

FILM REVIEW



King Features
Will Ferrell and Jon Heder in "Blades of Glory"

When rating "Blades of Glory" alongside Will Ferrell's other films, this sendup of the world of international figure skating isn't a gold-medal achievement like "Anchorman" or "Stranger Than Fiction." Nor is it a solid, silver-medal effort like "Talladega Nights."

No, "Blades of Glory" is definitely a bronze-medal-worthy comedy. It hits just enough comedic beats to be worth your time and money, but it won't be on your list of favorite Ferrell films of all-time. But hey, at least it's not "Bewitched."

The film stars Ferrell as Chazz Michael Michaels, the bad boy of figure skating, a raging, boozing sex addict with a doughy, hairy body that screams Neil Diamond. His on-ice nemesis is the virginal, golden-locked Jimmy MacElroy (Jon Heder). At the world championships, the two tie for the gold. A fight between them during the medal ceremony gets them banned for life.

Three and a half years pass. Michaels is boozing it up and appearing in a kiddie show on ice, while MacElroy is working in a sporting-goods store. MacElroy gets

"Blades of Glory"

REVIEWED BY DNA SMITH

Special to Florida Weekly

"Blades of Glory"

Running Time: 93 minutes

MPAA rating: PG-13

GRADE: C+

a tip from a stalker/fan (Nick Swardson) that even though the young phenom is banned from singles competition, there's nothing stopping him from competing in the pairs event. One convenient plot device later, MacElroy and Michaels are teamed up. They have a Coach (Craig T. "Coach" Nelson) and a killer (literally) routine that, if performed correctly, will change the face of figure skating forever.

For me, the funniest moments are the routines on the ice. They are so ridiculously choreographed, I couldn't stop laughing. That's where "Blades of Glory" scores its highest marks. The problem is with most of the stuff that happens between the competitions. The biggest problem is that I don't think Jon Heder has the experience or confidence to be a proper foil for a comic as dominating as Will Ferrell. Another actor with more experience may have found a way to add more to the character of MacElroy.

Another problem is that the cast is so strong, yet Jenna Fischer, Rob Corddry, Will Arnett and Amy Poehler have so little to do in the film. All that talent is wasted because of a pretty lackluster script.

"Blades of Glory" could've been a really great comedy. Instead, it's a pleasant afternoon diversion. See it at a matinee or wait for the rental. ■

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BOOK REVIEW

RECOMMENDED READING

Body Surfing

By Anita Shreve
(Little, Brown and Company, \$25.99)

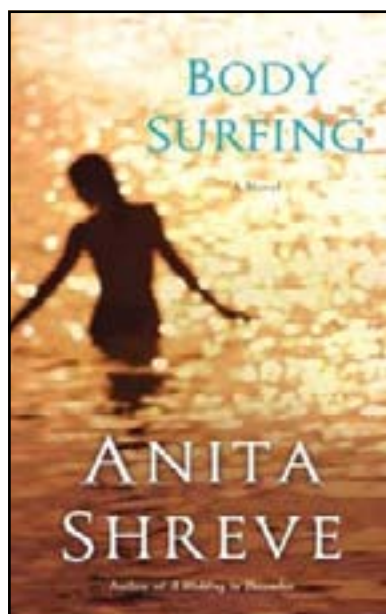
REVIEWED BY CINDY ELAVSKY
Special to Florida Weekly

Since gaining popularity for "The Pilot's Wife," which was a selection for Oprah's Book List, Anita Shreve's power as a storyteller has taken off and never looked back.

In her 13th novel, "Body Surfing," Shreve tells a story the way she does best: with empathy, sincerity, wit and keen observation of family members and their relationships with one another. The story opens with Sydney Sklar working as a tutor and general housekeeper for the well-to-do Edwards family as they vacation in their oceanfront New Hampshire cottage for the summer.

Sydney has developed a deep bond with her young charge, Julie, and most of her days at the cottage are filled with prepping for the SATs, walking on the beach and the solitary escape of body surfing. Sydney accepted this job as a getaway to try to recover from the death of her husband.

Things are simple for Sydney until the Edwardses' sons, Jeff and Ben, come to visit their parents and sister for the weekend. The rivalry between the brothers is evident, and it only intensifies as they



turn their attentions toward Sydney.

"Body Surfing" is at once heartbreaking, charming, funny and alert to human foibles and mistakes. In discovering herself with the help (whether asked for or not) of the Edwards brothers, Sydney is able to put her past in perspective and begin to think about her future: a thought that had seemed impossible only a few months earlier.

Anita Shreve can add this book to the growing list of "Best OP" books. As one of those books that is so intense and enrapturing that it can be read in one long afternoon, "Body Surfing" deserves a place on any literature lover's "must read" list. ■

Books reviewed in this column are available online or at your local bookstore.

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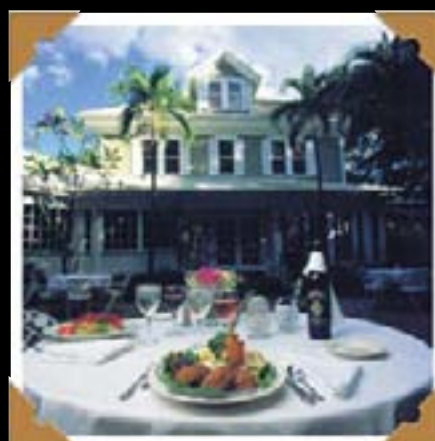
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