

Working Girl ★★★

Year of Release: 1988

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: See It

In director Mike Nichols' *Working Girl*, Melanie Griffith plays a secretary in Manhattan, the type who wears running shoes and socks over her nylons as she commutes to work and then changes into high heels once she gets there. Her greatest desire is to be respected for her mind as well as for her pretty face and shapely body. She has big ideas but no one will listen to them. And to top it off, her macho chauvinistic boyfriend, played by Alec Baldwin, is cheating on her.

But Griffith's fortunes turn when her new boss has a skiing accident and is laid up in the hospital for two weeks. Griffith uses her boss' absence as an opportunity to implement her own innovative business scheme. She joins forces professionally and romantically with Harrison Ford, who plays a struggling investment broker. Ford is outstanding in his role as a bumbling and ruffled, but charming, bachelor. He demonstrates once again his unheralded versatility.

Working Girl is a contemporary Cinderella story, but one with a corporate twist. Instead of a ball, we get a board room. Mr. Charming is not a prince, but a broker. And the evil stepmother is an executive in "Mergers and Acquisitions" who is

happy to steal an idea and call it her own. Although the movie may not generate much in the way of deep drama or high comedy, it succeeds beautifully as a fairy tale.

Working Girl is a showcase for Griffith. Nichols takes every opportunity to show off her cleavage, her curves, and her captivating blue eyes. But Griffith's role calls for much more than mere sex-appeal, and there is more to her character than meets the eye. Griffith gives a solid, even impressive, performance as the intelligent, ambitious, and resourceful secretary who wants to raise her social stock. Whereas Griffith's character is someone we can root for, Sigourney Weaver's is someone we can love to hate. Weaver turns in a bravura performance as Griffith's cool, calculating, and back-stabbing boss.

The secret to *Working Girl's* success lies in its inspired casting. Griffith, Weaver, and even Ford—who is playing against type—are perfect in their roles. And Joan Cusack is weird and wacky in yet another small supporting part. I bought into this simple Cinderella story primarily because the characters and performances captured me hook, line, and sinker.