



THE LOBSTER

GREECE 2015, 119 MIN

YORGOS LANTHIMOS

Bad moustaches don't come much better than the one sported by Colin Farrell in *The Lobster*. It lurks on his upper lip like a leech, drinking the sex appeal out of his face. Throughout his career, almost every role Farrell has played has been built on his near-comical handsomeness – even in the dust-blown epic *Alexander*, he looked like he'd gone through the entire Macedonian army's supply of Timotei. The first thing to admire about Yorgos Lanthimos's new absurdist comedy is the way it jostles him – and, as a result, us too – out of that slightly tatty comfort zone.

Farrell's character, David, is paunchy and glum, with unstylish glasses and a Father Dougal haircut. His wife is leaving him for another man, and in the world of *The Lobster*, this is even worse news than normal. Single people aren't tolerated here, so David is immediately taken to a seaside spa resort for processing.

The clipped Hotel Manager (Olivia Colman) tells him he must now find another partner from among his fellow inmates – and if, after 45 days, he's been unsuccessful in this endeavour, he'll be transformed into an animal of his choosing and shoed into the woods.

As the title suggests, David quite fancies becoming a lobster if things don't work out: they can live or over 100 years, they're blue-blooded ("like aristocrats"), and he also likes the sea. But it's surely no coincidence that David's chosen creature has been the mascot of the

surrealist movement ever since Salvador Dalí thought to plunk one on top of a telephone in the 1930s. Lanthimos's film works on much the same principle: when individually familiar but unrelated objects are placed side by side, both start to radiate oddness.

Lanthimos has drawn his cast from all over the place, but through some mad comedic alchemy, the mixture works. Ben Whishaw and John C. Reilly are a pair of bickering inmates, Anjeliki Papoulia, from Lanthimos's Greek-language films *Dogtooth* and *Alps*, a pitiless sadist, Ashley Jensen a wretched soul with a weakness for butter biscuits.

The film is dominated by Weisz and Colman's voices, who deliver their coldly hilarious lines with the same geometric precision of Thimios Bakatakis's camerawork, which somehow manages to turn the elegantly crumbling hotel into a kind of deadpan funhouse.

Fans of the comedy of Chris Morris will feel instantly at home. Others may take time to acclimatise – but despite *The Lobster's* slicing weirdness, and the way it elides a clean allegorical reading, the emotions it stirs and the fallacies it attacks are all too real. It might be the greatest bad date movie ever made: even if it puts you off relationships for good, if your partner laughs, you'll know they're a keeper

Robbie Collin , Daily Telegraph

WRITING CREDITS: Yorgos Lanthimos, Efthymis Filippou **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Thimios Bakatakis **CAST:** David Colin Farrell
Hotel Manager Olivia Coleman | Short Sighted Woman Rachel Weisz | Limping Man Ben Whishaw | Limping Man John C Reilly

VOTING FOR *Embrace of the Serpent* A49 | B43 | C11 | D0 | E0 | Rating 84.2% | Attendance 115

Our next screening | *The Salt of the Earth* | Tuesday 1 November 2016. 8.00pm

"moving pictures are supposed to move, but the most moving ones in *The Salt Of the Earth* are stills"