

GATTACA

“There is no gene for the human spirit”

Movie Information

Director: Andrew Niccol

Starting: Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Alan Arkin, Jude Law, and Loren Dean.

Produced by: Danny DeVito, Michael Shamberg, Stacey Sher

Composer: Michael Nyman

Release: 1997

GATTACA Quotes

“Consider God's handiwork; who can straighten what He hath made crooked?” - Ecclesiastes 7:13 (opening quote)

“I not only think that we will tamper with Mother Nature, I think Mother wants us to.”
-Willard Gaylin (2nd opening quote)

“There's no gene for fate.” -Vincent

“If at first you don't succeed... try, try again.”
-Eugene

“We shed 500 million cells a day.” -Vincent

“I was never more certain of how far away I was from my goal than when I was standing right beside it.” -Vincent

“We now have discrimination down to a science.” - Vincent

“You are the authority on what is not possible, aren't you Irene? They've got you looking for any flaw, that after a while that's all you see. For what it's worth, I'm here to tell you that it is possible. It is possible.” -Vincent

Vincent: *“A year is a long time.”*

Irene: *“Not so long, just once around the sun.”*

I got the better end of the deal. I only lent you my body, but you lent me your dreams. -Eugene

Awards/Nominations

Academy Awards (1997)

Best Art Direction – Nominated

Golden Globes (1997)

Best Original Score – Nominated

GATTACA Movie Facts and Trivia

- The name "GATTACA" is composed entirely of the letters used to label the nucleotide bases of DNA. The four nucleotide bases of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) are adenine, thymine, cytosine, and guanine.
- Public address announcements in the Gattaca Corporation headquarters building are in Esperanto, an artificial language invented in the 19th century.
- The winding stairs in Jerome's apartment have a helical structure, like DNA.
- Thurman, Uma's character is named Irene Cassini. Cassini is the surname of the 17th century French-Italian astronomer, Jean Dominique Cassini, who discovered the prominent gap in Saturn's main rings, as well as the icy moons, Iapetus, Dione, Rhea, and Tethys. The space mission in Gattaca is destined for Saturn.
- Law, Jude's character asks to be called by his middle name, Eugene. "Eugene" comes from the Greek for "well born," which Jerome is. "Eugenics" (the science of improving the hereditary qualities of a race or breed) is the central theme of the film.
- The Gattaca building (interiors and exteriors) is, in reality, the Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael, CA. It was designed by American star architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1957. The largest Wright design ever constructed, it was largely built after his death in 1959. The central dome (prominent in the roof-cleaning scene) contains the county library.
- The FBI agents are called "Hoovers," a reference to legendary top-G-man J. Edgar Hoover, but also a clever reference to a vacuum cleaner brand. There are numerous shots of vacuums being used to gather DNA evidence.
- When Gattaca was first released, as part of a marketing campaign there were adverts for people to call up and have their children genetically engineered. Thousands of people called, wanting to have their offspring genetically engineered
- The film's working title was "The Eighth Day", a reference to the Biblical creation story, which states that the earth was created in six days and on the seventh day, God rested. The original title implies the tampering of man with what God has already made, and "The Eighth Day" is still the name of the center in the movie where the children are engineered, as noted on the DVD deleted scenes.
- The piece played by the six-fingered pianist is based on Impromptu in G Flat Major, Op. 90, No. 3. by Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828). However, the creators did a beautiful job embellishing the piece with additional notes/harmonies so that it "can only be played with twelve [fingers]," as the Uma Thurman character notes.
- Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke became a couple during the filming of this movie. They eventually married in May of 1998 and divorced in July of 2004.
- Vincent's car is a 1963 Studebaker Avanti.

Movie Critics Review

"If smart sci-fi is your vial of tea, Gattaca won't disappoint."
-- Susan Wloszczyna, USA TODAY

"This is one of the smartest and most provocative of science fiction films, a thriller with ideas." --Roger Ebert,
CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

"Here's where the problems of Gattaca start: you see, as a mystery, it really isn't much of one. The investigation into the murder of the mission director who may have known Vincent's secret is never very focused, and Alan Arkin's "Columbo"-type flatfoot seems to uncannily know where to go at every turn. By the time the investigation is over, the whole thing has felt like a put-on to waste an hour of screen time.

