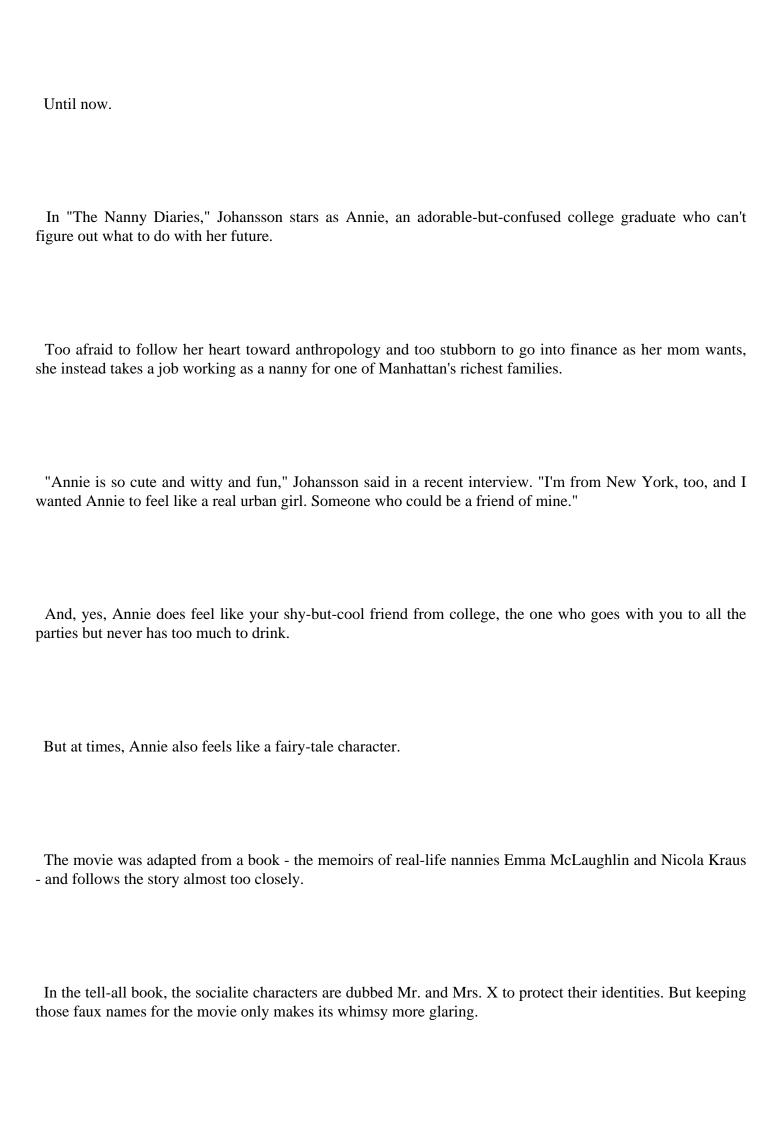
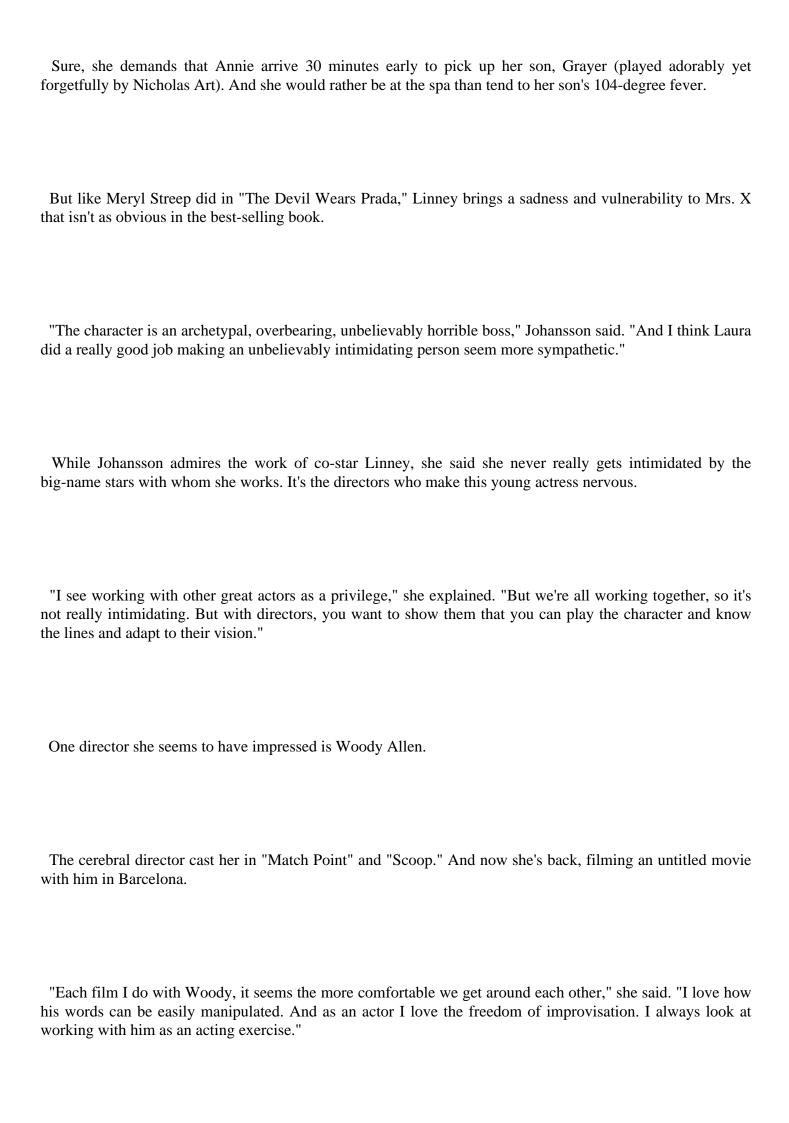
by Nina Garin At 22 years old, Scarlett Johansson has already played everything from a high school outcast ("Ghost World") to a seductive vixen ("Match Point"). But in "The Nanny Diaries," she crosses into totally new territory: super cute. 'THE NANNY DIARIES' - Annie (Scarlett Johansson) and Grayer (Nicholas Art) draw battle lines in 'The Nanny Diaries.' CNS Photo courtesy of K.C. Bailey. RATINGS 4 STARS - Excellent. 3 STARS - Worthy. 2 STARS - Mixed. 1 STAR - Poor. 0 - Forget It (a dog.) Sure, many already use that term to describe her physically. Or how she's dressed. But when it comes to her film roles, they've traditionally been less Julia Roberts sweet and more Jodie Foster serious.

