



## PRINCESS MONONOKE SHOWS HOW IT OUGHT TO BE

HEY DISNEY,  
WHERE'S THE  
MARKETABLY  
CUTE ANIMAL  
SIDE-KICK?

BY MARK EVANS

Anime is the proper name for what most people know as Japanimation. Popularized by images of Sailor Moon and Pokemon, the anime animation available in North America has historically been poorly dubbed, crudely translated and typically sub-par children's fare.

Recently the trend has been changing and quality anime is now typically as close as the local video store. Cashing in on the craze, Disney has purchased several films from Studio Ghibli — a highly respected anime animation studio. Miramax's *Princess Mononoke* is the first release.

The film takes place in feudal Japan during a time when gods and demons still walked the earth as living creatures. When a demon tries to destroy a small village, Prince Ashitaka (voiced by Billy Crudup) slays the beast, but not before it can place a curse on him which will slowly spread throughout his body until it kills him.

Banished from his village,

Ashitaka traces the path the demon took and soon finds himself in a great forest, which the demon had been part of before it was driven insane with hatred. Soon Ashitaka comes upon Irontown, a human settlement encroaching on the edges of the forest close to the mountain mines.

Ashitaka is quickly caught up trying to find a middle road in the vicious struggle between Irontown, lead by Lady Eboshi (Minnie Driver), and the forest gods, lead by San (Claire Danes), a human girl raised by the wolf tribe.

This only begins to scratch the surface of the complex story that drives *Princess Mononoke*, a story that is not only expertly told but presented with both style and energy.

All the major characters are fleshed out with great detail and they all have complex personalities. Lady Eboshi is clearly the villain of the piece, but she's acting out of concern for Irontown and its people and not purely evil. San is protecting the forest, but she hates all humans regardless of where they're from. In *Princess Mononoke*, it is not about a clear cut right and wrong, a point that is reflected in the ending.

The film conjures up some unforgettable and moving images, some based off Japanese mythology: the writhing form of the de-

mon Ashitaka slays, and the lumbering form of the forest spirit in its nightwalker guise.

The translation by Neil Gaiman is top notch and the musical score is both powerful and moving.

The movie is unquestionably not typical Disney, which is one reason it's so refreshing to watch. Besides the fact that Disney would never make a story with this much depth, *Princess Mononoke* is presented both frankly and realistically. The conflict between the forest and industrial progress is extremely violent, and there are decapitations, severed limbs, and frequent bloodshed. This willingness to show a real conflict with actual fighting would never appear in any American animated feature. There aren't even any nauseatingly cute and marketable animal sidekicks or pointless musical numbers.

Bottom line: Director Hayao Miyazaki is considered Japan's Walt Disney, but it's really an unfair comparison since Miyazaki's films tend to be far better than any of the formula crap churned out by his Western counterparts. *Princess Mononoke* is a brilliant film, a real cinematic masterpiece, and it manages to present an environmental message without ever descending into preaching. It's a real breath of fresh air and easily rates a full four stars.

## Ten things I wish I did on New Years.

BY PATRICK BLACKIE

New Years was just another night, but for some reason, it held some special meaning as a 'global celebration' to anyone who follows the dogmatic Christian calendar. The corporate extension of the holiday buzz allows people to justify yet another night of irresponsible behavior and mindless consumerism. I personally don't like the idea, but then again, I'll take any reason to cloud my judgement.

My New Years was relatively fun, not interesting, but apparently fun. I hung out with all of my close friends, drank 40 dollars worth of hard liquor, picked a few fights, then headed "uptown" for even more of the aforementioned. As I stumbled into my house some time after sunrise the next morning, trying (and failing) not to wake my parents, I was somewhat disappointed. Even though it was just another New Years, there are a few things I wished I had done instead. Here they are in no particular order.

1. I have no particular interest in ever trying acid, but if I did, it would have been this past New Years. I'd pop a ten-sheet, have a walkman with every version of "Viva Las Vegas" looped, and walk around my hometown stealing peoples Christmas lights.
2. Bomb the Southern States.
3. Breaking into a church and dancing naked to hits of the '50s has always been an interest to me.
4. Pump my body full of drugs and see how fast and far I could run.
5. I tried this one, but was quickly tossed. Dress up like an alligator and bust into a private party, asking people who their favorite football team is.
6. Go cross country skiing.
7. Set fire to the Southern States.
8. Paint a picture of Jesus smoking a crack-pipe and mail it to the Pope.
9. I also wanted to wait until early morning when traffic is light, so I could take my parents Chevette out for its last ride. A sixty of vodka, hockey helmet, a few noise makers, getaway music and some sweet cheeba turn one shitty car into the rally/derby-car extraordinaire.
10. Prepose to a hooker.

Emergency Contraceptive Pills

SEX, Myths & preventing unintended pregnancy

Myth: It's just the morning after.

Fact: For 3 days or 72 hours after a broken condom, forgotten pill, unprotected or forced sex, Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECP) are a safe way of preventing pregnancy. They are available from clinics, doctors and emergency rooms.

1-877-327-7247  
(toll free) (ECP-72HR)

