

'My Boyfriend's Back' and it's too bad for the viewers

Idiotic movie deserves no afterlife on video

By Gerri Pare and Henry Herx
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Riding the crest of mindless summer movies is director Bob Balaban's supremely idiotic *My Boyfriend's Back* (Touchstone).

A terminally dumb mix of comedy and horror, it features Andrew Lowery as 17-year-old Johnny, so lovestruck with classmate Missy (Traci Lind) that he concocts a fake holdup where he will save her from a masked gunman, in reality his friend.

Fate intervenes with a real robber and Johnny ends up dead — but not for long. Missy promised to go to the prom with him as he lay dying, so

zombie Johnny pops out of the grave the next night, looking to dine on human flesh lest he decay before his big date.

It's supposed to be hilarious that everyone accepts ashen Johnny matter-of-factly as "that dead kid" and that his mom kidnaps toddlers on which he can dine. And let's not forget the mad scientist lurking in the background eager to skin Johnny for his latest experiment.

Witless jokes are beaten to death only to return as lifelessly as jerky Johnny. Maybe 10-year-olds would be amused by the sophomoric level of humor, such as scenes of Missy reattaching Johnny's decaying nose onto his face with her bubble gum, but Johnny's sexual fantasies and the risqué double entendres fall in the adult category.

A mess of a movie, *My Boyfriend's*



Buena Vista Pictures
Missy McCloud (Traci Lind) and Johnny Dingle (Andrew Lowery) are star-crossed sweethearts who prove love never dies in Touchstone Pictures' *My Boyfriend's Back*.

Back doesn't deserve an afterlife — even on video shelves.

Because of its comic depiction of violence and much sexual innuendo, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification

is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Reader's Digest creates enjoyable, devotional biography of Jesus

The Story of Jesus, designed and edited by Gardner Associates; The Reader's Digest Association, Inc. (Pleasantville, N.Y., Montreal, 1993); 383 pages; \$33 (suggested retail price).

By Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

The Story of Jesus came as a pleasant surprise to this longtime client of *Reader's Digest* publications. He has read the monthly periodicals since World War II, guarded his health with the *Medical Encyclopedia* and *Home Medical Library*, and relaxed with the musical tapes of soft, gentle music.

The Story of Jesus elevates the reader to new heights in the realm of the spirit. Like Melchisedech, the book arrived unordered and unannounced with no invoice. The postman delivered a mysterious bill some two weeks later. When the *Reader's Digest* office was interrogated about the book, a gasp was heard that it was not slated to be released until September. So credit the *Catholic Courier* with another scoop.

The Story of Jesus is exactly what the title suggests — the Lord's biography based quite properly on Mark's Gospel since it is accepted as the first to be written. It must be emphasized that it is a devotional work aimed at deepening the reader's love and appreciation of the Savior. Thankfully it does not distract the reader with esoteric problems introduced by form criticism. It is not at all concerned with the question when Jesus became aware of His divinity, or who saw the dove at His Baptism, or the relative place of chapters 5-6 in John's Gospel.

The procedure in chronological order traces Christ's life by quoting an appropriate passage from a Gospel (200 selections from the Revised Standard Version) followed by reflections on the text by Nobel Prize laureates, poets, storytellers, archbishops and others. All have one thing in common — Jesus' enormous impact on their lives.

In addition, the book is filled with classic paintings found in venerable

cathedrals, stained-glass windows, and royal palaces. These works serve to illustrate the texts and to support these reflections. Expositions of various technical questions are found periodically throughout the tome.

"The Significance of 12" is one such intervention in which it is properly explained that numbers are not always meant to be taken literally. A detailed description of "The Sea of Galilee" reports that "Still pure enough to drink, the water of the Sea of Galilee is home to approximately 40 different species of fish." Also, "Burial Customs in Ancient Palestine" sheds light on the anxiety of Nicodemus that Christ's body be placed in a tomb on Good Friday night.

The reproductions of revered artists' classic paintings could stand by themselves and make an inspiring volume. As it is, they enrich the text and create an atmosphere in which the spirit rules. The editors cleverly and sometimes amusingly note details that might escape the unsophisticated

reader. Attention is drawn in the painting of Jesus preaching from the boat to some fishermen in the background in which they are cleaning their catch with no regard for the teacher.

This is somewhat similar to one candid shot taken by resourceful *Courier* staff writer Mike Latona in Denver. Shown is a fully vested bishop reading *The Denver Post* while waiting on the platform for the pope to start Mass.

The Story of Jesus should be read slowly over a period of days or weeks. Time for reflection is required after each section — if the reader is to fully profit from the experience. The book is an ideal Christmas gift for anyone seeking a deeper union with the Lord. Others might find it pietistic. *De gustibus non est disputandum* (you can't argue about tastes.)

EDITORS' NOTE: This book is scheduled for release in October. Readers interested in obtaining copies of the book for \$29.97 (plus shipping and handling) may call Reader's Digest at 1-800-234-9000.

Dining Around the Diocese

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