Movie Review: 'The Nanny Diaries'



Overall, "The Nanny Diaries" tends to go a bit overboard with fantasy. Take the scenes in which a magical red umbrella just appears out of nowhere to whisk Annie away.
When it delves into the sociological differences between ultra-rich Manhattanites and everyone else, the film becomes more engrossing and entertaining.
"I grew up in Greenwich Village," Johansson said. "I never had a nanny growing up. My parents were friends with artists, and so I wasn't aware of that whole hierarchy. This nanny thing is a whole new world for me, so it's kind of like I'm discovering it along with the audience."
Perhaps the most revealing discoveries about this Upper East Side lifestyle in "The Nanny Diaries" are the eccentricities of those people making all that money.
Rather than cook or dress or bathe their children, the socialite wives are portrayed as evil ice queens who care more about social clubs than storytime.
And the husbands? They're pudgy, balding, philandering workaholics. (Paul Giamatti plays his role as Mr. X so accurately that he's barely recognizable as himself.)
While these stereotypes could get cartoonish, Laura Linney keeps the film from floating away on that red umbrella by bringing humanity to her character, Mrs. X.



Taking on the Allen movie, as well as being cast as Queen Mary I of Scotland in the upcoming "Mary Queen of Scots," means Johansson probably won't be doing another Annie-style role in the near future.
So even though "The Nanny Diaries" suffers from being too cutesy, it is a rare chance to have this superstar Hollywood actress feel like your best friend. If only for a few hours, anyway.
A Weinstein Co. release. Director: Shari Springer Berman, Robert Pulcini. Writers: Shari Springer Berman, Robert Pulcini (screenplay); Emma McLaughlin, Nicola Kraus (novel). Cast: Scarlett Johansson, Laura Linney, Paul Giamatti, Alicia Keys, Chris Evans, Donna Murphy, Cady Huffman. Running time: 1 hour, 47 minutes. Rated PG-13. 2 stars.

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