

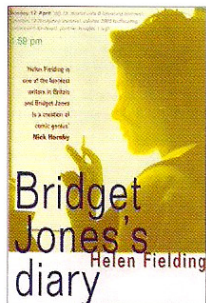


Classic or Tragic?

It's easy for people to get snobby about *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the book that launched a thousand (generally inferior) imitators. Forget the great glut of books with pastel colours, swirly writing and shoes on the cover that followed, because BJD is the original and still the best. Not only does it have a great plot (unsurprising given that it was lifted by author, Helen Fielding, from one of the greatest romantic comedies in English literature, *Pride and Prejudice*), it is also a hell of a lot funnier than any highbrow critic would have you believe.

But what makes BJD deserving of modern classic status is the fact that Bridget is endearingly and eerily real. Flab, flaws and all, Bridget Jones was the most realistic (indeed, pretty much the only realistic) representation of a modern woman to be found in fiction still populated by 1980s have-it-all bonk-buster ball-breakers. She smokes, she drinks, she swears, she stresses, she shags unsuitable men while not necessarily wearing matching underwear. It might not be the most flattering portrait of modern womanhood but it's perhaps the closest we're going to get. Enjoy!

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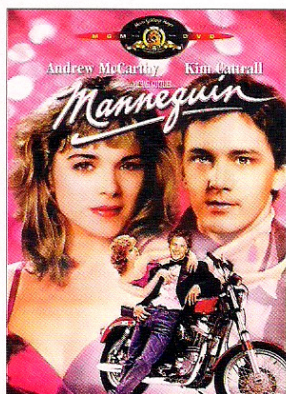


BRIDGET
JONES'S
DIARY



Guilty Pleasures

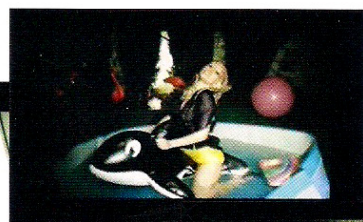
Remember the 1980s flick *Mannequin*, starring a freakishly young Kim Cattrall and Brat-Pack favourite Andrew McCarthy? Trust me, if you saw it, you wouldn't be able to forget it – it was your average tale of guy meets and falls in love with shop dummy, who is actually a princess from Ancient Egypt (and who said the 80s were the decade that taste forgot?!). Well, the finale featured them getting married in a shop window alongside their camp



companion and a Golden Girl (Estelle Getty), to the overblown strains of Starship's *Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now*. Nothing could be cheesier right?

Wrong. Brother and sister act Same Difference, who came third on UK television talent contest *The X-Factor*, just made it even more delicious, despite the slightly dubious nature of siblings singing what sounds suspiciously like a love song to each other. Just how do you top 80s power balladry at its best? Add some jangly Christmas bells and an epic key change that defines the art of epic key changes, sung by a pair so clean-cut, they make nuns look naughty. Check it out at

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQj1Gj6tmZI.



Videopolis

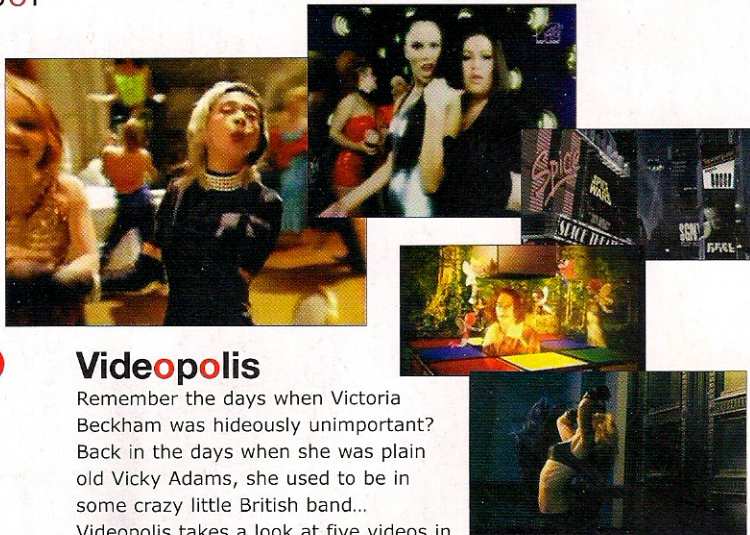
We wanna go to Lady GaGa's house parties – hey, it beats getting wasted outside Club 7-Eleven. Why?

