

Movie Draft: *Nocturna*

by Tenessa Gemelke

(*Nocturna* is one of five made-up films generated during PoopReading.com's recent [Movie Draft](#).)

I remember the first time I saw the trailer for *Nocturna*. A colleague had beckoned me to his desk to see it. Obviously I was excited to see The Dude turn a new acting corner, and Annette Bening as a prison warden? Very promising. The final shot—the one where Jeff Bridges holds a knife to Michelle Williams's throat and she whispers the desperate plea, "Daddy? You have to believe me, Daddy"—made my blood run cold. I thought, *this movie is going to be goooooooooood*.

I could not have been more wrong.

The trouble starts—as it often does—the moment a British character is introduced. I'm not sure why American filmmakers insist on making all British men awkward, evil, or charming—or awkwardly charming or charmingly evil—but the schtick has dire consequences here. Colin Firth is just awkwardly evil. Scenes that might otherwise be fascinating and filled with suspense just fall apart. Don't believe me? Try saying this without dissolving into giggles: "Give me the gun, Kensington."

Getting back to Mr. and Mrs. Mays, I'm not sure why the chemistry is so awful. The banter is predictable, the arguments are insincere, and the reprise of Jeff Bridges's piano-top make-out scene from *The Fabulous Baker Boys* is just plain embarrassing. It's hard to root for an estranged couple to reunite when their most intimate moments make you cringe or snort in disgust.

But the real thing at stake in the plot is the life of young Rebecca Mays. Michelle Williams does what she can with the role, but her character is essentially a callous bimbo. I kept hoping she'd reveal herself to be a brilliant double agent, but she's just sort of skanky and opportunistic. And extraordinarily dull.

At the end of the day, the movie can't make up its own mind. It wants to be a thoughtful critique of the military industrial complex. It wants to be a romantic comedy. It wants to be the story of a family's pain and healing. It wants to be a sex thriller. Sometimes it wants to be *Last Tango in Paris*, but then it somehow turns into *Tango and Cash*. It's all over the map, and it never goes anywhere good.

If this movie is available to you at no cost on a transatlantic flight, break your headphones and ask to sit next to a crying baby.

Nocturna manages a PG-13 rating because all the violent Desert Storm sex parties are staged with conveniently placed props in the foreground like a British farce.