

MOVIE REVIEWS



By: Pixilated Polly

Hi, guys! It's Polly and I'm here in hog heaven, as I'm sure you are, because of all the movies we get to attend this summer. (What the heck does hog heaven mean, anyhow?)

First, let's examine *The Incredible Hulk: the TV Series*. As a small girl Picture Polly watched Bill Bixby morph into Lou Ferrigno in his little cut off shorts. She loves that TV show. What's not to love about an angst filled man fighting his inner jolly green giant? Bill Bixby is great as Bruce Banner. He touched my impressionable young heart in the past and still does. Then, of course, there are the comics, and the cartoons. "Hulk smash! Hulk kill!" Okay, he may not have said "kill," but my imagination did. Hulk is big and green and glorious... and all goes well in my version of his world until 2003.

Then comes *The Hulk*. This movie should be good. After all, it has *two* Lees affiliated with it. The great Stan Lee created the title character. Marvel has been developing the character for years, so he is established and well rounded. Sam Elliott and Nick Nolte are in the cast. And Ang Lee directs it.

The movie is abysmal. I kept watching the incredibly long film... waiting for something to happen that I cared about. Watching and waiting. Forever. It doesn't. Jennifer Connelly's Betty betrays Bruce Banner every chance she gets by calling her father to tell him Banner's whereabouts. Teary-eyed or not, regretful or not, her actions make me angry. (*Don't make me angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry.* Sorry.) Okay, the acting is adequate. When bad things happen, I feel sad for Eric Bana. And Nolte does give a scary performance, almost as scary as his mug shot. I like Nolte. Loved him in *East of Eden* and *Rich Man, Poor man*. But the screenplay is a mishmash of convolution. Frame in frame or split frame, however it is filmed, it sucks. Artfully.



That said, I had great hope for the 2008 version of TIH. Edward Norton is... well... an incredible actor. (If you haven't seen *American History X*, *The Illusionist* or *Primal Fear*, go rent them. Now.) Norton is such an accomplished thespian, I wanted to see what he could do playing the part of Bruce Banner. I wasn't disappointed. The man can do more with letting an expression flit across his face than most can do reciting a paragraph of dialogue. The longing he shows for Liv Tylor, his sadness, his anger. He does an amazing job of getting them across with only his soft voice, his facial and body language. And when he screams in anguish, he is believable.

The beautiful Liv Tylor is great as Betty Ross. Never once did I think she might betray the man she loves. William

Hurt does his cold best as her unfeeling father, the general. And Tim Roth as a mercenary with his own agenda plays a villain as only Tim Roth can. (He was the only good thing about *Planet of the Apes*, if you don't count Charlton Heston's cameo.) And speaking of cameos, you can feel the love Marvel has for their franchise. Lou Ferrigno shows up as a gate guard. Bill Bixby graces a TV screen. Stan Lee's cameo is an even better than expected pleasure. And then there's Robert Downy, Jr. playing the role he was made for: Tony Stark, leaving me wondering whose side Tony is really on.

After *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk*, all I can say is I hope Marvel continues to make their own movies. No one else does them as well.

Go see 2008's *The Incredible Hulk*.

Pixilated Polly gives *The Hulk* one howl of pleasure.



She gives *The Incredible Hulk: the TV Series* four howls of pleasure.



This weekend Polly's husband, Bear, took her to see *Hellboy II, The Golden Army*, so the *Hellboy* films have caught my attention. I love the idea of an ass kicking, kitten loving, smart mouthed demon with absolutely no social skills. Ron Perlman was made to play Hellboy. I loved him in "Beauty and the Beast" as Vincent, the sad, beautiful lion creature in love with a human. In both *Hellboys* he portrays a big, curmudgeonly softie with a passion for TV and Baby Ruth candy bars, fighting like there's no tomorrow. Basically, someone after our own hearts. Abe Sapien (portrayed by Doug Jones) is a sweet, intelligent, and sadly vulnerable being, especially in *HB II*.

In the first *HB*, we get a short back-story of how HB was found in the midst of a war zone by John Hurt or "Father." You can see the love Hurt has for the creature... a demon capable of destroying our world, as we find out later in the movie. What stops him? To put it simply: love. A love taught him by Father and brought to maturity by Liz (Selma Blair), a woman who's as much of a misfit as HB himself. Throughout the first movie, she fights to deny who she is. In the second, she embraces her inner freakishness.

In *Hellboy*, HB fights eldritch demons that seemed to come right out of Lovecraft's imagination. He is fighting for humanity, and the perimeters of his battle are pretty cut and dried. The genius of *Hellboy II, The Golden Army*, is that HB has to choose sides between the humans he was raised with and the mythical creatures of which he is one. To complicate things, Abe is in love. And Liz has a secret of her own.

HBII begins with another piece of back-story in which we see a pre-adolescent HB interacting with Father. Again, you see the strong father/son bond between them as Father reads a myth to HB, which provides the basis for the story. The theme of fatherhood runs strong through both movies, handled in a way that touches the heart, but never becomes cloying.

Director Guillermo del Toro has an imagination both twisted and beautiful. Witness his

creatures in *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Hellboy I* and *Hellboy II*. The troll market scene in *HBII* is to die for... a true rival to the bar scene in *Star Wars*. I wanted to freeze the movie for a while and just take in the vision of so many unique and awesome beings

But *HBII* is not just eye candy or adrenaline pumping action. It has a wonderfully written plot full of hard choices for each of the characters. The path chosen sometimes comes as a surprise. There are fewer humans in *HBII*, but much more humanity. With so many movies coming out this summer, it would be a shame to miss *HBII*.

Pixilated Polly gives *Hellboy* four howls of pleasure.



She gives *Hellboy II*, *The Golden Army* 4 ½ howls.



Now I'm going to see *The Dark Knight*. I can't wait. 😊

Until next time then, Polly is out of here.