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Bad behaviour of a Danish royal and a US billionaire

REVIEW

A Royal Affair (15)

On limited release

Tony Earnshaw ★★★★★

LOVE and ideals are the primary factors at the heart of this absorbing true-life tale from Denmark in which Mads Mikkelsen's enlightened doctor brings gravitas to the court during the turbulent years of the 1800s.

Enlisted as physician to an out-of-control, boorish, juvenile monarch who is being manipulated by his advisors, Doctor Struensee (Mikkelsen) assumes the position of mentor/father figure to King Christian VII (Mikkel Følsgaard) whilst Caroline, the young queen, lonely, ignored and cultivated, enjoys a yearning for a better man.

Their affair soon becomes the talk of the court. And as Christian begins to appreciate and wield his influence he initiates a coup d'état that no-one within the Machiavellian establishment will allow.

An enthralling costume drama, part biopic, part illicit romance, part history lesson, *A Royal Affair* contains elements of *Mrs Brown*, *The King's Speech*, *The Young Victoria* and *The Madness of King George*.

Yet in many ways it manages to eclipse them all in its depiction of a mighty state in which the upper class is

rotting from within, where corruption is commonplace and lies, deceit and intrigue are a way of life.

The accidental love triangle at the heart of *A Royal Affair* is the motor that gives this compelling story its heart. Struensee emerges as a magical Mr Fix-It, imbuing the king with the essence of identity, steering the country toward reform and siring a child that, if the story had a

happy ending, might be as great as his father wishes to be. But stories like this do not traditionally enjoy a fun finale. As the powers of the elite are ranged against him, so Mikkelsen begins to realise the folly of his actions, and his emotions. High ideals and love make for uncertain bedfellows, and one man cannot defeat an army.

Students of modern politics will see Boris Yeltsin or an 18th century Berlusconi in the king. Mikkelsen resembles a benign, free-thinking, cultured Rasputin. Alicia Vikander as Caroline, the English princess co-opted for her breeding, is the ultimate victim of Bodil Steensen-Leth's novel, and of this glorious epic.

Also out

Comopolis (15): Adapted

from the book of the same name by Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis* paints an emotionally cold portrait of a young man with too much money and hardly any morals.

Set almost entirely within the confines of a stretch limousine, the film focuses on 20-something billionaire Eric Packer (Robert Pattinson) who has made his fortune by playing the financial markets and stabbing his rivals in the back. He travels across Manhattan irritated that a Presidential motorcade has brought traffic to a standstill.

He wiles away a few minutes by engaging in sex with his employee, Didi Fancher (Juliette Binoche), before meeting his wife Elise (Sarah Gadon), who is well aware of Eric's adulterous escapades.

As the afternoon wears on, Eric welcomes a financial analyst Vija Kinsky (Samantha Morton) and computer programmer Shiner (Jay Baruchel) into his car, drawing on their expertise to protect his vast portfolio when the financial markets crash.





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FORBIDDEN LOVE: The Danish film *A Royal Affair* recounts the true life affair of Princess Caroline and Dr Struensee, her husband's advisor.