

Wild Target (2010)

Contributed by Daniel Cann
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This is a quintessentially British comedy remake of original French film ('Cible Emouvante'). Bill Nighy plays 54 year old hitman Victor Maynard who is told by his infirm but still formidable mother (Eileen Atkins) that it is time to settle down after a long and successful career at the top of his profession. Victor lives for the approval of his mother, constantly living in the shadow of his deceased father and grandfather (also assassins of course).

One particular mission gets Victor entangled in the lives of con artist and professional thief Rose (Emily Blunt) and Tony a young drifter and stray (Rupert Grint) these three eccentric and disparate characters are thrown together by circumstance with Rose and Tony believing Victor to be a helpful, kindly private detective totally unaware of his true nature.

Rival hitman Dixon ('The Office's' Martin Freeman) is hired by Fergusson (played with the usual relish by Rupert Everett) to kill turncoat Victor and Rose (who double-crossed Ferguson). The film follows the three runaways and the attempts on their lives in the ensuing mayhem.

I have to say that despite a clichéd and weak premise I did enjoy this film. The opening half set in London was fast paced, funny and moved along nicely. Yes it was unconvincing in places and somewhat contrived in others, but there was enough humour and action to forgive the filmmakers these weaknesses.

I felt the film did sag a little in the middle which was a shame. It was almost as if the screenwriter ran out of ideas. I soon found myself losing interest whilst the three leads were holed up at Victor's 'safe-house' in the countryside. It became a little tiresome seeing Rose and Tony playing the unruly children to Victor's stern disapproving father figure. I found these scenes to be weaker and the film is let down by them.

The chemistry between the leads is (for the most part) engaging and it was nice to see Emily Blunt play against type as the mischievous and free-spirited Rose. Rupert Grint also impresses as Tony, showing that he has an acting range that extends beyond the 'Harry Potter' franchise. Nighy is his usual dry self. I also enjoyed seeing 'Rab C Nesbitt's' Gregor Townsend in a supporting role.

The theme of damaged people helping each other has been done many times before but overall it does work well here. Before the film somewhat runs out of gas about an hour or so in, I still found this to be a lightweight but likeable romp. It's not the best comedy you will ever see but is nicely diverting entertainment nonetheless.