



FILM: **LIKE CRAZY**

FDG RATING: 3.9

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Paolo Virzi: *Director*

Valeria Bruni Tedeschi: *Actress, Beatrice*

Micaela Ramazzotti: *Actress, Donatella*

DATE: June 18, 2017

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **LIKE CRAZY**

In the film, *Like Crazy*, we happily took the scenic, countryside, Tuscan road trip romp with Beatrice and Donatella, two female escapees from Villa Biondi, a sumptuous, centuries old dwelling that houses the psychiatric facility where they are patients. Beatrice, a long-time resident of the facility, ostentatiously parades around the sunny villa grounds holding a parasol as if she is the contessa, and with brash loquaciousness, gives orders to other patients and workers. When a frail, emotionally and psychologically damaged, young Donatella arrives, Beatrice swoops in and interviews her pretending to be a doctor, and then immediately takes the reluctant, fragile, withdrawn girl, who is assigned as her roommate, under her wing.

The director skillfully balances the pathos of mental illness with sensitive comedy delivered mainly by Beatrice's character. Several of our resident reviewers appreciated the way the film treated mental illness and commented that the humor was appropriately funny.

When the patients are on an outing and their van to return home is late, Beatrice impulsively decides to hop a passing bus, with Donatella in tow. The two mis-matched women begin their "Thelma and Louise" style adventure and along the way we gain insight into their life stories and emotional pains as their protective facades slowly fade. Beatrice actually does come from a wealthy family and with her upper crust, "entitled", demeanor in full tilt, she pulls off "borrowing" a man's car and has them dining in expensive restaurants without paying. Another humorous scene is when they drop in on her ex-husband and his new wife living in a luxurious mansion overlooking the sea.

In stark contrast to Beatrice, who intensely thrives in every moment, Donatella is withdrawn, holding onto her deeply painful past. She has been committed after attempting to kill her young son by jumping with him from a bridge into deep waters after learning that he would be taken away from her. And now she is not allowed to even see him and she doesn't know where he is. Beatrice is determined to find him for Donatella. The most beautiful, poignant scenes are when Donatella finds her son and is able to spend precious moments with him on the beach while his adoptive parents sympathetically watch from a distance.

The duo is forced to confront their past and in the process, they become close and supportive of each other. In one scene, the roles slightly reverse, and Beatrice seems the weaker of the two while Donatella exhibits a semblance of strength. It's interesting that each pinpoints an underlying issue of the other when reclusive Donatella blurts out to Beatrice, "You talk too much." And Beatrice tells Donatella, "You need to be happier." Beginning at two polar extremes, by the end of the adventure, Donatella has become a bit more open and complete as a person rather than a traumatized shadow of herself and Beatrice has slowed her frenzied pace revealing the loneliness she hides. The two head back to the facility which is a satisfying ending since we know as well as they do, that the facility is the right home for them. And thankfully, this facility is a progressive, well-run establishment staffed by people who care professionally and appropriately for the patients.

In addition to the main themes, the director seemed to make a political comment since the credit roll at the end states that the story predates the passing of a law in 2014 that did away with "Judicial Mental Hospitals" like Villa Biondi with patients certified by a judge as mentally unwell and requiring institutionalization. And later in the epilogue, there is an addendum stating that only around half the patients in these institutions have since found alternative care. Note the film was released in 2016.

All of our resident reviewers really enjoyed this entertaining, original story and thought the acting was spectacular. Several absolutely loved it and one called it magical. We more than "liked" *Like Crazy* giving it a jubilant 3.9 which is basically a 4 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best).



See you at the movies!

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[Film Discussion Group](#) (FDG) organizer