



Helen (Kate Hudson) and Pastor Dan (John Corbett) in *Raising Helen*.

BUENA VISTA PICTURES, 2004

Hip Mama

Kids and home call.

RAISING HELEN: Directed by Garry Marshall. Written by Jack Amiel and Michael Begler, based on a story by Patrick J. Clifton and Beth Rigazio. Produced by Ashok Amritraj and David Hoberman. Executive producers, Mario Iscovich, Ellen H. Schwartz. Cinematography, Charles Minsky. Production design, Steven Jordan. Editors Bruce Green, Tara Timpone. Costumes, Gary Jones. Music, John Denby. Music supervisor, Dawn Soler. Starring Kate Hudson, John Corbett and Joan Cusack. With Hayden Panettiere, Spencer Breslin, Abigail Breslin, Helen Mirren, Sakina Jaffrey, Felicity Huffman, Hector Elizondo and Sean O'Bryan. Buena Vista, 2004. PG-13. 119 minutes.

Young, beautiful, hip New Yorker Helen Harris (Kate Hudson) has a job with a modeling agency that requires her to be out nearly every night, dancing, drinking and being seen with other young things. But the day after a suburban birthday party for her sister, Lindsay (Felicity Huffman), at which the whole family boogies down to Devo's "Whip It," Helen's life as she knows and loves it changes, suddenly.

She becomes guardian to Lindsay's 15-year-old daughter Jenny (Hayden Panettiere), 10-year-old son Henry (Spencer Breslin) and five-year-old Sarah (Abigail Breslin).

Helen isn't the only heartbroken sister who wonders if she can raise her sis's kids. Her other sister, Jenny (Joan Cusack), a reliable Martha Stewart kind of homemaker and mother, is both surprised and angry at Lindsay's considered choice as well as convinced Jenny will fail. After all, Helen thinks eating an apple in a taxi is dinner.

With determination, Helen sets about moving the kids into her apartment in the city and getting them in school. She chooses a Lutheran school headed by Pastor Dan (John Corbett), who shows more than a passing interest in Helen. Even after she loses her job as assistant to Dominique (Helen Mirren), head of the advertising agency, Dan tells her she can succeed. But domestic difficulties, such as a rebellious teenage girl who wants to be liked by the wrong crowd, a sports-loving

boy who refuses to play basketball and a weepy kindergartner who cries when she can't tie her shoelaces, confound Helen. After an unforgettable failure of will, she gives up.

Hudson, like those other movie kids, Jodie Foster and Drew Barrymore, spent her childhood being comfortable on movie sets. Her professionalism, buoyant personality and knockout good looks would be enough for most young actresses — she's only 24. But like her mother, the underrated Goldie Hawn, Hudson generates good will. She is generous, not competitive, with other actors and especially loving toward the kids in this film. She was so naturally gifted in *Almost Famous* I imagined she could skip over the stage she appears to be stuck in, but she's played it safe since then. While this role challenges her a little, Hudson can handle a whole lot more.

Corbett (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) is definitely in a rut. Being a sweet, patient guy while the woman he loves runs through her nuttiness before she remembers he is sexy is a leading man's trap. On "Sex and the City," Corbett's character was too nice, and he doesn't even list his role as Chris in the Morning deejay from "Northern Exposure" any more. Corbett needs a role where he takes risks, is not paired with a stronger woman and isn't so damn thoughtful.

Director Garry Marshall could make this picture with his eyes closed, because he's directed a slew of such offerings — *Runaway Bride*, *Pretty Woman*, *Beaches*. He also directed Hunter's parents, Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell in *Overboard*, one of my light-hearted faves. But his familiarity with the genre is what's wrong with the film. It's entertaining but forgettable.

Now playing at Cinemark and Cinema World, *Raising Helen* is easy on the eyes and very sweet.

EW

movie clips

opening or returning: **Broken Wings:** The winner of nine prizes at the Israeli Academy Awards and a hit in its home country, the award-winning *Broken Wings* is the extraordinarily moving story of the life and loves of the Ullman family, an ordinary Israeli family coping with everyday life. R. Bijou.

Cold Mountain: Anthony Minghella's adaptation of Charles Frazier's Civil War best-seller stars Jude Law as a wounded Southern soldier who walks 1000 miles to get home. Nicole Kidman is his pre-war sweetheart, and Renee Zellweger teaches her to farm and survive. Very highest recommendations. Academy Award to Rene Zellweger. Nominations: Jude Law, actor; cinematography; original score; two original songs; film editing. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Day After Tomorrow, The: Directed by Roland Emmerich, starring Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emmy Rossum, Sela Ward. A climatologist (Quaid) tries to figure out a way to save the world from abrupt global warming. He must get to his son (Gyllenhaal) in New York, which is being taken over by a new ice age. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Hidalgo:** Based on autobiography of distance rider Frank T. Hopkins, played by Viggo Mortensen, this epic action-adventure takes place during a 3,000 mile survival race across the Arabian Desert in 1890. PG-13. Movies 12. **Prince and Me, The:** Stars Julia Stiles, Luke Mably. She's a pre-med student. He's the Crown Prince of Denmark. Also stars James Fox and Miranda Richardson. PG. Movies 12. **Raising Helen:** Directed by Garry Marshall, starring Kate Hudson, John Corbett, Joan Cusack. After her sister and brother-in-law die in a car accident, a young woman (Hudson) becomes the guardian of their three children. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

Soul Plane: Directed by Jessy Terrero, starring Tom Arnold, Kevin Hart, Method Man, Snoop Dogg, Mo'Nique Imes-Jackson. Things get raucous aboard the maiden flight of a black-owned airline, thanks to some last-minute passenger additions. R. Cinemark.

