

Credibility lacking in 'Parenthood'

By Paul Queary
Emerald Contributor

Some movies aren't movies, they're nightmares. You're led to think that you're about to watch a comedy featuring some of today's better actors, and suddenly you find yourself embroiled in a maudering imitation of a movie peopled by characters living out life's less interesting domestic traumas.

Ron Howard's *Parenthood* is unfortunately a nightmare. You'd think it wouldn't be. Howard's

Movie Review

previous films, including *Cocoon* and *Willow* have tended to tearjerk too much, but otherwise they've been reasonably passable family fare.

Parenthood's cast, which includes Steve Martin, Mary Steenburgen, Jason Robards, Tom Hulce, and Keanu Reeves, would seem to promise better things but don't be taken in.

Steve Martin's performance is particularly disappointing after his virtuoso turn in 1987's *Roxanne*, where he merged his awesome comic talent with a mature reading of a complex role. Here, he is back in the annoying groove that made his earlier films such dogs.

Perhaps we should blame *thirtysomething*, the popular and much-lauded television series which dramatizes the mundane problems of upper-middle-class parents and parents-to-be. The difference is that *thirtysomething* succeeds (most of the time, anyway) through witty writing, well-developed characters, and a finely judged appeal to its audience, which is similar to the characters themselves.

Parenthood, on the other hand, fails through a lack of all the above. It centers around Gil (Martin) and his wife Karen (Steenburgen) and their three children. Gil is obsessive about good fatherhood because he feels that his father (Robards) neglected him, and he is frantic because his eldest son is called a "problem child."

Gil has two younger sisters, one married to a prospective child-prodigy maker (Rick Moranis) who teaches his daughter the periodic table of elements at four, the other divorced and coping with two teenagers, one withdrawn, the other rebellious.

A fourth sibling (Hulce) is the black sheep/prodigious son who appears with a newly discovered product of a brief earlier union, primarily to sponge money off Dad.

The ensuing chaos is a mishmash of embarrassing situations, childhood trauma, parental insecurity, marital discord and parent-child conflict and misunderstanding. Needless to say, the scriptwriters managed to heal all wounds through the various devices of caught fly balls in little league, drag-racing crashes, interrupted school plays, and sappy songs sung to the teacher by her estranged husband in front of her students who (wait for it) clap!

If the series of saccharine climactic resolutions isn't too much for you, the denouement will put you into diabetic shock for weeks. The answer to all these problems of parent-child, wife-husband conflict is, yes, you guessed it, HAVE MORE CHILDREN! So many people are either pregnant, newly delivered or in labor at the end of this picture that you'd think it was one of those Shakespearian marriage-comedy endings, only nine months later.

The movie isn't wholly bad. There are some funny moments, some good lines, and a few reasonable performances. Keanu Reeves (*Dangerous Liaisons*, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*) gives a refreshingly good performance as the drag-racing Tod and gets the two best lines in the picture. But the good parts are few and far between, and they only make you wish that Ron Howard had saved them, scrapped the rest of the film, and started over.

This film will probably do some good business, as it's being released between waves of bigger summer movies. Many people will be tempted to go, simply because they like one or more of the actors or need a few hours diversion, but take my advice, drop back ten yards, and PASS!



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Ems end home stand with double victories

Salem 6, Eugene 3

The bumpy road finally came to an end Wednesday for the Eugene Emeralds.

The Ems' week-long, seven-game road trip ended with a seventh straight loss.



Ems Capsules

this time to the Salem Dodgers by a 6-3 score at Chemeketa Community College.

Dodger starting pitcher Ramon Tavares (6-0) was the deciding factor in this game, as he held the Ems to six hits and one run over seven innings. Meanwhile, the Dodgers were working over Eugene's Brian Ahern (1-5), collecting five runs off 10 hits in less than five innings.

One of Eugene's runs came off of first baseman David King's eighth inning solo home run. It was King's sixth homer of the season.

Salem 7, Eugene 4

The Emeralds, squandering a bases-loaded-with-no-out situation in the seventh inning, failed to overtake the Dodgers and ended up losing 7-4 at Civic Stadium Thursday.

The Ems, who never had a lead during the game and were behind 6-4 at that point, were given the grand opportunity after Salem reliever Bob Fletcher walked three Ems on 14 pitches. Jorge Pascual then came to pitch out of the jam, and did so.

Pascual got shortstop Fred Russell to fly out to left.

Baserunner David King tagged third base to try and advance on the sacrifice, but he was cut down by Dodger leftfielder Don Carroll's throw to the plate.

Eugene 9, Salem 0

The Emeralds broke their eight-game losing streak by pounding the Dodgers at home Friday, and they made it look easy, beating the Dodgers 9-0.

Ems manager Paul Kirsch, making a pitching adjustment to break the team's funk, moved reliever Lou Talbert (3-2) to the starting role, and he got a fine game from the right-hander.

Talbert walked five Dodgers, but gave up only two hits over six innings. Ed Pierce then worked the last three innings with no-hit relief to pick up his third save.

While Talbert was working on the mound, his teammates were also doing their job. The Ems scored three runs off Dodger starter Paul Brancionier (3-4) in the first inning, and added one more in both the third and fifth inning.

Shortstop David Ritchie was the offensive sparkplug for the Ems; Ritchie hit 3-for-4 including a leadoff double in the first inning, scored one run and batted in two.

Northwest League

Northern Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Spokane (Padres)	28	22	.560	—
Bellingham (Mtns)	23	25	.479	4
Boise (Ind)	23	27	.460	5
Everett (Giants)	20	28	.417	7

Southern Division

S. Oregon (A's)	32	19	.627	—
Salem (Dodgers)	27	22	.551	4
Eugene (Royals)	23	26	.469	8
Bend (Angels)	22	29	.431	10

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