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## "THUMBS UP! 'STAR TREK NEMESIS' STANDS ALONE

as an engaging  
intergalactic thriller with  
a lot of spirit - and some  
rousing action scenes."  
Richard Roeper, EBERT & ROEPER

## STAR TREK NEMESIS

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

SCI-FI ACTION VIOLENCE & PERIL & A SCENE OF SEXUAL CONTENT

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StarTrek.com



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## FILM

camera work with Goodall in the picture. — SR (Unrated.)

**THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS** — (Grade: C) The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, director Peter Jackson's second installment of his adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's Rings trilogy, packs half the spark of its exciting predecessor, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, despite a climactic showdown between warring armies at a mountain-side fortress, Helms Deep. *The Two Towers* picks up where its previous installment finished. The hobbit Frodo Baggins (Elijah Wood) and the rest of the Fellowship continue on their mission to destroy the Ring of power. The Fellowship is split up, causing *The Two Towers* to lose its spirit of camaraderie. Jackson uses every special effect imaginable to wow audiences, and the battle spectacle he creates is breathtaking. Still, the film is more solemn than any fantasy has the right to be. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**MAID IN MANHATTAN** — (Grade: D) A sugary Christmas present to moviegoers is *Maid in Manhattan*, director Wayne Wang's comic romance that tells a Cinderella story about Marisa Ventura (Jennifer Lopez), a housekeeper at a plush Manhattan hotel. Happenstance involving a guest's designer clothes pushes Marisa into an accidental encounter with a wealthy Senate candidate, Christopher Marshall, played by Ralph Fiennes. Of course, it's love at first sight. It's the type of timeless rich boy/poor girl story that's been seen before. Yet, when Fiennes looks into Lopez's eyes and kisses her passionately, you're left with a sinking feeling in your stomach. There isn't one spark between them. Lopez is warm and likable but *Maid in Manhattan* is the type of cloying romantic comedy that quickly gets on one's nerves. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**★ MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING** — (Grade: A) Forget the standard boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back premise. How about girl meets boy, they fall in love, and boy meets girl's family. That director Joe Zwick ends *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* with a wedding is no surprise. The surprise will come if Hollywood can avoid prostituting this well-made, boisterous indie film about the marriage of two cultures. When unassuming Greek girl Toula (Nia Vardalos) meets the very non-Greek Ian (John Corbett), you know it's love. The laughs ensue as he will do whatever it takes to make not just Toula, but her large, boisterous family, happy. — ttc (Rated PG.)

**★ REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES** — (Grade: A) Patricia Cardoso's breezy and engaging adaptation of Josefina Lopez's play, *Real Women Have Curves* tells the likable story of Ana (America Ferrera), a Mexican-American high school girl who wants to leave her East Los Angeles home to attend college in New York City. Ana's English teacher believes she has the talent to succeed at college but Ana's critical mother Carmen (Lupita Ontiveros) isn't convinced. *Real Women Have Curves* is a celebration of Latino culture. It's also a tale about family and self-identity. More importantly, its universal themes are just as relevant outside the Latino community. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**THE RING** — (Grade: C) Director Gore Verbinski's adaptation of the 1998 Japanese film *The Ring* offers an interesting version of the urban legend. A cursed videotape kills its viewers seven days after they view it. At least that's the theory of a Seattle reporter (Naomi Watts) out to find the real story. As an

encore to her performance in last year's *Mulholland Drive*, Watts' earnest scream queen performance in *The Ring* is something of a letdown. The film's true star is the tape itself, which Verbinski portrays with a mesmerizing, avant-garde mix of stark images and blurry photography. Verbinski saves the best scare for late into the film, when the cursed spirit behind the tape finally makes itself known. Unfortunately, the ghost's appearance is too brief to be satisfying. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**THE SANTA CLAUSE 2** — (Grade: D) There is more holiday magic in one line of *The Night Before Christmas* than all of director Michael Lembeck's cluttered comedy *The Santa Clause 2*. Tim Allen is likable enough as Scott Calvin, the absentee dad who's become the latest choice in a long line of Santa Clauses. Elizabeth Mitchell plays the woman Calvin targets as someone worthy to be Mrs. Clause. But Allen's easy-going nature can't boost a lulling plot that has Calvin needing to marry by Christmas Eve in order to remain Santa. The film's funniest performances belong to David Krumholtz and Spencer Breslin as Santa's top elves. They're the one burst of joy in an otherwise spiritless film. — SR (Rated G.)

**★ SOLARIS** — (Grade: A) One question surrounds director Steven Soderbergh's glossy remake of Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 film, *Solaris*. Why would Soderbergh attempt to remake a film masterpiece from the most revered and influential Soviet filmmaker? The soulful reasons behind his *Solaris* remake belong to Soderbergh and his muse, but the beautiful results are available to everyone. While shorter and more straightforward, the update remains true to the story's humanistic characters and passionate sense of spirituality thanks to an approachable lead performance from George Clooney. *Solaris* is Soderbergh's most audacious surprise yet, a daring remake of a beloved film that, at first glance, looks too complicated for the Hollywood system. Then again, Soderbergh seemingly has become an expert at knocking down commercial constraints. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**★ STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF MOTOWN** — (Grade: B) Director Paul Justman's *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* is based on Allan Slutsky's same-titled book about Motown bass player James Jamerson. The documentary uses Jamerson's story as the launching point to revisit the surviving members of the Funk Brothers, the largely unknown session musicians behind the Motown hits. The film is a collection of stories and it is the director's responsibility to make audiences forget what's missing, which in this case, is any new insight into Motown founder Berry Gordy. Obviously Justman wanted his film to celebrate the Funk Brothers rather than vilify their employer. Despite the great musical treasures from a reunion concert in Detroit, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* is orderly instead of truly coming to life. — SR (Rated PG.)

