

Doctor Cheezy

Doctor Cheezy (VPRO, Netherlands) is a series about 5 kids, Fee, Faris, Talisha, Benjy, and Liewe. In episode 7, they try to escape summer diet camp to go on a trip to get a Doctor Cheezy cheeseburger. The kids stop at a birthday party for Fee's best friend along the way (cf. screenshot 1), and Fee plans on doing a dance routine with her best friend as the grand finale of a glamorous birthday party. All of the kids come inside to the party and Fee goes upstairs to practice the dance routine with her friend, who has unexpectedly invited another girl to perform with them (cf. screenshot 2). Downstairs, the diet camp kids are ostracized and ridiculed: Talisha is pressured by some snobbish girls to sign up to sing on stage because they think she will fail (cf. screenshot 3). Faris is surrounded by a group of other boys who call him fat, and he shoves his face full of food to be funny (cf. screenshot 4). While some of the boys from the party are locked in a bathroom stall, Benjy and Faris spray the boys with a water hose (cf. screenshot 5). Talisha is called up to sing, and cheered by Liewe, is very successful (cf. screenshot 6). Fee realizes that her friends from the party are superficial and she stands up to her best friend (cf. screenshot 7). The soaked boys in the bathroom are discovered, and all of the diet camp kids run away before they can get caught, but not before they grab the life-size swan from on top of the cake to throw in a pond outside (cf. screenshot 8).

Doctor Cheezy was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012 finalists in the 7-11 Fiction category.

International experts' opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *Doctor Cheezy* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. The program was generally very well-liked, as people appreciated that it featured heavier kids. People expressed that they could relate to the kids and that the acting was very well done.

"The acting, and thereby I assume the directing, was of very, very high quality." (male expert, UK)

Some raised concerns that the program may have been reinforcing stereotypes in its attempt to subvert them.

"I only really wonder whether we see in this film another stereotype about thin and wide." (female expert, Vietnam)

"There were some definite stereotypes, both about kids who are heavier and kids who are skinnier, that the thin kids are mean." (female expert, USA)

While it was agreed that it is time for television to feature heavy characters, some questioned the ways that television programs should go about portraying these characters.

"I sort of wished there were more shows where kids could be heavy on TV without the show having to be about them being heavy." (female expert, USA)

"I understand the question about, are all programs with heavy people have to be about being heavy? But, I think we need a lot more programs about being heavy because it's a huge crisis waiting to happen, which as responsible children's broadcasters, we have to address." (male expert, UK)



Ill. 1: Talisha, Faris, Liewe, and Benjy show up to a fancy birthday party with Fee



Ill. 2: Fee's friends tell her that they have found someone new to do the dance routine with them



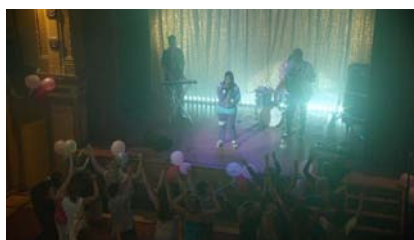
Ill. 3: Some of the thin girls corner Talisha and sign her up to sing onstage



Ill. 4: When the other boys pick on him, Faris tries to be funny by stuffing his face with food



Ill. 5: Benji helps Faris get back at the boys who were mean to him



Ill. 6: Talisha wows the crowd with a beautiful performance



Ill. 7: Fee defends Talisha against her old friends, who claim she is ruining their party



Ill. 8: Faris gets revenge when he runs out of the party with the swan cake topper

Many really appreciated the sincerity of the characters, and said that they showed substantial growth in a heartwarming way.

“The acting, in particular, the blond boy who was miserable, sitting on the stairs, I felt that misery, and I agreed with him. And it felt like there were issues of class, of race, of size. Everything made it in there, and yet it all felt completely believable, to the point where I was transported right back to Junior High.” (female expert, USA)

“I thought that there was an amazing moment when the heavy kid just crams everything in his mouth. He’s being ironic, and it doesn’t work. Your heart really went out to him. I know what he was trying to do, and it didn’t work.” (male expert, UK)

Amy Hudgins (University of Washington, Tacoma, USA)