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring: The exquisitely beautiful and very human drama *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... And Spring*, starring director Kim Ki-duk, is entirely set on and around a tree-lined lake where a tiny Buddhist monastery floats on a raft amidst a breathtaking landscape. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Starsky & Hutch: Ben Stiller is uptight Starsky, while Owen Wilson is laid back Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson in this remake of TV's undercover crime-fighters. With Vince Vaughn, Snoop Dogg, Juliette Lewis. PG-13. Movies 12.

Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

continuing: **Cheaper by the Dozen:** Steve Martin and Bonnie Hunt play the parents of 12 children, including Piper Perabo, Hilary Duff and Tom Welling. Directed by Shawn Levy. PG. Movies 12. **Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen:** Stars Lindsay Lohan (*Freaky Friday*). Welsh director Sara Sugarman's first movie. PG. Movies 12. **Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind:** Highly acclaimed film directed by Michel Gondry from screenplay by Charlie Kaufman (*Adaptation*). Stars Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet, Tom Wilkinson, with Mark Ruffalo, Elijah Wood, Kirsten Dunst. Carrey discovers Winslet had memories of their relationship erased. Now he wants to do the same. Or does he? The best new film of '04. Very highest recommendations. R. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

Fifty First Dates: Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler in a romance with a catch: she has no short-term memory recall, so she forgets him every night. Also stars Rob Schneider, Sean Astin and Dan Aykroyd. Directed by Peter Segal. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Fight Club: Directed by David Fincher (*Seven*), this controversial film is based on Portlander Chuck Palahniuk's Oregon Book Award winning, explosive novel about young men fighting each other in no-rules secret fight clubs. Movie stars Brad Pitt, Edward Norton and Helena Bonham Carter in a screenplay by Jim Uhls. Definitely not for the violence-adverse. R. Latenite Bijou.

Kill Bill Vol. 2: The Bride (Uma Thurman) pursues her next foes, Budd (Michael Madsen), Ellie Driver (Daryl Hannah) and finally, Bill (David Carradine). Bound to be bloody. R. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

Laws of Attraction: Julianne Moore and Pierce Brosnan play high-strung New York divorce attorneys who square off with their famous clients (Parker Posey and Michael Sheen) during a nasty divorce, and fall in love. PG-13. Movies 12.

Laws of Attraction: Julianne Moore and Pierce Brosnan play high-strung New York divorce attorneys who square off with their famous clients (Parker Posey and Michael Sheen) during a nasty divorce, and fall in love. PG-13. Cinema World. **Cinemark. Online archives.**

Lord of the Rings: Return of the King: Peter Jackson's stunning work stars Elijah Wood, Viggo Mortensen, Sean Astin, Ian McKellen, Billy Boyd, Orlando Bloom, Liv Tyler, Cate Blanchett. Frodo and Sam make it to Mount Doom as Aragorn leads the warriors of Middle Earth in the final battle against Sauron. Swept 2003 Academy Awards. Very highest recommendations. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Man on Fire: Denzel Washington as a security guard for a child who is kidnapped on his watch. He will have revenge. R. Cinemark. **Mean Girls:** Lindsay Lohan plays a high-school student raised by zoologist parents in the African bush, who falls for a popular girl's ex-boyfriend. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

Mystic River: Clint Eastwood directs Brian Helgeland's adaptation, based on Dennis Lehane's dramatic tragedy. Stars Sean Penn, Tim Robbins, Kevin Bacon, Laurence Fishburne, Marcia Gay Harden, Laura Linney and Emmy Rossum. Very highest recommendations. 2003 Academy Awards for Penn and Robbins; nominations for picture, supporting actress Marcia Gay Harden; director Eastwood; adapted screenplay, Helgeland. R. Online archives. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

New York Minute: Action comedy stars Mary-Kate Olsen and Ashley Olsen as sisters on the loose in Manhattan. With Eugene Levy as a loony truant officer. PG. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Passion of Christ, The (2004): Mel Gibson film opens amid charges (denied) of anti-Semitism. A.O. Scott of *The New York Times* writes, "'The Passion of the Christ' is so relentlessly focused on the savagery of Jesus' final hours that this film seems to arise less from love than from wrath, and to succeed more in assaulting the spirit than in uplifting it." Others call the graphic torture unwatchable. R. Cinemark.

