



'Hopper,' the menacing leader of a gang of grasshoppers bullies 'Flick' (right) and an island of ants into providing the grasshoppers with food in Disney/Pixar Animation's computer-animated film, 'A Bug's Life.'

Bugs

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even more characters and made this film more complex.

The animators accurately captured the life of bugs, even going so far as to create a "Bugcam": a miniature video camera on a stick that was dragged through the ground to see it from a bug's perspective. From this kind of research, the bugs' animated habitat seems as real as taking a peek in your backyard.

Another striking feature of "A Bug's Life" is detailed attention given to group scenes. Much of the story centers around group rallies by the ant colony. The animators invented new software programs for this film that allow the group of ants to function like a real group: simultaneously

some ants are attentively listening to speakers while others are shaking, gasping, or not paying attention. Scenes like these are what make it difficult to comprehend that this isn't reality, but instead computer animation.

Though the film's characters are real-life bugs, special liberties were taken by the animators to evoke certain responses to the insects. For example, real-life ants have six legs, but those in "A Bug's Life" have only four. The ants are colored in beautiful hues of blue and purple, taking an almost iridescent brilliance to their bodies. The gruesome grasshoppers, however, are characterized even grosser than they are in reality. The deep crevices in Hopper's face and his spindly, flailing appendages make him even more of

a creep than exhibited by his personality.

In addition to Spacey and Foley, other character's voices are played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Phyllis Diller, David Hyde Pierce and Denis Leary. The actors' voices come to life when placed behind an animated insect, making the film more comical.

With the deluge of holiday movies aimed at young kids, it's nice to have one that is aimed at kids of all ages. "A Bug's Life" is just that.

This computer-animated film is the kind of entertaining and timeless flick that has been missing in recent years. "A Bug's Life" is a masterful piece of animation and art, the kind that will bring a smile even to biggest bug-fearer.

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