

Movie Draft: *Once Upon a Time*

by Tenessa Gemelke

(*Once Upon a Time* is one of five made-up films generated during PoopReading.com's recent [Movie Draft](#).)

Once Upon a Time there was a movie starring Jeff Bridges – and it still managed to suck.

Hollywood's latest attempt at the perfect date movie sounds like a recipe for success: Bridges is handsome prince Dale Jenkins, a best-selling children's book author on the road to becoming the next Dr. Seuss. When he crosses paths with Vera Farmiga's Maggie Hart, even a wicked witch like me hopes for a happy ending. By the third act, however, I found myself wishing for a whole basket of poisoned apples.

Jeremy Renner plays Bart Powell, the best friend and illustrator who keeps Jenkins's career out of the toilet. After years of drunken debauchery, Jenkins has finally hit rock bottom. When authorities find the author passed out drunk near the Maurice Sendak display at the local Barnes & Noble, Powell knows he's in trouble, but a public brawl with nemesis Karl Schreiber (Christoph Waltz) at the Worldwide Writers Wee-Union is the last straw; it's time to get his friend a professional makeover.

A makeover??? Really? REALLY? In a world full of mommy makeovers and extreme home makeovers and man boob makeovers, it should come as no surprise that a dumbass movie studio would leap at the chance to give **Academy Award winner Jeff Bridges** a freakin' makeover. What a brilliant use of his talents! Listen, people, if America wanted to see the man with a haircut and a clean shirt, we'd stop creaming our jeans over *The Big Lebowski* and *Crazy Heart*.

Despite the inane premise, publicist Maggie Hart initially provides a glimmer of hope. Rather than a typical spunky, spitfire cool chick, she enters the story with the elegance, subtle listening skills, and wry humor of Angelica Houston in *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Sadly, the film implies – through veiled, family-friendly innuendos – that she also exhibits the absurd sexual appetite and unnerving mind games of Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction*. Ultimately it's nearly impossible to root for a woman who names her kids Hansel and Gretel.

All of this might be fun or at least amusing if the film didn't try so hard to be a relevant contribution to the Holocaust canon. Having Christoph Waltz play a German villain is one thing. Having Christoph Waltz write a secret manuscript for a book called *Little Mr. Stink Trousers Explains Why Anne Frank Deserved It* is enough to make Mel Gibson blush.

By the time the movie's antics reach a crescendo on a popular television talk show, the fairy tale has turned into a full-scale flop. The decision to use "Yakety Sax" (better known as the theme from *The Benny Hill Show*) in the final

chase scene is an attempt to be... what? Retro? Kitschy? Unfortunately, the song has the same effect here that it always had then: it suggests that the star of the show is a dim-witted pedophile.

Not even a knight in shining armor could rescue this debacle in distress. Take my advice and abandon this Cinderella story at the box office.

Once Upon a Time is rated PG in a pathetic effort to render it a "family" movie. If you want your kids to be alcoholics with German enemies and cliched love lives, have at it.
