



WHO WAS THAT?

Ben Stiller is an executive producer on Submarine as well as a minor role as a Soap Opera actor on Oliver's television set.

Oliver Tate (Craig Roberts) isn't your normal 15-year-old boy. He sports the same pea coat with shaggy hair just hitting the top of his eyes. He daydreams of what others would do in the situation that Oliver would mysteriously die. But mostly, he is fascinated by a girl. This girl is the curiously beautiful Jordana Bevan (Yasmin Paige). Studying her interests by spying on her daily activities, Oliver finds his way into Jordana's eyes. However, Oliver is a lot more vocal about how he feels about Jordana than she is. While Oliver is busy falling in love, his parents are too preoccupied falling out of love to care for their son. Lloyd Tate (Noah Taylor) seems to only evoke emotion when discussing marine biology while his neurotic wife, Jill (Sally Hawkins), worries herself into a possible affair with an ex-lover (Paddy Considine) who has just moved next door. Oliver constantly tries to manipulate his parents back into a loving marriage, but nothing seems to be working. Oliver now must choose what to focus on: The struggle of keeping his family together or the intoxicating love with Jordana.

Submarine isn't what you would expect from an R-rated indie film on losing your virginity. In ways, this is exactly what Oliver is attempting to do. But Jordana isn't just some girl. She's the girl he's been waiting for. They play with fire, ride a make-shift rocket bike and frolic on the beach. His journey to losing his virginity opens a gateway to a whirlwind of situations and emotions. Submarine is very much a british call-and-response to the 2007 smash, Juno. Not exactly in the situations but the mannerisms of its main character. Oliver is a strange, curious teen who only wants love and to be loved in return. Of course, he hasn't been receiving much comfort and support from his parents, given their current predicament with each other. In some ways, Submarine feels like an R-rated Harriet The Spy written by Juno scribe Diablo Cody. The situations Oliver finds himself in aren't exactly humorous at all, but his actions are what bring the true hilarity. And make no mistake, Submarine is hilarious.

Hilarity is found all over Submarine. Whether it's throughout the story or when Oliver forges a second letter, as his father, explaining the first forged letter all on his type-writer, humor is something that the director, Richard Ayoade, did not care to leave out. The satisfying nature of the humor is the fact that it is cleverly mixed in with dramatic elements. See, Oliver has no one to guide him through his journey but himself. Unlike most other sex-comedies, Oliver doesn't have a group of friends to tell about his conquests. That can be credited to both excellent direction by Ayoade and the fact that Submarine isn't just a comedy about sex. It's also a coming-of-age tale full of celebration and tragedy. This brilliant move makes Submarine, easily, one of the better british comedies in a long time. But alas, perfect it is not.

Towards "Part Three" of the film, things become a little too dark. Tones and themes change in the slightest and make Submarine feel like a different film. The acceptance of the situations that arose may just be too tough for some viewers. The bright side is Ayoade pulls a magic trick on his audience by slipping in some silver lining amidst the tragedy. It's a cool pay-off but doesn't exactly justify the overbearing length of the situation. The whole "Part Three" of the film feels like it took the "Indie" way out and just complicated things for the sake of complication and sorrow. The characters don't exactly justify why they did what they did. This suffers a blow to the pacing of the film. Thankfully, it's the only blow Submarine really has to take.

Submarine is an extremely enjoyable british comedy about the young and reckless that doesn't quite stick the landing of a memorable film. However, with great acting and a hilarious script, Submarine becomes a rare treat that comes along when you least expect it to.

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