



## Shrek Forever After Teaches a Valuable Lesson

Shrek Forever After is a film that concurrently entertains and teaches a valuable lesson: You don't know what you have until it's gone. The film's theme helps to appeal to an older audience, who can certainly relate to the midlife crisis that seems to be plaguing Shrek at the beginning of the film. Couple that with a mastery of double entendres and you have yet another successful Shrek movie.



At the beginning of the film, we are reintroduced to the characters with whom we fell in love over the past nine years: Shrek (Mike Myers), Fiona (Cameron Diaz), their three precious baby ogres, Donkey (Eddie Murphy) and his family. They all seem to be unjaded by the monotonies of life — well, most of them at least. Shrek finds himself bored with his life, longing for his carefree days as a bachelor, er, I mean, ogre.

As days of diaper changing, unending socialization, and interrupted sleep pass, Shrek becomes increasingly overwhelmed until he finally blows his top at his baby's first birthday party. After exchanging regrettable words with a much-chagrined Fiona, Shrek makes the acquaintance of the evil Rumpelstiltskin (Walt Dohrn). Unbeknownst to Shrek, ol' Rump harbors resentment towards Shrek, believing that Shrek possesses what rightfully belongs to himself.

Rumpelstiltskin tricks Shrek into believing that Rump has the power to give Shrek a day of being a carefree ogre in exchange for a day from Shrek's past. Little does Shrek know, however, that Rump plans to steal from Shrek the one day that truly counts: the day Shrek was born. What follows is an exciting adventure, reminiscent of those found in the previous films.

The plot of *Shrek Forever After* is similar to that found in *It's a Wonderful Life*. Not only is Shrek's life obviously changed by never having been born, but the world in which he finds himself is altered as well. Far Far Away is under the control of the tyrannical Rumpelstiltskin, who imprisons ogres, prompting threats of an ogre underground revolution. The streets of Far Far Away are tainted with corruption, gambling, violence, and fear. It's up to Shrek to reclaim what is his and restore the "happily ever after" to Far Far Away.

Donkey and Puss in Boots steal the show, once again. This time, however, Puss is not the same Zorro-like hero we've grown to love; he has regressed to a pampered, overweight, feline, but managed to retain his ability to turn on the charms and heroics when necessary.

*Shrek Forever After* stays true to its original charms, modernizing classic fairy tales. At one point in the film, the Gingerbread Man has to turn one of the cheering Three Blind Mice around because he was



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facing the wrong direction, a definite laugh-out-loud moment.

Fiona seems to have the edge over Shrek in this film as the true hero. Cameron Diaz manages to fluctuate between a feminine, maternal wife and passionate, strong heroine.

To my dismay, Donkey used the word "ass" to refer to himself, something the film could have done without. Overall, however, *Shrek Forever Ever* recaptures the magic found in the first two films that was utterly lacking in the third. Humorous, action-packed, and sweet, the hour and a half spent in the theater will be time well-spent.



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