

Tween-market Cinderella fails to recapture the magic ; Jay Stone; ; Edmonton Journal ; 07-16-2004 ;

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Tween-market Cinderella fails to recapture the magic

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Movie REVIEW

A Cinderella Story Rating 2

Director: Mark Rosman

Starring: Hilary Duff, Jennifer Coolidge, Chad Michael Murray

Classification: General

Theatres: Cineplex Odeon, Famous Players

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The tween set -- those eight- to 12-year-old girls who seem to constitute a powerful consumer lobby, if not an entire third sex -- are enjoying high times at the movies this month. After gorging themselves on *Sleepover* (nice girls vanquish school bitch posse to land major babe), they can take in *A Cinderella Story* (Hilary Duff vanquishes high school bitch posse, not to mention wicked stepmother, and then lands major hunk.)

*Cinderella* is an overly familiar tale by now, so we'll skip right to this update, which sticks the orphaned girl into the San Fernando Valley where she's Sam (Duff), a high school senior forced to live in an attic loft and clean up after Fiona (Jennifer Coolidge), the botoxed, zaftig scenery-chewer her father unaccountably married before he was killed in an earthquake. Sam works in the family diner and is thus known as Diner Girl around school, although why everyone hates this sweetly bland young overachiever is never quite made clear.

Sam has a secret refuge, however. He's a cybermate, an e-mail buddy with whom she shares her innermost secrets. We learn early, that it's really Austin Ames, the privileged high school quarterback and all-around sex god, played by Chad Michael Murray. He doesn't want to be a college football star, like his dad wants, but to become a writer.

Sam and Austin get together at the Halloween dance, where she is dressed as Cinderella. When Cinderella drops her cellphone -- the glass slipper of the new millennium -- he has to find her.

Sam has to battle her stepfamily, her low self-esteem and the school's bad girls before everything can turn out happily ever after. Director Mark Rosman puts this all together with very little sense of fairy tale magic, but just seeing Hilary Duff happy is reward enough.

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Illustrations/Photos:

Photo: The Associated Press / Hilary Duff and Chad Michael Murray  
strike romance at a Halloween dance. ;

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