Secret Window: Psychotic (John Turturro) stalks writer (Johnny Depp), accusing him of stealing the ending to his story. David Koepf directs, story by Stephen King. Also stars Maria Bello, Timothy Hutton, Charles S. Dutton. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

Shrek 2: Mike Myers returns as Shrek, Cameron Diaz is his new wife, Princess Fiona, and Eddie Murphy's his sidekick, Donkey. Now the newlyweds face Queen Lillian (Julie Andrews) and King Harold (John Cleese). Fairy god-mother (Jennifer Saunders), Prince Charming (Rupert Everett) and the ferocious Puss in Boots (Antonio Banderas). Cinemark.

Cinema World. **Taking Lives:** All-star cast includes Angelina Jolie, Ethan Hawke, Keifer Sutherland, Olivier Martinez and Jean-Hughes Anglade. Directed by D.J. Caruso. Thriller about a serial killer who steals his victims' identities. R. Movies 12.

The Passion of Christ (2004): Mel Gibson film opens amid charges (denied) of anti-Semitism. A.O. Scott of *The New York Times* writes, "'The Passion of the Christ' is so relentlessly focused on the savagery of Jesus' final hours that this film seems to arise less from love than from wrath, and to succeed more in assaulting the spirit than in uplifting it." Others call the graphic torture unwatchable. R. Movies 12.

Thelonious Monk — Straight No Chaser (1989): Directed by Charlotte Zwerin. A documentary about the life of pianist and jazz great Thelonious Monk. Features live performances by Monk and his band, and interviews with friends and family about the offbeat genius. PG-13. Bijou Latenite.

Troy: Wolfgang Petersen directs the ancient Greek tale of the great warrior Achilles (Brad Pitt) and the lovers Paris (Orlando), Prince of Troy, and Helen (Diane Kruger), Queen of Sparta, whose passion starts a war that destroys a civilization. When Paris steals Helen from her husband, King Menelaus (Brendan Gleeson) of Sparta, and takes her to the walled city of Troy, Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon (Brian Cox) move against King Priam of Troy (Peter O'Toole) and Prince Hector (Eric Bana). R. Cinema World. Cinemark.

Van Helsing: Monster killer Van Helsing (Hugh Jackman) teams up with Kate Beckinsale in Transylvania to bring down Count Dracula (Richard Roxburgh). PG-13. Cinemark.

Walking Tall: Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson returns home after military career to find his hometown overrun with crime, drugs and violence. He's elected sheriff to shut down his former rival's criminal biz. Directed by Kevin Bray. PG-13. Movies 12.

What the Bleep Do We Know? Through interviews with cutting-edge scientists and spiritual teachers, a brand new way of thinking about consciousness, intentionality and the ability to make a difference in the world emerges. But it begins with Amanda (Marlee Matlin). Highly recommended. NR. Bijou. **Online archives.**

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458) Cinema World 8 (342-6536) Cinemark 17 (746-5202)c Movies 12 (741-1231)

video clips

New Releases on Video Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of *EW* publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

Ali Will Smith plays Muhammad Ali in Michael Mann's (*The Insider*) film about the legendary fighter. Also stars Jon Voight, Giancarlo Esposito, Mario Van Peebles and many others in a drama that follows one of the most controversial sports hero of our time. Brilliant film, true to Ali's spirit; biting in its exploration of racism, 1964-1974.

Angels in America: (2003 HBO miniseries) Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson, Justin Kirk, Ben Shenkman, Mary-Louise Parker, Jeffrey Wright, Patrick Wilson, James Cromwell, Michael Gambon, Simon Callow.

The Company Robert Altman's dream of a dance movie stars the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, Neve Campbell, Malcolm McDowell. One of Altman's most relaxed yet highly observant films. He "gets" dance, and *The Company* shows it. Highly recommended. PG-13.

Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt: 1989 Documentary. Directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, narrated by Dustin Hoffman. Extras: "Then and Now," a new short film by Epstein and Friedman about AIDS, photo gallery.

Destination Tokyo (1943): Directed by Delmer Daves, starring Cary Grant, John Garfield, Alan Hale, Dane Clark.

Freaky Friday Includes both 1976 original and 2003 remake.

Monster Patty Jenkins' feature film about real-life killer Aileen Wuornos stars Charlize Theron (Academy Award nominee) in an unforgettable performance. Theron's physical transformation not only captures Wuornos's fragile hold on human decency but also show that her tough exterior is the only buffer she has between her marginal life and an uncaring world. Co-stars Christina Ricci. Hard-to-watch violence, but outstanding. 2003 Academy Award for Theron, Best Actress. R.

Night and Day (1946): Sentimental musical about the life of bon-vivant and composer extraordinaire Cole Porter. Stars Cary Grant, Alexis Smith, Jane Wyman. Directed by Michael Curtiz.

Trainspotting 1996 Academy Award nominee for screenplay, film features sordid subject, witty script, excellent performances. A wild success in Britain, this picture about heroin addicts in Scotland from the Shallow Grave trio of director Danny Boyle, producer Andrew Macdonald and screenwriter John Hodge stars Ewan McGregor as the film's anti-hero and a great cast as his unsavory buddies. Excellent filmmaking. R.

Next Week: Along Came Polly, City of God, Field of Dreams, Mystic River, Reality Bites.