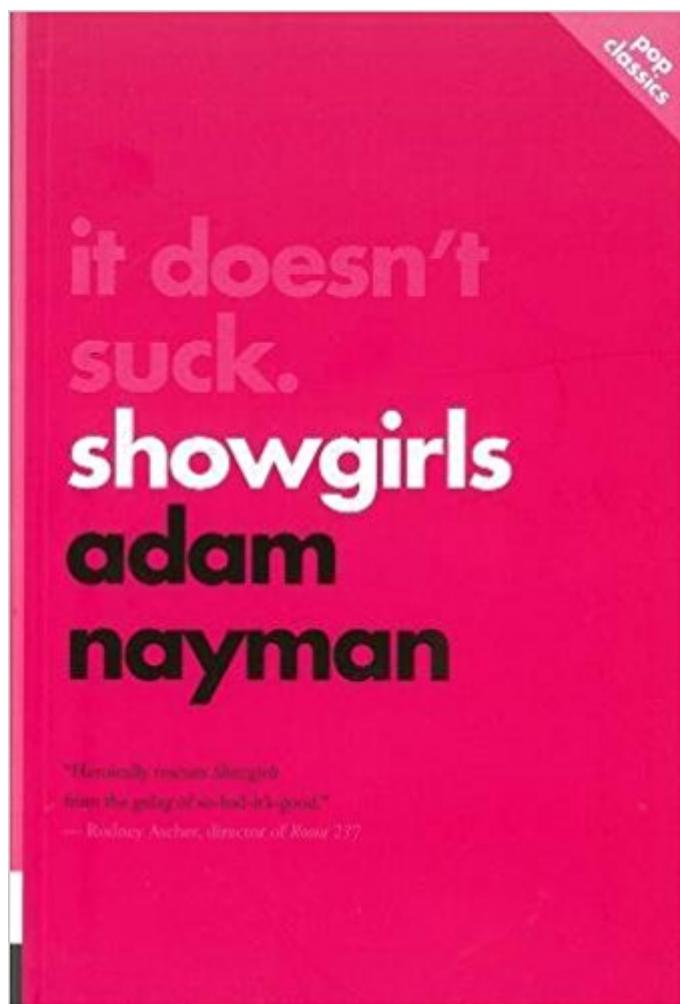


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# It Doesn't Suck: Showgirls (Pop Classics)



## Synopsis

Enough time has passed since *Showgirls* flopped spectacularly that it's time for a good, hard look back at the sequined spectacle. A salvage operation on a very public, very expensive train wreck, *It Doesn't Suck* argues that *Showgirls* is much smarter and deeper than it is given credit for. In an accessible and entertaining voice, the book encourages a shift in critical perspective on Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls*, analyzing the film, its reception, and rehabilitation. This in-depth study of a much-reviled movie is a must read for lovers and haters of the 1995 Razzie winner for Worst Picture.

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## Customer Reviews

*It Doesn't Suck* isn't just a book about *Showgirls*, but about the way we perceive such films and how that perception changes over time. As an extended conversation on one of the most ridiculed films of the past two decades, Nayman's book is a valuable gift. Whether you love or loathe *Showgirls* (and if you have even a passing interest in *Basic Instinct*), this is a must read. The book is, quite simply, stiletto-sharp, and succeeds in something extraordinary: It makes one want to revisit *Showgirls* not for laughs, or titillation, but for (gulp) understanding. That's some accomplishment. The FilmStage.com "Showgirls doesn't suck. That's the thesis of the short, entertaining new book *It Doesn't Suck*, and author Adam Nayman goes a long

way towards proving it . . . His book definitely demonstrates that *Showgirls* is a coherent statement, and that its excess, its ridiculousness, and its tastelessness aren't arbitrary, but thematic."

— The Atlantic<sup>147</sup> For lovers of *Showgirls* or controversial films in general, It Doesn't Suck is likely to be a great conversation piece. It facilitates discussions and inevitable arguments about the film, offers good background and contextual information and equips the reader to carry on the argument with his or her own friends, accepting or rejecting as many of Nayman's arguments as desired.<sup>148</sup> Paste

Magazine<sup>147</sup>; Nayman's passion is entertaining, like sitting down with a friend who has just realized that you need to watch *The Wizard of Oz* while listening to Pink Floyd.<sup>149</sup> Las Vegas Weekly<sup>147</sup>; This book is virtually a legal defense dressed as film criticism. Adam Nayman gives us heart, soul, and history, yes, but he also gives us something more: tools to win at *Showgirls* sucks.<sup>150</sup> It doesn't. Adam demonstrates not only the ways in which the movie means something to all of us, he allows for the possibility that the movie is us.<sup>151</sup> A Pulitzer Prize<sup>150</sup>-winning Grantland film critic Wesley Morris<sup>147</sup>; The scene where Nomi and rival Cristal (Gina Gershon) bond over having eaten dog food is probably the film's most mocked, but Nayman convincingly illustrates how<sup>151</sup>; even here<sup>151</sup>; Verhoeven purposefully breaks the grammar of conventional film continuity to create the effect that each woman is talking to herself.<sup>151</sup> Cineaste Magazine "There's no doubt that Nayman has done his homework and comes armed with plenty of arguments as to why [*Showgirls*] was at least well-made, even if it's not necessarily good. . . . After reading the book, I sought out a copy of the film to follow up."<sup>151</sup> DVD Talk

