

## Revenge ★★

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**Year of Release:** 1990

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** Skip It

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In several respects, the Kevin Costner movie *Revenge* is like his earlier film *No Way Out*: each movie is about a military man having an affair with the wrong woman at the wrong time. In both films, Costner finds himself in over his head, tip toeing through a delicate situation. Both films are charged with sexual energy. However, there is a key difference between *Revenge* and *No Way Out*: *No Way Out* didn't fall apart until its disappointing conclusion. *Revenge*, on the other hand, starts to capsize immediately.

*Revenge* tries to pack the emotional wallop of a *Body Heat* or *Fatal Attraction*, but the routine story line prevents the film from delivering a knock-out blow. Costner plays Jay Cochran, a recently retired navy pilot who drives down to Puerto Vallarta to visit his friend Tiburon Mendez, a powerful Mexican millionaire played by Anthony Quinn. Cochran is immediately drawn to Mendez's stunningly beautiful wife, Miryea (Madeleine Stowe), and he finds himself torn between his passion for her and his loyalty to a longtime friend. As the title suggests, *Revenge* chronicles the violent repercussions of the inevitable affair.

*Revenge* is a sinking vessel, but it's buoyed by its magnetic crew. As usual, Costner has that earnest, boy-next-door quality that made him so appealing in *Field of Dreams*. He seems like someone you'd want your sister to marry, which makes it hard to buy him as a cold-blooded killer in the second half

of the film. As Miryea, Stowe exudes a tantalizing aura of mystery, vulnerability, and raw sex appeal. Quinn has the thankless task of playing a rather standard tyrant who's violent, ruthless, and unforgiving. Quinn's dynamic presence, however, makes the familiar role more distinctive than it might have been in someone else's hands.

The first half of *Revenge* is moderately successful. As Costner and Stowe fall in love, the film crackles with erotic tension. The most sensuous scene has Costner trying to make lemonade as Stowe does her best to seduce him. The image of Costner nervously trying to slice lemons is far more memorable than any of the steamy sex scenes. The second half of the film, unfortunately, is unpleasantly brutal and bloody. To add insult to injury, *Revenge* has a "so what?" quality about it. Aside from the gorgeous Mexican scenery, the film is unexceptional. It plods along predictably until the pull-out-the-Kleenex conclusion.

Worst of all: the plot depends on the lovers' making really dumb mistakes. Costner and Stowe are unbelievably naive when it comes to hiding their affair, and the screenwriters are unbelievably naive to think that we'll accept such stupid characters. If the lovers had any common sense or discretion, then the plot would crumble, making all the revenge nonsense unnecessary. But because the characters are idiots, they have no way out.