



## Her Name Isn't Veronica

Nancy Drew gets pulled into the present

**NANCY DREW:** Directed by Andrew Fleming. Written by Fleming and Tiffany Paulsen. Story by Paulsen, based on characters created by Carolyn Keene. Cinematography, Alexander Gruszynski. Starring Emma Roberts, Tate Donovan, Josh Flitter, Max Thieriot and Rachael Leigh Cook. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2007. PG. 99 minutes. 42111

Dear Nancy,

It's not you. It's me.

Actually, scratch that. It's not me either. It's another teen sleuth with a penchant for cracking tough cases. She's come between us, and I can't deny it any longer.

I grew up with you, Nancy. I still have all your books in a box in my dad's basement. I still shake out my shoes before I put them on; I remember (possibly incorrectly) when you found a scorpion in your boot. Scenes from your stories linger in my imagination. I envied you your awesome friends (but not your doofy boyfriend) and your endless adventures.

I was probably about 10 then. You were supposed to be 18, yet your fans were years younger. I think they're about to get younger still. This movie that just came out — Nancy (Emma Roberts), what happened? You've got the car and the bland boyfriend (Max Thieriot), but Bess and George are left back in River Heights when you and your dad (Tate Donovan) head to L.A. Daddy dearest wants you to stop sleuthing, which could have something to do with the weird case you solve in the film's opening minutes (something about Chris Kattan robbing a church?). But you've moved into an old house with a creepy caretaker straight out of an old *Scooby-Doo* episode, and you've just got to figure out what happened to the actress who once lived there. I understand that.

But what's a surprise, Nance, is what you've become. This time warp thing,

where you "just like old things" and listen to vinyl, is jarringly unconvincing. It also doesn't seem likely that a girl who does so much sleuthing would have a lot of spare time for sewing retro dresses. Making you self-confidently unpopular in your new town turns you into a watery girl-power princess: you're well-off, good at everything and too clever to care what the snobby girls think (or to call them on their crap when they befriend you just to get closer to your boyfriend). Emma Roberts has a sweet smile (it must run in the family), but she doesn't quite have enough presence to portray your goody-two-shoes side as charming instead of, well, a little grating.

But as I said before, it's not really about you. It's about that other girl I met this summer. Her name's Veronica Mars, and I think you must have inspired her. She's in high school too, but her life's a little tougher than yours: Her mom split, her best friend was murdered and her dad got fired. She's got seriously complicated boy troubles, and while she's trying to deal with her own stuff, the entire student body of Neptune High (even the people who don't like her) seems to come to her for help. She's a smart cookie, she's sassy, she's extremely talented but not unbelievably good at everything, and when her heart breaks, you can feel it. After Veronica, Nancy, you're just too nice (though many grown-ups like that about you). But the real issue is simply that the girls who've followed in your footsteps — the Harriets, the Veronicas, maybe even the Buffys; all strong, intelligent, complex heroines — have passed you up.

I'm sorry. Maybe we'll have another chance in the future.

Love,  
Molly

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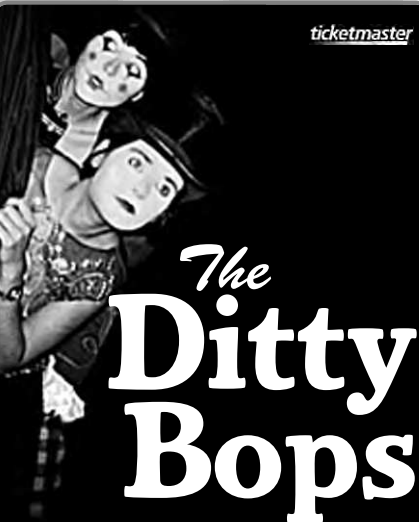
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