

True love means never complaining about having to wear an anorak.



# Sightseers

★★★★☆ Out now Think Kill List in a caravan.

**F**ROM BADLANDS TO NATURAL *Born Killers*, lovers-on-the-run flicks take pulp fiction narratives for romantic rides across America, the sweep and the drama of the scenery matching the magnitude of the heroes' emotions – and their crimes. The genius of *Kill List* director Ben Wheatley's third film, a parochial black comedy based on a screenplay by lead actors Steve Oram and Alice Lowe, is that it takes all this cultural baggage and transports it, by caravan, to Redditch.

As normal-seeming new boyfriend Chris (Oram) whisks homebody Tina (Lowe) away on a UK holiday, the trail of deaths they cause begins mundanely, with a car park-based RTA at the Crich Tramway Museum. The settings more than match, as the pair explore Little England in all its pretty pettiness, from Castleton's Blue John

Cavern to Keswick's Pencil Museum. Even their star-crossed love is constantly undercut by their deadpan patter, not to mention Tina's penchant for pot pourri and crotchless (but crocheted) knickers. When she envisages them dying together in the name of romance, Chris' response is characteristically Partridge-esque. "Going to salsa's romantic," he says. "We could try that first."

It might not sound much on paper, but it's all in the delivery, the appealing lead performances combining with Wheatley's sudden tonal shifts to produce a film that's funny, sinister and strangely moving. Don't write in, but the Midlands accents help here: unpretentious and unexpected, they bring to mind Shane

Meadows' early work (which this strongly recalls) and undercut the characters' more extreme pronouncements. "He's ruined the tram museum for me now," huffs Chris of his first victim, while Tina's attempt to talk dirty results in: "He said he wanted to shit in my hand

and make me use it as a brown lipstick!" Between killer lines and skull-cracking murders, there's a weary reality that makes *Sightseers* sad where lesser works might skew silly. As Tina's fear of being left behind by Chris lead them further along

*'Tonal shifts make this funny, sinister and strangely moving'*

the road to ruin, their deteriorating relationship is echoed by the increasingly desolate surroundings. One scene ends with a dog eating sick – you don't see that in *True Romance*.

Another, in Keswick Pencil Museum, leaves you unsure whether to laugh or cry. It may peter out a little towards the end, as all road movies must, but for the most part this is a staycation to cherish. **Matt Glasby**

**THE VERDICT** At first *Father Ted* cute, but then *League Of Gentlemen* cruel – a combination that Wheatley never lets curdle – this is a dark little delight.

► **Certificate 15 Director** Ben Wheatley **Starring** Alice Lowe, Steve Oram, Eileen Davies, Jonathan Aris, Richard Glover **Screenplay** Alice Lowe, Steve Oram, Amy Jump **Distributor** Studiocanal **Running time** 88 mins

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**WITHNAIL & I**  
1987

Alcoholic actors Richard E Grant and Paul McGann go "on holiday by mistake" with debauched/depressing/hilarious results.

**A ROOM FOR ROMEO BRASS**  
1999

Shane Meadows' third feature details Andrew (*This Is England*) Shim's strange coming of age.

**SUBMARINE**  
2010

Widescreen teenage emotions writ small in *TF* columnist Richard Ayoade's directorial debut.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/cinema\\_reviews](http://totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews)

**TALKING POINT**

Steve Oram and Alice Lowe created their characters for a TV series that never happened. They actually took this exact trip in a camper van, improvising along the way.