A new edition of the first book in the acclaimed Pop Classics series *The Worst. Movie. Ever.* is a masterpiece. Seriously. Enough time has passed since *Showgirls* flopped spectacularly that it's time for a good hard look back at the sequined spectacle. A salvage operation on a very public, very expensive train wreck, It Doesn't Suck argues that *Showgirls* is much smarter and deeper than it is given credit for. In an accessible and entertaining voice, the book encourages a shift in critical perspective on Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls*, analyzing the film, its reception, and rehabilitation. This in-depth study of a much-reviled movie is a must-read for lovers and haters of the 1995 Razzie winner for Worst Picture.<sup>152</sup> This expanded edition includes an exclusive interview between the author and *Showgirls* director Paul Verhoeven, as well as a new preface. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Readers will probably be inherently open to the author's argument (uh, that the movie doesn't suck) or not. My husband took a quick look at this book and rejected it. Despite being an entertaining and detailed look at the movie, I can't see this convincing anyone who dismisses the move. That said, there is a lot here for the fan (or even a hater) to enjoy -- background on the screenwriter and director, a close reading of several scenes, and an attempt to fit the movie where it belongs in cinematic history. Reading it isn't as gloriously fun as watching the movie is (what could be?), but it's still worth the read for those interested in the movie.

Amusing, but it spends way too much time trying to compare the movie to Paul Verhoeven's other works rather than actually looking at the absurd details of the movie at hand. Worth a read if you're a fan of the movie (for whatever reason), but you'll probably wonder why so many ridiculous things in the movie aren't mentioned or are glossed over.

Plus more about the relationship between Eszterhaz and Verhoeven than all but the nerdiest film geeks will want to know. Thoroughly enjoyed this book. I've long felt Showgirls was underappreciated and now I more thoroughly understand why.

A masterful argument on what should truly be seen as classic cinema.

Fun read1

I have lived in Las Vegas for many, many years and I found the movie to be great. Almost all of here enjoyed it. Over the top? of course.. but so well done and the very touching story of what she goes through is right on. I am so happy to see this book come out. A very good read.

Readers might be inclined to think this book is a put-on, but Adam Nayman's apparent sincerity, obvious writing talent and impressive analytical dexterity is convincing. Convincing that he means it, if not necessarily right. Nayman is a 20-something film critic, and his well-researched treatise on Paul Verhoeven's legendary 1995 box office bomb is a thoroughly entertaining read, if not necessarily a completely convincing defense. Nayman is among a group of critics that have turned the table on the film's initial reception, suggesting that Showgirls isn't just not bad, it's a modern classic that was sorely misunderstood by both reviewers and viewers. The key to appreciating Showgirls is, paraphrasing author Anne Rice, to interrogate the text from the right perspective.

Nayman's approach isn't tongue-in-cheek irony, simple-minded contrarianism, or the mental slight of hand of Jason Hartley's Advanced Genius Theory; his appreciation is unabashed fandom. Nayman argues that the careers of director Verhoeven and writer Joe Eszterhas anticipate their work in *Showgirls*, and that analysis of the film itself reveals that the filmmakers knew exactly what they were doing. Verhoeven is posed as a satirist and provocateur, the film's lack of subtlety as an artistic choice, and the laughter it generates for over-serious scenes as an opportunity rather than an accident. If one accepts the film's most ridiculous moments as intentional, rather than unconscious mistakes, a number of critical analyses begin to flow. First and foremost for Nayman are the film's mirror-like, self-reflexive qualities. Starting with the film's star, Elizabeth Berkley, Nayman suggests that *Showgirls* provided an opportunity for her reinvention as a grown-up actress that parallels the film's main character, Nomi Malone. But as Nayman continues to ascribe intention to what might easily be a lack of care or perspective, one starts to wonder if Occam's razor is a more straightforward explanation of the parallels. Berkley and Malone both aimed for grown-up, but ended up in entertainment that was merely adult. It's possible that Nayman is seeing depth where there are really only artistic shallows, and he's seeing causation where there is really only coincidence. Nomi's relationship with her roommate might be subtle and complex, but it might simply be poorly thought out and rendered. The homophones for Nomi - "Know Me?" and "No Me" - could be clever entendre, or they could be nothing more than on-the-nose, inch-deep word-play. He argues that the film is too self-conscious to be camp, but it's difficult to overcome the feeling that no matter how many of the film's worst moments you explain away, the film still manages to be worse. Nayman brings welcome context for casual viewers, including the existence of the little-known companion book *Showgirls: Portrait of a Film* and Rena Riffel's low-budget spoof sequel, *Showgirls 2: Penny's From Heaven*. Though he occasionally employs the sort of hyperbole for which the film was originally ridiculed, the bulk of his analysis is well-reasoned, deftly written and hugely entertaining. Nayman may be an analytical genius, or simply a talented writer tackling a lost cause; but either way, his book is a fun and surprisingly thought-provoking read.

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Love the flick or hate it, film prof Adam Nayman's in-depth tribute to one of the most controversial movies of all time is articulate & fun enough to make you think & quite possibly change your mind. Excellent work that will send you back to watch *Showgirls* with a new set of eyes.

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