

Good God! Christian Slater is a good fairy

FernGully, The Last Rainforest

Voices of Samantha Mathis, Tim Curry, Christian Slater, Robin Williams

directed by Bill Kroyer

Ram Triple
967-8284

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Save the Earth!

This message seems to be everywhere these days. Even in cartoons. This message dominates the new animated feature *FernGully, The Last Rainforest*.

FernGully is set in the last rain forest in Australia. The film opens with the legend of how humans once lived in the forest, but the evil Hexxus drove them out. Humans are now believed to be extinct. *FernGully* is inhabited by many amazing animals and creatures. Crysta (Samantha Mathis) is a young, carefree fairy who enjoys flying around the forest with her friend Pip (Christian Slater). Crysta's mentor, Maji (Grace Zabriskie), tries to convince Crysta to be more serious, but Crysta just wants to have fun.

One day, Crysta decides to fly above the forest canopy and sees smoke off in the distance. She tells Maji, who scoffs at her story, but Maji secretly knows that the humans have returned. Crysta then meets Batty (Robin Williams), a screwy bat who has escaped from a biology lab.

The humans are using a huge ma-

MIKE LONG

Movie

chine, to destroy the forest and they are heading for *FernGully*. Zak, one of the men on the crew, is just a young man who sees destroying the forest as another summer job. That is, until Crysta shrinks him and he gets to see firsthand the abundance of life that lives within the trees.

Meanwhile, the tree-eating machine has released the evil Hexxus (Tim Curry) from his prison. Hexxus feeds off of pollution and steers the enormous mechanism of destruction straight for *FernGully*. When Crysta realizes that humans aren't the mythical creatures she once thought, she is heartbroken. Zak must win Crysta's trust, while all of the fairies must fight to save their homeland.

The animation in this film is truly beautiful. The long shots of the forest landscape reminded me of the same shots from *Medicine Man*. There are several scenes where Crysta uses her powers to make flowers spontaneously bloom that are breathtaking. Director Bill Kroyer received some training from the Disney studios and it definitely shows in the size of the characters eyes. They're f—in' huge! This helps them to better express all of the emotions that run through this film.

To say that this film is political is like saying that Stephen King is a bit strange. The film tackles several important topics, including: saving the rain forest, pollution, lab research on animals, feminist heroes and the need for a free-standing BCC (oops, my



Christian Slater and Samantha Mathis, who starred in 'Pump Up The Volume,' are two of the voices in 'FernGully'

bad. I was possessed by Arnie Epps. Someone call the exorcist!) Batty constantly makes references to how humans mistreated him and he even goes as far as rapping about it. God help us all. The film does get a bit message heavy at times. There is a sweet and funny love story going on here, but it is constantly being overshadowed by the "Love your Mother" message.

Robin Williams steals the show as Batty. One has to wonder if his dialogue was written beforehand or if they just let him wing it. Several of his lines are incredibly funny but have nothing at all to do with the context of the film. "Hi Helen!" During the final battle, he begins to quote every war movie ever made. Christian Slater is kind of hard to picture as a fairy, because he sounds just like Christian

Slater. *FernGully, The Last Rainforest* is a magical, beautiful film with a respectable message. The message won't go over the heads of children. The animation will fascinate younger viewers and the comedy will satisfy older audiences. Any viewer will be able to appreciate the powerful message of the film. It is an important one that we should all heed to.

Dolly sez: Don't wear high heels on a soggy lawn

Straight Talk

Dolly Parton, James Woods

directed by Barnet Kellman

Plaza I-III
967-4737

How many times can the camera shoot down the chasm of Dolly Parton's cleavage?

If your response, like mine, is, "I don't want to know," this movie is not for you.

In *Straight Talk*, an aging Dolly lives in Flat River, Ark., with an abusive live-in lover and falls for a trick so old it's in the Bible. Every plot twist is even older. She asks that they move to Chicago, because, as she so aptly cries, "This town's dyin.' We're dyin' with it." No dice, so we're treated to a driving medley of one of Dolly's songs. One of many medleys.

Dolly plays Shirlee, who is "saved" from what a reporter (James Woods) thinks is a suicide attempt and through a bizarre series of coincidences continues to run into him throughout Chicago. Yeah, right. Meanwhile, she

MARA LEE

Movie

searches for jobs, meeting cold, hard city slickers everywhere to whom she coos, "Doesn't hurt your mouth to give a smiiiile."

She lands a job as a receptionist at a radio station by commiserating with the current one's man troubles, and then, oddly enough, is accidentally put on the air in place of the new call-in psychologist.

She gives advice like, "You may have balls, but you're going to wear out your stick."

Of course, she's a hit, so the sleazy station manager decides to bill her as a doctor, allaying her fears of fibs oh-so-patronizingly. "You're my girl," he says. "Let me handle your life."

To make a long story short, Jack, the reporter, courts her to expose her. The courtship is marked by squeals and country analogies. Finally, it culminates in Shirlee's industrial-strength bra floating through the air with Jack saying, "Holey moley." No lie.

Dr. Shirlee becomes an instant celebrity, gets rich overnight, acquires a professional image (they cover up her two large talents as best they can) and avoids the press.

When she finally goes on a talk show, she blows the pretentious mediator and the other psychologist out of the water using her down-home wisdom to show his Sorbonne training as cold and heartless.

Sadly, her ex shows up, calls Jack's

bluff and Jack quits his job instead of exposing his lady love. Shirlee confesses all on her first nationwide broadcast after a casualty of her advice confronts her.

Jack begs her to return to her job, saying the world thinks that "the days and nights are a little easier with Shirlee's laughter."

The wave of public love brings

Shirlee back, Jack renounces his lifelong fear of commitment and Shirlee continues to dispense her homey homilies, including this one to a man about to change his gender: "Don't wear high heels on a soggy lawn."

Don't go to this movie unless you want your emotions manipulated in the crudest of ways, or unless you're a really big fan of Dolly Parton.

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