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Page 3 • Thursday, June 10, 2004



"Shrek 2' Voices of Mike Meyers, Eddie Murphy, **Cameron Diaz Dreamworks Pictures**



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s people grow older, they tend to mellow out. They trade the convertible for the minivan, interesting views on poli-

ics for one party-dominated views and slaying dragons for meeting the in-laws. Shrek has grown up.

The adventurous tale that fueled the plot of the first "Shrek" with epic adventures of saving the Princess Fiona is traded for problems with the wife's parents.

"Shrek 2" is similar to "Meet the Parents" without all the pot okes (although Puss In Boots does get busted for possessing catnip, which he denies). The plot is much more emotionally entrenched and at times drags the story down, but Shrek once again manages to get into trouble and make some laughs. Littered with pop culture references and stuffing every fairy tale thinkable into the story, the film leaves one wondering if it could have been a little more creative and relied less on referencing other movies and shows. Many of the new characters are spoofs of classics such as Zorro and Bob Barker, and even the StayPuft Marshmallow Man gets a semi-revival. What is nice is that the story still teaches us to love ourselves for what is inside, even if we have green skin and eat dirt. Success hasn't changed Shrek as it has to others, like Beyonce and Britney.

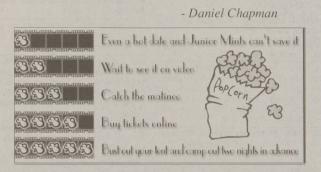


He's still keeping it real.

The graphics have been taken up a few notches, as the hair and fur of the characters look more realistic and the lighting in the rooms more lifelike. These advances are noticeable, but nothing that will be terribly shocking compared to the first. Compared to "Bambi," though, today's cartoons are truly amazing spectacles. The all-star cast that makes up "Shrek 2" makes the story come

to life, but also leaves many of the characters no room to live up to their potential. Antonio Banderas soars as Puss In Boots, Eddie Murphy is hilarious again as Donkey, but they may as well have hired one of the graphics nerds to play Prince Charming because Rupert Everett's talent was almost wasted on this role. This also goes for Julie Andrews as the queen. Maybe if George W. could have been cast for these parts they would have been funnier.

Sequels are always very difficult to judge. If there had never been an original "Shrek," this movie would have been phenomenal, but the impossibility for "Shrek 2" to stack up to the near perfection of its predecessor in boundary-pushing graphics and stark originality is understandable. It is nice to see the characters again and many of the new additions add a nice touch to the "Shrek" series, but unless you're baby-sitting kids all summer, you may want to pass this one up for something a little more thought-provoking and exciting.





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