**STAR TREK: NEMESIS** — (Grade: C) The tagline "A Generation's Final Journey...Begins!" would have audiences believe that *Star Trek: Nemesis* is a climactic send-off. The adventure story focuses on Shinzon (Tom Hardy), a renegade warrior intent on taking over the Romulan Empire who also happens to be a clone of Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart). Then there's a subplot involving a discovered precursor to LT. Commander Data (Brent Spiner). All these double characters allow for a lot of talk about humanity, which is a hallmark of the *Star Trek* universe, but there's something missing: The rest of the crew. This journey, directed by

Stuart Baird (*U.S. Marshals*), is a two-man voyage. The faces and bodies are present, but almost none of the personalities. — ttc (Rated PG-13.)

**★ TREASURE PLANET** — (Grade: B) Directors Ron Clements and John Musker tweak Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel into a unique animated adventure. *Treasure Planet* may tell a familiar story but its inventive mix of Tall Ships and outer space travel give Stevenson's beloved characters an energetic boost. Following a map for hidden treasure, young Jim Hawkins (voice of Gordon Levitt) joins a spaceship crew and quickly befriends its cook, Long John Silver (voice of Brian Murray), a half-robot/half-man who has a few surprises up his robot arm. The spaceship's feline captain (voice of Emma Thompson) is a welcome twist on what's normally a boyhood tale. Silver's friendship with Hawkins is heartfelt and believable, making *Treasure Planet* as rollicking an adventure as Disney's 2001 animated film *Atlantis*. — SR (Rated PG.)

**TWO WEEKS NOTICE** — (Grade: C) Am I the only person who would like to see the movie about the lives of characters in romantic comedies after the formulaic cute meetings, simple-minded bits of misdirection, and the oh-so-startling proclamations of true love? It takes about a year of working for rich boob George Wade (Hugh Grant) before Lucy Kelson (Sandra Bullock), a granola-crunchy, Harvard-educated lawyer realizes that she has fallen in love with him. Of course, by this time, she has given her two weeks notice and even found an ambitious replacement (Alicia Witt). Bollock and Grant have perfected the quirky staples of the genre, but I am far more interested in the *War of the Roses* style battle that seems inevitable. I bet that's where the fun begins. — ttc (Rated PG-13.)

**★ WHITE OLEANDER** — (Grade: B) Director Peter Kosminsky's *White Oleander*, as engaging a melodrama as you're likely to see, stars Michelle Pfeiffer, Renée Zellweger, Robin Wright Penn and newcomer Alison Lohman in a story about Astrid (Lohman), a teenage girl who struggles through foster homes and shelters after her mother (Pfeiffer) is sent to prison on murder charges. Wright Penn flashes trashy clothes and a Southern drawl as a born-again Christian who takes Astrid into her dysfunctional home. Zellweger brings the film some much-needed levity as an insecure actress who becomes Astrid's second foster mother. Pfeiffer's cold beauty matches perfectly with her role as Astrid's self-obsessed mother. Still, the film's best performance belongs to Lohman, who equals Pfeiffer in a gripping mother-daughter confrontation at the end of the film. — SR (Rated PG-13.)

**★ THE WILD THORNBERRYS MOVIE** — (Grade: B) What *The Wild Thornberrys Movie* lacks in visual artistry it more than makes up for in storytelling sass. Eliza Thornberry (voice of Lacey Chabert), the 12-year-old girl who can talk to and understand animals, her nature documentary parents (voices of Tim Curry and Brenda Blethyn) and her bratty teen-age sister (voice of Marisa Tomei) all share the rough-hewn characteristics we've come to expect from Nickelodeon cable TV network cartoons. While Eliza lacks the colorful polish of a Disney heroine, her courage and tenacious belief in environmental causes makes her a likable kid heroine. Directors Jeff McGrath and Cathy Malkasian keep the storytelling swiftly, balancing a drama about African poachers with plenty of slapstick humor. — SR (Rated PG.)

## LEO VS. LEO: FROM PAGE 33

was 18 years old.

"How he engaged people was much more important to me. How he was able to make you feel calm around him was more important to me. You talk about a great actor. He (Abagnale) had that gift. He was a great actor."

Most other actors who compare with DiCaprio's dramatic strengths are decidedly older. Scorsese compares DiCaprio with DeNiro, and I don't think anyone would disagree.

If one wants to find a combination of All-American good looks and depth, Nick Nolte springs to mind. As far as actors who are closer to DiCaprio's own age, Jude Law and Johnny Depp are his dramatic equals. That's not the case with newfound action heroes Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. As far as the

rest of the rising male crop is concerned, like Freddie Prinze Jr. and Ashton Kutcher, DiCaprio shares little in common. Like Al Pacino and DeNiro, DiCaprio looks like someone who's in the business for the long haul.

Scorsese calls DiCaprio a great film actor. Spielberg describes his work in *Catch Me If You Can* as brilliant.

The characters continue to get more interesting. He reunites with Scorsese for *The Aviator*, based on the life of Howard Hughes. His next project is *Alexander the Great*, with Luhrmann directing. His roles keep getting more interesting. DiCaprio holds our attention, and it doesn't matter what he's wearing or how he looks. Now that's something no gossip columnist would ever print.