

The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (1994)

*The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* is a story about three individuals who go on a quest together, each with different motivations and goals. Felicia wants to climb the Kings Canyon which is at the center of Australia. Felicia is a character who is young, full of life and still naïve on the harsh realities of hatred about the outside world. Mitzie wants to see his son and become a father by finally involving himself in his son's life. At first he is worried on how his son will think of his father being a drag queen and a homosexual but he learns that his son accepts him for who he is. Bernadette is probably the most wounded spirituality and emotionally of the three characters and the most wise on the cruelty of the real world. When their bus named Priscilla gets spray painted with hateful words Bernadette says "doesn't matter how tough I'm getting, it still hurts."

The director thought of the idea of the film as 'drag queens in the outback' which has a similar look to the Western landscapes of the Spaghetti Westerns. In the readings Home and Away by Pamela Robertson she gave *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* a comparison to the fantasy classic *The Wizard of Oz*. Like *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*'s characters desire to leave home in the beginning of the film changes at the end and they realize that they must return home. All three characters in the film

have separate goals and motivations similar to The Tin Man, the Lion and the Scarecrow. In the readings of Pamela Robertson she brings up how several of the queer characteristics of the three men in *Queen of the Desert* are similar to the cowardly lion, the artificial tin man who cannot stop crying and a butch femme couple of witches.

The most interesting character in *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, was the character of Bernadette. The film is full of themes of the homosexual culture encountering the straight culture. In an interesting scene of the film a butch woman in a bar confronts Bernadette and tells him that he and his kind don't belong there. Bernadette says, "Why don't you light your tampon and blow your box apart, because it's the only bang you're ever going to get sweetheart." Pamela Robertson says that Bernadette's insult to the woman is a joke on her sexuality and how she is unable to achieve normal female sexuality because of her unattractive looks. Bernadette is the only character of the three who decides not to go home at the end when he develops a relationship to Bob, a man they meet on the road.

Even though Bob doesn't seem to be homosexual he starts to care for Bernadette because in a lot of ways Bernadette is a better woman than Cynthia his Filipino wife. In a classic scene in a bar Cynthia upstages the three drag queens by doing perverse tricks with her private part and when we realize she tricked Bob into marriage for her ticket to Sydney; we know that Bob deserves better. In the article *Queens of the Road* by Estella Tincknell, she writes that even though Bernadette is by birth a man he is more of a lady than Cynthia. Bernadette has more respect for himself as a woman than Cynthia does. And when Bernadette decides to stay with Bob at the end of the film you accept that even if they become lovers or not, they will always truly care for one another.