

LIFESTYLE

Silver Linings Playbook: A Review

by GraceHolliday



It's being lauded as one of the best films of this year, and with its all-star cast including Bradley Cooper, **Jennifer Lawrence** and Robert De Niro, we just had to check out the new film **Silver Linings Playbook** for ourselves.

Directed by David O. Russell and adapted from a **novel** by **Matthew Quick** of the same name, Cooper plays Pat Solitan, a thirty-something suffering from bipolar disorder, who has spent eight months in a psychiatric hospital after beating up the man he finds in the shower with his wife. Returning to his parents' home to recover, attend compulsory therapy and form a plan to get his estranged wife back, he meets equally unstable Tiffany, played by Lawrence, of **The Hunger Games** fame. Agreeing to do something for her in return for passing on a letter to his wife, the two enter a dance competition, giving Solitan a good dose of discipline but a bad dose of pressure to deal with.

There are a number of different touching threads to the story—it does not just revolve around the relationship between the leads. Pat and his father Pat Sr., played by De Niro, have troubles of their own, and Pat Sr.'s attempt to bond with his son over American football is, despite best intentions, not much help at all. Relationships between various family members is another recurrent theme, from Tiffany and her sister to Pat and his brother.

Cooper, who came to everyone's attention as "the hot one" in **The Hangover** movies really could be looking at a mantle place crammed with awards after his performance. In short, he really seems like he knows what he's doing. He exudes the traits of bipolar without showing them in our faces, or over or under playing them. He strikes the balance perfectly. It should be mentioned, however, that for those familiar with the nature of bipolar, his lack of "downers" seemed a little odd, and was the one element in which the film didn't ring entirely true.

As a relative newcomer to the big screen, Lawrence really comes into her own as the film progresses—anyone who has the courage to say the "f word" to Robert De Niro gets our vote. Even if she and Cooper don't exactly look entirely right together aesthetically, both handled the subject of depression and mental illness with a tact and sensitivity that couldn't be faulted.

Cancer was dealt with in a humorous yet sensitive manner in the 2011 movie **50/50** and here, too, the entire cast treats the delicate topic of depression and mental disorder with the utmost respect. A special mention should go to Pat's mother, Dolores, played by Jacki Weaver, who is pitched perfectly, worrying without being stifling, reflective for many on their own

mothers' attempts to act in times of crisis. Meanwhile Pat's friends and their carbon-copy excuses about how they were too busy to visit him in the hospital will make sense to many who've experienced friends ditching them when the going gets tough.

Silver Linings Playbook really is a romance, a comedy *and* a topical drama. Despite the subject matter, the penultimate scene has to be one of the funniest of cinema this year, so look forward to it. Running at nearly two hours, however, you'll be wanting to find some comfy seats and stock up on the snacks beforehand.

For many, the ending will have seemed too idealistic and too happily-ever-after, but at the end of the day, that's exactly what feel good movies are supposed to do, make you feel like maybe everything will be all right, after all.

Silver Linings Playbook is in cinemas now.

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