

The Misadventures of Mistress Maneater Defies RomCom Norms – A Highly Entertaining & Worthwhile View

Director/producer C.J. Julianus & writer/actress Lorrisa Julianus deliver perfectly executed twists & turns that add spice to this film's unique, clever plot.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Gleefully

lighthearted without being overtly pretentious, filled with wry comedic intelligence without being blatantly campy, surprisingly dramatic without being overly sensationalized, and ultimately charming in its grander execution, this 111-minute indie

feature from director/producer C.J. Julianus and writer/producer/lead actress Lorrisa Julianus doesn't waste any time pretending to be anything else than what it is—a delightfully witty romantic [comedy](#) (with some action sequences thrown in for good measure!), which is a very,

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*Kirk S. Fernwood,
OneFilmFilmFan.com*



Ava Moriarty (Star/Writer Lorrisa Julianus) discovers a priceless work of art in The Misadventures of Mistress Maneater.

very good thing. Often, this critic feels that films can tread dangerous ground when attempting to BE something more than what they are and hence fall into all the classic pitfalls like overt predictability, overacting, and sometimes just plain cheesiness or lack of any true substance that's worth a view. Fortunately here, none of that was present, at least for me anyway.

While yes the film as a whole isn't necessarily reinventing the wheel when it comes to certain “standard” romcom

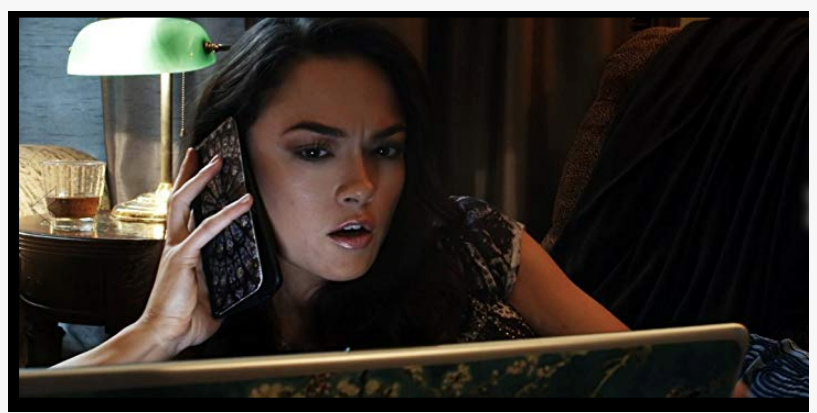
expectations in its foundational narrative presentation, it still felt fresh and fun thanks to what I felt was an intentional level of jovial absurdity in its cornerstone premise (I mean, a PhD-level minded dominatrix in trouble with the Russian mob, a corrupt politician, AND a Serbian priest who's a potential love interest? Not exactly typical in the romcom genre. Just sayin'. And...NO

disrespect intended to those in the said profession, mind you) that actually works quite effectively to draw us as the viewer into the character's plight and the wondrous insanity that ensues when her bid to leave the job she doesn't remotely relish anymore ends up getting her into more trouble than she ever would have anticipated. It's all played for humor but tempered with some surprisingly serious moments that likewise fit perfectly into events being depicted.

Additionally, the rest of the story's fundamental concepts don't tread upon any new ground, yet are filled with enough originality through the key characters involved that it makes you not really concerned about that. Rather, just sit back and enjoy the ride, as all of it leads to a finale that was a little unexpected, but then wrapped up in an appealingly apropos manner, and how I personally WANT a film of this nature to conclude. After all, the whole idea of a romcom is to feel good about how things turn out, and I will simply state that this is achieved here in that "only in a romcom", "awww"-inducing, "make the heart warm" manner. As with so much of indie cinema and its character-driven roots, the myriad of other notions being explored, like self-worth, gender discrimination, misguided pre-

conceptions/assumptions, choosing right over wrong, how we build walls to protect ourselves (often to our detriment), forgiveness, and the value of integrity are also addressed amidst the comical, dramatic, and scattered action sequences, all delivered with a smoothly shot visual style that is easy on the eye and pacing that allows development without tedium.

Lorrisa Julianus was a flat out beautiful choice to play the circumstance-laden, career-beleaguered, wanting-to-get-away and start over Ava, a woman of true intellect, raw beauty, and



Ava Moriarty (Star/Writer Lorrisa Julianus) pieces together the mystery of a lost masterpiece in *The Misadventures of Mistress Maneater*.



Lorrisa Julianus and Mickey O'Sullivan star in the RomCom of the Year, *The Misadventures of Mistress Maneater*

a wryly sassy, absolutely sexy demeanor who finds herself in over her head when all the plans she's had to leave the dominatrix life and actually use her brain instead of whips and chains get severely upended. Forced into a position where there's seemingly no choice but to fall in line to earn her way out of the mess, things take a decidedly abrupt turn when she falls for the mark she's supposed to undermine to gain her emancipation. Now under the gun (figuratively AND literally), she has to make choices that could destroy other's lives to save her own, and the decision will effect everything moving forward. Honestly, it's a heartfelt, wholly bravado-filled, energetic performance Julianus gives us (plus a killer smile), and she's a complete joy to watch both vamp it up and be vulnerable through the entire affair with engaging, purely entertaining poise.

O'Sullivan likewise provides us a very (at first) understated then highly intense level of dynamic believability in his role as Father Radovan, the new pastor at a local church, who's main concern is taking care of his ailing mother, but also while hiding multiple facets of who he actually is in the context of ghosts from his past and current realities he's not even aware of. Becoming the unsuspecting pawn in a larger game when it comes to Ava, watching as his world begins to unravel while slowly becoming enamored with her is actually quite moving while also being hysterical and just enjoyable to watch unfold, all thanks to O'Sullivan's "everyman who's not TOTALLY an everyman" manner portrayed, making him the most effective pairing with Julianus' Ava. The chemistry he has with her is like a match waiting to be struck, and it's wonderfully enacted as such by O'Sullivan, making him a treat to witness just as much as Julianus.

Additional supporting roles are magnificently rendered by Christopher as Ava's amusing yet also at times seriously menacing ex and Russian mobster Boris, Shannon Brown as Ava's best friend and unintentional source of problems Gabe, Lichty as the deliciously slimy town politico Mayor Kupsik, John Mossman & K.J. Jogisoo as Boris' main henchmen Viktor and Vladimir, Joette Waters as Radovan's illness-stricken mother, Molly Morgan as local journalist Ashley, Cynda Williams & William Lee as church volunteers, Bonnie Morgan as a town librarian, and Robyn Coffin as an art student, along with appearances by Michael Kristula, Brian Barber, Ruth Kaufman, C.J. Julianus, and many others. In total, "The Misadventures of Mistress Maneater" is a totally pleasurable, gratifying, winning piece of indie filmmaking that thankfully traded what could have been a much more brazenly irreverent/crude tone for a more randomly off-color but ultimately endearing and adventurous air that deserves credit to its makers for "whipping" up a jolly ride that doesn't "tie us down" or cause us pain, but rather "handcuffs" us with merriment. - Kirk S. Fernwood, OneFilmFan.Com

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