On the other hand, Gattaca succeeds quite well at making us feel like this could really happen. Director Andrew Niccol has put beaucoup work into the set and costume designs, and the yellowish lighting makes Gattaca a real creep-out. As a cautionary tale about not messing with Mother Nature, Gattaca is similarly successful, if obvious about it." -- Christopher Null, FILMCRITIC.COM

"This is the chillingly feasible premise of Gattaca. While in 1997, science has not yet perfected the genetic engineering techniques used in this film to routinely develop babies, every day brings the medical profession closer. As a result, Gattaca doesn't just function as a science fiction thriller, but as both a cautionary tale about the dangers of letting scientific ability outstrip ethics and as a morality play about the irrationality of bigotry." -- James Berardinelli, REELVIEWS

"With that oft-quoted remark as inspiration, first-time filmmaker Andrew Niccol has fashioned Gattaca, a smart and stylish cautionary fable. Niccol imagines a brave new world in which a person's DNA determines his or her place in the social structure." -- Jack Garner, ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

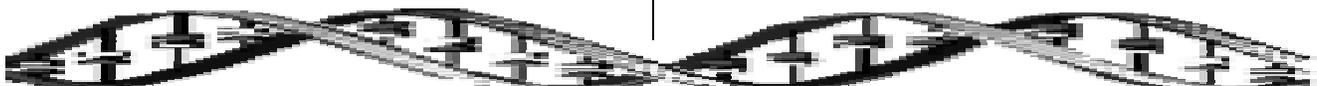
"Confidently conceived and brilliantly executed, Gattaca had a somewhat low profile release in 1997, but audiences and critics hailed the film's originality. It's since been recognized as one of the most intelligent science fiction films of the 1990s. Writer-director Andrew Niccol, the talented New Zealander who also wrote the acclaimed Jim Carrey vehicle *The Truman Show*, depicts a near-future society in which one's personal and professional destiny is determined by one's genes. In this society, "Valid" (genetically engineered) qualify for positions at prestigious corporations, such as Gattaca, which grooms its most qualified employees for space exploration. "In-Valid" (naturally born), such as the film's protagonist, Vincent (Ethan Hawke), are deemed genetically flawed and subsequently fated to low-level occupations in a genetically caste society. With the help of a disabled "Valid" (Jude Law), Vincent subverts his society's social and biological barriers to pursue his dream of space travel; any random mistake--and an ongoing murder investigation at Gattaca--could reveal his plot. Part thriller, part futuristic drama and cautionary tale, Gattaca establishes its social structure so convincingly that the entire scenario is chillingly believable. With Uma Thurman as the woman who loves Vincent and identifies with his struggle, Gattaca is both stylish and smart, while Jude Law's performance lends the film a note of tragic and heartfelt humanity." -- Jeff Shannon, AMAZON.COM

Famous people with genetic disorders:

Abraham Lincoln – Marfan syndrome
Emily Dickinson – Manic depression
Vincent van Gogh – Epilepsy
Albert Einstein – Dyslexia
John F. Kennedy – Addison's disease
Ronald Regan – Alzheimer's disease
Ray Charles – Primary Glaucoma
Stephen Hawking – Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
Jackie Joyner-Kersey – Asthma
YOU - ????????

Links and Further Information

- <http://www.sciflicks.com/gattaca/>
- <http://www.mediaknowall.com/Scifi/gattacanotes.html>
- <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/gattaca/>
- <http://www.becal.net/toolkit/damaris/gattaca.html>
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119177/>



GATTACA

Questions

Name:

Date:

Period:

- 1. What do you think Andrew Niccol (the director) is trying to say by using the quote from Ecclesiastes 7:13 and the quote by Willard Gaylin at the beginning of the film?**
- 2. What is an “in-valid”?**
- 3. List two ways that the society portrayed in the movie routinely ‘reads’ a person’s genetic profile.**
- 4. What is one major surgery that Vincent had correct for his genetic “imperfections”?**
- 5. List two things Vincent did on a daily basis to maintain his ‘Jerome’ identity.**
- 6. Who is murdered in this film? Why?**
- 7. What evidence pointed towards an ‘in-valid’ as the murderer? Who is the murderer?**
- 8. Describe the different attitudes Vincent and Irene have toward their imperfections.**

9. What would you say to a friend who believed themselves to be solely a product of their DNA and with no true freedom?
10. What ultimately happened to Anton (the brother)? What job did he end up doing?
11. How is the relationship between Vincent and his brother? How is it ultimately resolved?
12. What is the significance of the word “GATTACA”?
13. Why doesn't the actual Jerome enter the space program?
14. Does anyone ever find out that Vincent is not Jerome? If so, who?
15. Does Vincent ever get to fly into Space? What moon was Vincent training and planning for?

