

LOOK OUT FOR... 'Cassandra's Dream'

Cassandra's Dream," Woody Allen's latest drama, opening Jan. 18, takes place in London just like his last two films. But that's not the only echo of the past. The doomed prophetess Cassandra was fated to accurately predict the future but be ignored. Now, Allen's body of work is so vast it's difficult for him to manufacture even the quirkiest plot twist that doesn't resemble a device from one of his earlier films.

In his latest, two brothers (Ewan McGregor and Colin Farrell) agree to murder a business associate of their wealthy uncle in exchange for his financial help, which they desperately need. Here's a rundown of the movie's high points that riff on earlier efforts by the Woodman.

PARENTS

In **"Cassandra's Dream,"** McGregor and Farrell's mother (Clare Higgins) is always running down her husband, when she's not nagging the boys, that is. All out of love.

In **"Take the Money and Run"** (1969), Virgil Starkwell's (Allen) parents nag him about his career plans, which are to be a career criminal. But they do it all out of love; it's just that they feel more comfortable disguising themselves by wearing Groucho noses and glasses when talking about Virgil on camera.

THE GOOD LIFE

In **"Cassandra's Dream,"** McGregor dates an actress (Hayley Atwell) who is besieged with male admirers, including a wealthy blue blood who invites both her and McGregor to his country estate for a party. McGregor also plays wealthy by taking the expensive automobiles his brother repairs for a spin when he's on a date.

In **"Match Point"** (2005), Jonathan Rhys Meyers is a washed-up tennis pro who also gets to taste the high

life, thanks to his friendship with dashing aristocrat Tom Hewett (Matthew Goode). Rhys Meyers decides he likes the good life so much that he marries Hewett's mousy sister to guarantee a place at the table.

MURDER!

In **"Cassandra's Dream,"** Uncle Howard (Tom Wilkinson) asks the two brothers to eliminate a business associate who rather annoyingly seems determined to tell the truth when questioned about Howard's shady dealings.

In **"Crimes and Misdemeanors"** (1989), a businessman (Martin Landau) has an affair with the increasingly unstable and threatening Anjelica Huston and ultimately decides the only reasonable thing to do is have her killed.

SIBLINGS

In **"Cassandra,"** McGregor is the relatively stable sibling and Farrell the miserable sod with gambling problems and an unhelpful sense of morality. They squabble constantly but still spend more time with each other than with their respective girlfriends.

In **"Hannah and Her Sisters"** (1986), Mia Farrow plays the absurdly perfect Hannah, while sister Barbara Hershey cheats on her husband with Hannah's current hubby (Michael Caine) and Dianne Wiest is her drug-addicted other sister, who dates Hannah's ex-husband (Woody Allen). Despite their constant complaining, the sisters never go two minutes without worrying each other with their respective problems and fears.

THE THEATAH!

In **"Cassandra,"** McGregor's girlfriend is seen performing some sexually naughty drama. But the real drama is



backstage, where everyone is air-kissing everyone else and the actors are seemingly involved in casual romances.

In **"Bullets Over Broadway"** (1994), John Cusack is an aspiring playwright who discovers a lot more drama backstage, thanks to a talentless moll (Jennifer Tilly) who is foisted on him, her gangster boyfriend with a gift for show doctoring and a grande dame of the theater (Dianne Wiest) who fondles Cusack almost as lovingly as she does her liquor bottles. ♦

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