

been playing Audrey on stage for the past two years, is able to make the dumb blonde stereotype look even dumber. Martin's performance as the dentist provides some of the movie's funniest moments.

SCTV's John Candy, Christopher Guest of "Spinal Tap" and James Belushi of "Saturday Night Live" have some interesting bit parts. Bill Murray recreates the role Jack Nicholson played in the original and in the film as the masochistic dental patient.

The true star of the film is Audrey II. Director Frank Oz, who began with the Muppets and worked his way up to bigger and better puppets in "The Empire Strikes Back" and "The Dark Crystal,"

makes Audrey II come alive with a combination of expert puppetry and skillful direction. Audrey II is more animate than some of its human co-stars. Former Four Tops singer Levi Stubbs provides Audrey II's foul-mouthed, but soulful, voice.

Since "Little Shop of Horrors" is set in 1960, the music fits into the style of that period. The chorus girls, Chiffon, Crystal and Ronnett, take their names from popular girl groups of the late '50s. Except for the lyrics about feeding people to plants, the music sounds like a golden oldies review.

The ending of the new film has been changed drastically from the endings of the original film and the play. In the play,

Audrey II's evil doings were exposed when, at a ceremony to present Seymour with a prize for his green thumb, Audrey II sprouted several blooms that contained the faces of everyone the plant had eaten. Seymour and Audrey want to leave town but, while Seymour is away from the shop, Audrey II munches on his bride-to-be. Seymour attempts to do a fatal pruning job on Audrey II but he winds up together with Audrey—dead faces in one of the plant's blooms.

Although the traditional ending was filmed, producer David Geffen decided that audiences would probably prefer a happy ending and substituted a different finale.

What little artistic integrity the original film and play had was defaced only for money-making purposes, so the new "Little Shop of Horrors" has been penalized and one star has been docked from its rating.

But it's still more fun than an evening with a six-pack of Jobe plant food spikes.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer

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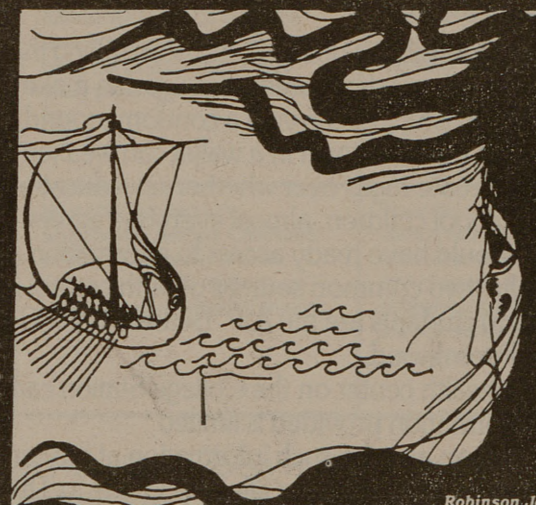
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