

## Movie “She’s the Man” by Carol Duerksen

Rated Pg-13. 105 minutes

### **MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:**

- 1 Schedule a movie time with your youth in someone’s home. It is illegal to show a video in a public building if you haven’t purchased the rights to do so, but you can show one in a home.
- 2 Get the movie “She’s the Man”

### **MOVIE REVIEW:**

*By Kyra-lin Horn*

“She’s the Man” based on Shakespeare’s *The Twelfth Night*

directed by Andy Fickman

written by Ewan Leslie, Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith

Viola Hastings (Amanda Bynes), a soccer star and student of Cornwall High School, goes to try out for the soccer team only to find out that the team has been cut, so she tries out for the boys’ team – no luck. Her twin brother, Sebastian (James Kirk), just so happens to be going out of town for two weeks – unbeknownst to both of their divorced parents – so Viola decides to impersonate him at Illyria High School, a boarding school straight out of a screenwriter’s desperate imagination, and try out for the Illyria boys’ soccer team in order to put those Cornwall boys in their places.

Once at Illyria, Viola-as-Sebatstian only makes the soccer team’s second string, but her roommate is luckily the delectable and dearly sensitive team captain, Duke Orsino (Channing Tatum). Viola crushes on Duke, who has the hots for Olivia (Laura Ramsey), who in turn falls head over heels for Viola-as-Sebastian thus completing the high school love triangle that propels the rest of the story. Through a series of wacky and very high school events, Duke promises to make Viola-as-Sebastian good enough to play first string against Cornwall if she can get him a date with Olivia. Things happen, people date, people argue, people kiss, Viola scores the winning goal against Cornwall and everyone lives happily ever after.

It’s truly an adorable film. Bynes is both lovable and horrifyingly comical with her big eyes and rubber face. Her male impression is so bad that you can’t help but laugh. Her awkwardness is perfectly palpable and without a doubt lifts the film and its cartoon-ish characters out of slapstick territory.

Not for a second is the premise believable, but “She’s the Man” does accurately parody high

school romance. The film portrays, though comically, the insecurities that all teenagers feel when dealing with the opposite sex.

Many of the characters are embodiments of the stereotypical perfect teen. They appear confident, beautiful and ultimately desirable and/or enviable to the public around them. Yet within each of these perfect persons are the same insecurities held by all of us “mere mortals.”

Duke, the stereotypical jock – attractive, athletic and popular, turns to absolute jelly when in the presence of his crush Olivia.

Olivia is the most popular and attractive girl in school. Yet she still submits herself to self-deprecating tactics in the hopes of gaining Viola-as-Sebastian’s attention.

Eunice is desperately creepy. She wants a boyfriend and any boy will do. But her intense anxiety and insecurity makes her overbearing and clingy—an instant turn off for almost any guy.

Monique is the rich snob that thinks she’s too good for anyone, but when Viola-as-Sebastian dumps her she stalks her-as-him and refuses to give up the title of “Sebastian’s girlfriend.” Despite how attractive or how good of a catch Monique thinks she is, she isn’t confident enough to say ‘his loss’ and move on. She couldn’t accept that a guy had turned her down.

Everyone pairs off by the end of the film in true Hollywood fashion, but that doesn’t pertain to reality. In reality, the insecurities don’t ride away with the sunset. They remain to be one of the leading causes of bad decision making in high school.

The way Viola-as-Sebastian tries to fit in with the guys by talking “about girls in such graphic terms,” how the guys finally accept her when her two attractive girlfriends pretend to be her pining ex-lovers, how both Monique and Justin behave after being dumped – people want other people to think highly of them, and in high school being sexually experienced or desirable can certainly cause that climb in status.

The best lesson “She’s the Man” has to offer is about following your dreams no matter what anyone else might say or think. Viola may be a soccer superstar, but she is often shown to fail at being a lady. Soccer is her life therefore she blindly chases her dream with perseverance and determination. She isn’t anywhere near perfect, but she does know what she wants and goes after it.

Being overly concerned with the opinions of other people can easily entangle you in a web that has no easy way out. Getting entangled with another person especially is risky. Love is wonderful, but true love involves no pressure only free will.

## **THE SESSION:**

Show the movie, then discuss: What messages did you get from this movie? What did it say to you?

(Refer to the movie review for possible messages and discussion topics.)