

Film Review: 'Before I Fall' a Bittersweet Tale of Redemption



"Kudos aplenty are in order for Zoey Deutch, who's incredibly convincing as Sam in a demanding role" in 'Before I Fall'

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Samantha "Sam" Kingston (Zoey Deutch) was a spoiled-rotten brat the night she perished in a tragic car crash. First of all, she and her little sister Izzy (Erica Tremblay) were lucky enough to be raised in the lap of luxury by a couple of loving parents (Jennifer Beals and Nicholas Lea).

Secondly, the recently-deceased 17 year-old was not only leaving behind a handsome boyfriend in Rob (Kian Lawley), but an ardent admirer in Kent (Logan Miller), a platonic friend she'd taken for granted since grade school. Sam was also pretty popular at Ridgview High School where she was a member of an exclusive clique along with her three BFFs, Liz (Halston Sage), Elody (Medalion Rahimi) and Ally (Cynthia Wu).

The snobby quartet took delight in teasing classmates like lesbian Anna (Liv Hewson) and reclusive outcast Juliet (Elena Kampouri). So Sam would think nothing of participating in such mean-girl rituals as dumping drinks on Juliet while calling her a "psycho bitch."

However, after the accident, she was afforded an unusual opportunity to reconsider her cruel behavior when, instead of proceeding to the hereafter, her spirit miraculously reentered her body. Upon opening her eyes, she realized that it was again dawn on Feb. 12, and that she was about to relive the same day again.

In fact, Sam's about to experience Feb. 12 over and over, while learning valuable lessons in tolerance each go-round. Thus unfolds "Before I Fall," a bittersweet tale of redemption based on Lauren Oliver's young adult novel of the same name.

At first blush, the picture's premise reads rather reminiscent of the Bill Murray classic "Groundhog Day" (1993), although this is a drama as opposed to a comedy, and it's set on Feb. 12 instead of Feb. 2. The movie was directed by Ry Russo-Young ("Nobody Walks"), who puts a fresh enough spin on the familiar theme to make you forget "Groundhog Day" after 15 minutes.

Kudos aplenty are in order for Zoey Deutch, who's incredibly convincing as Sam in a demanding role which calls for the exhibition of a considerable acting range over the course of the story. Her supporting cast delivers stellar work selling an escapist fantasy which might otherwise fall apart oh so easily.

A deja vu-driven, surrealistic morality play designed to leave you deep in reflection and weeping as you walk up the aisle.

Excellent ★★★★★

Rated PG-13 for mature themes, bullying, sexuality, violent images, profanity and underage drinking

Running time: 99 minutes

Distributor: Open Road Films

To see a trailer for *Before I Fall*, go to TheSkanner.com.

Ice Cube: The "Fist Fight" Interview

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News



Ice Cube in a Mellow Mood! Born O'Shea Jackson in Compton, California on June 15, 1969, Renaissance man Ice Cube is an actor, writer, producer, director, rapper, philanthropist and father. N.W.A., the rap group he co-founded with Dr. Dre, Eazy-E, MC Ren and DJ Yella, was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2016.

Cube made his feature film debut in 1991 in "Boyz n the Hood," and proceeded to parlay his critically-acclaimed performance into an enviable career. He has become one of the most bankable names in Hollywood as a writer, star and producer.

His production company, Cube Vision, has been making memorable films for over two decades. And his movies have cumulatively grossed over a billion dollars at the box office. Here, he talks about his latest outing in "Fist Fight," a comedy co-starring Charlie Day.

Kam Williams: Hey Cube. How you been, brother?

Ice Cube: I'm good, good. How about

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you, Kam?

KW: Great, thanks. What interested you in "Fist Fight"?

IC: I thought it was a great concept based on a funny premise. And when they started filling in the pieces with Charlie Day and Tracy Morgan, I just knew we were going to have a great time and hopefully shoot a funny movie.

KW: In this film you play a teacher who is sort of like a bully. Did you ever have a teacher like your character, Mr. Strickland? And were you either bullied or a bully when you were a kid?

IC: In my neighborhood, you were either one or the other. Going back to my memory bank, there were teachers who were no-nonsense and intimidating. Most of them were coaches or gym

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2017 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORTS - ANIMATED (NR) Fri-Thur: 5:00, 9:40	FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM (PG-13) Fri, Sun-Thur: 4:45
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JACKIE (R) Fri-Thur: 12:05, 7:30	MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO (R) Fri-Thur: 2:45, 9:15
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Babysitting: Available for children 2 to 8 years old. Fri: shows after 3:30pm and before 8:00pm. Sat - Sun: all shows before 8:00pm. \$9.50 per child for the length of the movie. Call to reserve a spot, no drop ins.