



## DREAMLAND

Directed By:		Written By:		Cast:		HBS User Ratings	
Jason Matzner		Tom Willett		Agnes Bruckner		1 review, 1 rating ★★★★★	
				Kelli Garner		Awesome	14.29%
				Justin Long		<b>Worth A Look</b>	<b>85.71%</b>
				John Corbett		Average	0%
				Gina Gershon		Pretty Bad	0%
				Brian Klugman		Total Crap	0%
<b>Our Reviewer Says:</b>							
"Where Dreams Hopefully Don't Go To Die" - Erik Childress ★★★★★							

### THE EFC REVIEW:

**SCREENED AT THE 2006 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL:** Gosh, I hope a place like *Dreamland* exists somewhere. After all the put-upon jokes about trailer trash, finally here is a place where the terminology of community really defines itself. Close friends and tight families, not without problems, but just weary enough to know such issues come from within and are fixable despite the burden of a low income. Like all small communes, there is both contentment and a desire to break free. A girl like Audrey is caught somewhere in the middle and while her best friend desires to someday become Miss America, Audrey more than wins the title of Miss Gilbert Grape.



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The wonderful **Agnes Bruckner** plays Audrey, an 18-year Will Hunting if her grades are any indication. Seemingly every school in the country wants her, but she tucks her acceptance letters away in a box underneath her bed. Although the fact that she applied to so many tells us something. In the interim, she works in a convenience store, experiments with the occasional "ride home" from co-worker Abraham (**Brian Klugman**) and takes care of her loving, but alcoholic father (**John Corbett**, in a great minimalist performance) who has struggled with agoraphobia ever since Audrey's mother died.

What Audrey really lives for though is spending time with that best friend, Calista (**Kelli Garner**). They will sit in the pool and talk all day if you let them, and in *Dreamland* it's pretty much all theirs. That's when a new family arrives. Mary (**Gina Gershon**) and her fiancé, Herb (**Chris Mulkey**) fit in just nicely with the folks; her being an ex-folk singer and all. Mary's son, Mookie (**Justin Long**) comes along utilizing his time to re-training his knee for the basketball court when what he really needs is some height. After becoming fast friends, Audrey encourages him to ask out Calista knowing full well of her longing to feel something as she struggles with the effects of Multiple Sclerosis. Once again, sacrificing her own happiness for others since its clear from the start she cares for me than just Mookie's basketball prowess. But how long can anyone keep themselves from being happy?

There's a romantic quality to *Dreamland* that's unmistakable. From **Jonathan Sela's** lush cinematography of the open desert to the behavior of its inhabitants, writer/director **Jason Matzner** inculcates such congeniality into the landscape that it may as well referred to itself as Pleasantville. Never does it play as false or treacly though. When confrontations do arise, some through silent indifference, we feel hollowed out a little as if knowing the ways they could have been avoided and the hurt that replaces the decency of each of them.

Audrey is not just another smart-aleck with her nose ten feet above the people she surrounds herself with. She's a wise and sad character who is not going to acknowledge her own potential until she provide others with some. Maybe its fear on her part, but why should she be exploiting her own hope when those in her life have so little? Bruckner is solid as Audrey, but even better is Long. Known for his nerdy comedic performances in *Dodgeball* and on TV's *Ed*, really breaks through as the sensitive romantic who has to juggle competitive emotions for both girls without breaking either of their good hearts. I suspect many girls will be swooning Long as the boyfriend they wish were available; even on just a sharing basis. Equally good is Garner, who with her comely figure and lips that rival Angelina Jolie's, may find herself getting typecast as the sexpot in any number of indies. But in *Dreamland* she delivers a performance brimming of forced acceptance, backed into so many corners that it's devastating to realize that her only way out of *Dreamland* may not be

alive.

Maybe it's the beautiful terrain that surrounds these people and the unending sky full of promise that keeps them all afloat. Visit maybe, but very few of us would want to trade our digs for the little corner of Earth the folks of Dreamland have accepted as home. Then again, can home – no matter where it may be – exist without the heart? It may be playing a song on a guitar, looking out for your family or sitting all day in a pool listening to your friend's dreams. That's a home which is hard to make fun of.

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★★★★ (Worth A Look)

[Erik Childress](#) - 02/02/06 07:17:34

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Mary Sumner	Beautiful film with outstanding performances, I especially loved Calista played by Garner.	Awesome

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