

The Perfect Date is a fun, feel-good flick

 By [Ayesha Abrahams](#)

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Noah Centineo's third Netflix film, *The Perfect Date*, released last week. It was better than Sarah Burgess but not nearly as good as *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*. Considering this was Centineo's first time as the main lead (as opposed to some teenage girl's crush), it wasn't bad. The film's not perfect, but there are worse ways to spend a Friday night.

Brooks Rattigan (Centineo) is an over-achiever with blind ambition. This high school senior desperately wants to change the world but has no clue where to start. Brooks believes he must get into Yale to be a success. Unfortunately, it takes more than good grades to be accepted and he has nothing vaguely interesting to put on his resume – that is until he launches an 'innocent' escort service app called The Stand-In. With the help of Murphy (Odiseas Georgiadis), Brooks starts his own business. He comes up with the idea after offering to take a friend's cousin to her dance. Celia (Laura Marano) and Brooks have chemistry from the start. Had they fallen in love after the first dance, the movie would probably have been 10 minutes long. But instead of falling for the weird and confident girl in his arms, Brooks singles out Shelby (Camila Mendes) because every teenage boy is blinded by the popular girl. That's just how things go.



Pretty soon the chaperone business is booming with Brooks going on different dates every night. It's a bizarre and indulgent concept: clients tailor their date to their needs, choosing not only his clothes but his interests and personality too. Brooks starts raking in the cash for college while rubbing shoulders with rich kids and improving his acting. Eventually, he even gets a shot with Shelby – the only problem is, he's lied his way into her life. And a relationship built on deceit is doomed from the start.

With all the hustling, it's easy to forget Brooks has another job and a high school diploma he still needs to get. And what about the college essay he was supposed to be working on? What about Murphy? What about Celia? Brooks is so busy juggling all his different personas, that he forgets about the person who launched his app and the girl who helps him get an interview at Yale. In Brooks' own words, "I've been so many people these past few months – a cowboy, an art connoisseur and a bad friend." It only takes losing his best pal and the girl he loves to realise he's lost his way.



Not a superficial romcom

You could watch this movie for the obvious happy ending, the promised laughs or because your girlfriend forces you to, but *The Perfect Date* isn't the superficial romcom you might think it is. Like every other film in its genre, clichés abound, but Centineo's chaperone app also presents us with a few very bleak realities. Number one: We live in a world where it's a sin to show up to an event on your own, i.e. girls always need a guy on their arm. Number two: Most of us lack friends who will jump in when a boyfriend or girlfriend can't. Number three: We must lie to get people to like us rather than appreciating those who already do.

I think the film addresses some of these issues. Celia, for all the problems I have with her trying so hard to be gritty in her combat boots and tulle dress, is the one really strong female lead. She's one of the only characters who openly calls Brooks out, but she also has enough courage to admit when she's being a hypocrite. She stands up to her parents and even goes to the dance alone. To crown it all, Celia knows her worth and will not tolerate disrespect from anyone.

For almost the entire film, Brooks and Celia dance around each other. He focuses all his energy on earning tuition money for Yale and fighting for a girl he can't have a decent conversation with. In the end, Brooks realises he never wanted any of these things. It takes him far too long to notice the obvious fact we all spotted: You never give up the girl who dances badly in public for the one who spends her night taking selfies.

So why should you watch *The Perfect Date* when anyone can predict the ending from the start? Because it's fun to see Brooks make a fool of himself in different outfits. And, like all Centineo Netflix Originals, it leaves you with that warm fuzzy feeling we all need sometimes.

ABOUT AYESHA ABRAHAMS

Ayesha is a self-confessed bibliophile. When she's not reading stories, she's writing them. This former teacher and editor is a diehard Potterhead. Currently she's completing her MA in Creative Writing. Ayesha will almost always choose tea over coffee, and writes articles when she's supposed to be working on her thesis.

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