

boyfriend, and she is quick to get physically involved in new relationships.

The other main females in the film are even more disappointing. One is utterly intoxicated for most of the film and the other is insecure and unfaithful. Nick is actually one of the more responsible and understandable characters in the film. While Ari Graynor (as Norah's friend Caroline) plays an impressively convincing drunk teenager, her performance is more likely to inspire cringes than laughs, and the overtly homosexual jokes get old even before they become remotely amusing. Nonetheless, Kat Dennings (as Norah) and Michael Cera (as Nick) do their jobs well because, by the end of the movie, one can't help but hope that they will finally get together.

However, the relentlessly crude humor made me wonder what the filmmakers thought this added to the film. Although today's teenage audience has its own sense of humor (different from humor targeted to adult audiences), I think teenage audiences are more intelligent than these filmmakers give us credit for, and I found the humor in ***Nick and Norah*** to be somewhat degrading. Unfortunately, neither the original plot nor the eclectic soundtrack are quite redeeming enough to make this film a top choice for either rental or purchase.

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