

Makeover

The Devil Wears Prada

Info Box: A Midwesterner on her way to law school takes a stop-gap job as personal assistant to Miranda Priestly, the infamous editor of *Runway* magazine, and must struggle to save her soul in the whirlwind New York fashion scene.

Directed by David Frankel

Screenplay by Aline Brosh McKenna, based on the novel by Lauren Weisberger

Starring: Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt, Stanley Tucci, Adrian Grenier, Simon Baker,

2.5 Stars

Rating: PG 13

Running Time: 106 minutes

Reviewed by Sarah Caitlin Lavery and David Lavery

The opening credit sequence of *The Devil Wears Prada* shows our heroine Andy Sachs (Hathaway) dressing for her first day on the job as a personal assistant to Miranda Priestly (a wickedly good Streep), the notoriously demanding editor of the fashion magazine *Runway*. (Andy's not-very-fashion-aware preparations are presented in montage with that of her far-more haute couturish fellow Priestly slave Emily [Blunt].) The "arming for battle" motif is an ancient one, but director David Frankel is not showing us Achilles preparing for combat with Hector. Though she does not know it yet, Andy is preparing to fight: for her soul. Before long, she will be "drinking the Kool-Aid" and becoming a "Glamazon," learning what not to wear from her mentor Nigel (Tucci) but turning away from those who love her, including boy friend Nate (*Entourage's* Grenier).

Oh, how a good book can spoil a perfectly good movie! *Prada* the movie seems an agreeable, out-of-the-cerulean (you'll get the joke after you see the movie) surprise, enjoyable enough hurrah for feminist values that is likely to appeal even to a prime candidate for a makeover show. But those familiar with Lauren Weisberger's names-changed-to-protect-the-guilty novel about her own apprenticeship in New York's fashion industry are likely to find the movie version guilty of every cliché the book struggles to escape.

In novel form, Andy is strong, independent, free from chicklitdom. In the quintessential *Prada* (the novel) scene Andy screams "F*** you, Miranda, F*** you!" at her Mommie Dearest boss. The film, however, replaces the liberating moment with an MPAA "R"-escaping cell-phone tossed in a Paris fountain and a sly half-smile—hardly likely to cause audiences to stand up and cheer her moral courage.

The message being cleverly hidden here is that if you want true girl-power and originality, look to books; for clichés and a Hollywood ending, head to the theatre.