1. The possibility of getting raunchy in the toilet with a man wearing a furry head of indeterminate animal origin.
2. The chance to dry hump an inflatable whale (it's OK Lady G, we're not judging you if that's the only action you can get!).
3. Getting to know the zany fellow playing a drum on his head (we're sure his wit is sparkling too).
4. Funky grandma.
5. Akon is there. Throwing rose petals over himself. In a white suit. Next to a Red Indian. You just can't buy moments like that, can you?

Check it out yourself at

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IHnhV9NfL8.





Videopolis

Remember the days when Victoria Beckham was hideously unimportant? Back in the days when she was plain old Vicky Adams, she used to be in some crazy little British band... Videopolis takes a look at five videos in the career of the Spice Girls:

1. In fact, some old lady extra is in the video for *Wannabe* more than Beckham. Prophetic some might say, given how Posh now seems to dress like her.
2. Posh Spice. Dawn French. Who can tell the difference in the *Who Do You Think You Are* video?
3. I vividly recall hating the video for *Spice Up Your Life* at the time – such a happy song, such a dark video. Now, of course, I see that *Spiceworld* is as much a searing critique of the values of a dystopian society as *1984* or *Brave New World*... maybe...
4. *Viva Forever* sees the evil child-catcher Spice fairies entrap a gender-indeterminate child in a Rubik's cube before his mate chucks it into a gachapon vending machine (the toys in the little egg-shaped canisters). What this is meant to be a metaphor for, we'll never know but someone's probably writing a thesis on it as we speak.
5. Well, the Spice Girls tour date in Hong Kong never materialized... instead, we got the video for *Headlines*, the sole purpose of which seemed to be to demonstrate how you can see Geri Halliwell's ribs when she's in her underwear.

Watch all the videos here:

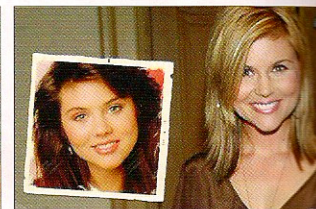
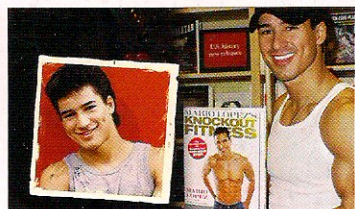
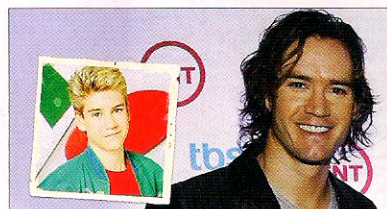
http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=83072546D9608616

Guilty Pleasures

Half the joy in returning to the television of your youth is seeing what the actors you had teen crushes on are up to now – and those from '90s classic *Saved By The Bell* don't disappoint. While Mario Lopez (AC Slater), fresh from showing off his snake-hips on *Dancing With The Stars*, looks identical (dimples intact and, luckily for the ladies, still with an aversion to wearing shirts), Mark-Paul Gosselaar (Zach Morris) probably won't be setting teen hearts a-flutter now with his dull, greasy locks. Tiffani-Amber Thiessen (Kelly Kapowski) went blonde, Elizabeth Berkley (Jessie Spano) lost her curls and her dignity in *Showgirls* and your guess is as good as mine as to what happened to Lark Voorhies (Lisa

Turtle). Best (or worst) of all is Dustin Diamond's fall from grace – returning to play Screech in another decade's worth of *Saved By The Bell* spin-offs, a how-to-play chess video where he dressed up as (you've guessed it) Screech and (hold onto your lunches) a sex tape. Paris Hilton he ain't. Balk.

Relive the memories of that incredible theme tune at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2K4iTh1TL9g>



words rachel read

Classic or Tragic?

Is there an unwritten rule somewhere that 'classic' novels are sacrosanct? If so, I'm about to break it. Here's my confession, bc readers – I despise Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Despite being hailed as some sort of feminist icon by several critics (seemingly only because she is not the prettiest girl at the literary heroine party and because she refuses Rochester's first proposal – wow, big deal, Lizzie Bennett did the same when Darcy first proposed in *Pride and Prejudice*), *Eyre* is profoundly pathetic, mooning about Rochester yet unwilling to do anything about it. Oh yes, apart from almost deciding to become a missionary with one of the most extraneous characters in English literature, St John Rivers, before, in a moment even a TVB soap opera would shirk at, some voice from beyond implores her to return to darling Rochester. The final mush of an ending, where Rochester magically regains his sight, reads like something out of a Mills & Boon, only with longer words.

That's not to say the book isn't without potential – Rochester makes for a hero so surly he'd no doubt be throwing a strop over his new-found sex symbol status from television adaptations. Instead of Charlotte Brontë, go read Jasper Fforde's *The Eyre Affair* for a hint of the *Jane Eyre* that never was but should have been.

