

The Natural (Movie Review)

Nominated for four Academy Awards, *The Natural* is one of Robert Redford's best pictures. The breathtaking cinematography, coupled with the bold original score by Randy Newman, makes *The Natural* one of the most memorable films of its time. A classic baseball film, based on the best-selling novel, the movie has managed to insert itself into the pop culture. Certainly no little league player, nor major league player for that matter, can escape the sounds of Roy Hobbs and his mystical abilities when stepping into the batter's box with the game on the line... *The Natural* is quite simply one of the best baseball films around - up there with *Field Of Dreams*, *Eight Men Out*, and *Major League*...Written more like a fairy tale than a modern drama, *The Natural* follows the life and times of Roy Hobbs (Robert Redford), a man trained from his earliest days to love the game of baseball by his father. When the boy's father dies of a heart attack on the family farm, Roy uses the wood from the lightning-felled tree under which his father died to fashion a homemade baseball bat. In love with the girl next door, Iris Gaines (Glenn Close), Roy leaves the farm after promising to come back to her in order to pursue a tryout as a pitcher for the Chicago Cubs. But Roy never makes it back...Mysteriously shot by a woman he meets in a hotel room, Roy's career is nearly ended by internal injuries. When Roy reappears twenty years later as a forty-year-old rookie for a last place team, he faces opposition from the team coach Pop Fisher (Wilford Brimley) who believes his business partner, The Judge (Robert Prosky), is intentionally sabotaging the team in an effort to cheat Pop Fisher out of his ownership shares. But when Pop Fisher finds out that Hobbs can not only play, but is the best player to ever set foot on a baseball diamond, the team's losing ways are put to an end - at least until Hobbs decides to complicate his life further...Involving himself with Pop's niece, Memo Paris (Kim Basinger), Roy finds the level of his game dropping off. Despite Pop's warnings, Roy develops a relationship with the girl who is in partnership with the Judge to keep the team stuck in its losing ways. However, when Iris reenters Roy's life (along with her teenage son), Roy's play begins to pick up. But the championship is in jeopardy when a familiar reporter, Max Mercy (Robert Duvall), comes dangerously close to uncovering Roy Hobbs's mysterious past and internal bleeding threatens the life and career of the game's greatest slugger...Sporting a different (Hollywood-ized) ending from the novel which spawned its release, *The Natural* is nonetheless one of the most inspiring, feel good movies of all time. The 1930's setting, and the seemingly one-dimensional characters, create an innocence of times past that make this movie seem like a flashback to the Frank Capra era. The musical score will create a literal tingling in your bones, and the hero-wins screenplay is one to be appreciated in this era of cynic realism. All these aspects of the film work together to make *The Natural* one of the most entertaining films around as well as earn it the designation of a must-see film... Pop this one into the DVD player and go live the magic!

About the Author

The world conservation union, whose mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity.

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