

Foster shines in 'Nell'

Apted's film teaches to not label or judge people

by Karen Steele
Collegian Staff

"Nell," a Michael Apted film currently in the theaters, is about being humane. It is a movie that teaches the viewer not to judge or label people.

Nell, played by Jodie Foster, is a grown woman with child-like qualities. She is a pure character who has grown up shielded from modern civilization. Nell was forced to make up her own language, later called "Nellish" by Dr. Lovell, played by Liam Neeson.

The movie begins with a scene where we learn that Nell's mother is dead. She had lived most of her adult life as a hermit in a secluded cabin. When Dr. Lovell and Todd Peterson, a cop played by Nick Searcy, go to pick up the body, they find Nell.

At first she seems like a wild woman; however, later it is evident that this is not the case. Nell speaks her own language and sees the world in a unique way that others do not.

Lovell and Paula Olsen, a psychologist played by Natasha Richardson, are given three months to observe Nell. During these months, they come to

understand Nell's carefree world and learn her language.

They need to decide if Nell should continue to live her secluded life or be institutionalized to learn how to live in the "real world."

Jodie Foster portrays Nell remarkably. She says that the element she finds most compelling is the "lack of categorization." This illustrates how people judge others, but quite often that they are very wrong.

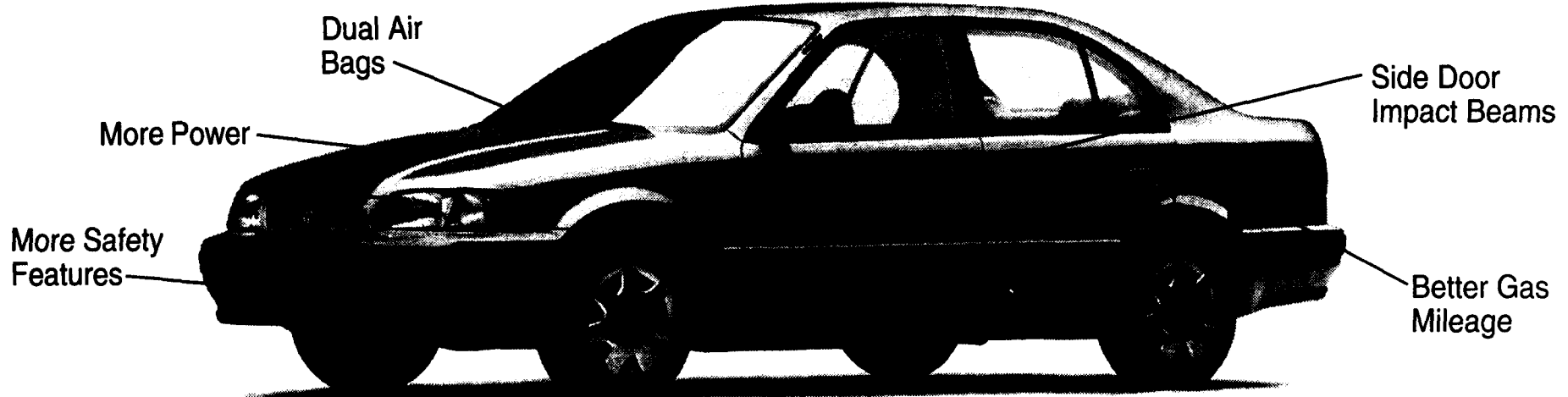
When we first see Nell, we are quick to assume that she has been deprived -- that she has missed out on a "real" childhood with rock 'n' roll music and chocolate candy bars. As the movie progresses, however, we wonder if she is really the one who has had something wonderful taken from her.

Nell's carefree world is the aspect I was most drawn to in this film. It's enlightening to know someone who is "one" with nature. Nell has never been burdened by the stresses that come with modern living, and she has no responsibilities. This film will take you back to the innocence you know as a child.



Dancing in a world of her own, two-time Academy Award winner, Jodie Foster stars as the title character in 'Nell'. Keeping an eye on her is costar, Academy Award winner, Liam Neeson as Dr. Lovell.

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