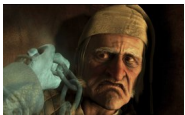


- [149.95\\$ Adobe InDesign CS6 cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Cheap Avnex Voice Changer Software Diamond Edition 6.0.34](#)
- [29.95\\$ Corel WinDVD Pro 11 cheap oem](#)
- [Download openPim](#)
- [Discount - Lynda.com - Illustrator CS6 Essential Training](#)
- [Discount - Aquafadas Pulp Motion Advanced 3 MAC](#)
- [Download Autodesk AutoCAD Plant 3D 2014 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Download Resolume Avenue 3 MAC](#)
- [Buy Autodesk AutoCAD LT 2014 \(32-bit\) \(en,cs,de,es,fr,hu,it,ko,pl,pt,ru,zh\)](#)
- [Buy Alien Skin Bokeh 2 \(en\)](#)
- [Discount - Lynda.com - After Effects Apprentice 14: Shape Layers](#)
- [Download Nik Software Dfine 2.0 MAC](#)
- [Buy Autodesk Navisworks Manage 2014 \(en,cs,de,es,fr,hu,it,ja,ko,pl,pt,ru,zh\)](#)
- [Discount - Adobe Creative Suite 6 Production Premium Student and Teacher Edition](#)

[MAC](#)



### **DISNEY'S A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

For the most part, *Disney's A Christmas Carol* - the third of director Robert Zemeckis' features to employ the process of performance-capture animation - is a strong, serious, stunningly well-designed piece of work, and an unexpectedly resonant take on Charles Dickens' holiday classic. But I do feel compelled to ask Mr. Zemeckis a question: Must *everything* be transformed into a Hollywood thrill ride?

In 2004, the filmmaker turned author Chris Van Allsburg's delicate, charming Christmas tale *The Polar Express* into a mostly hyperactive onslaught of activity; in 2007, Zemeckis made a brutal action-adventure spectacle out of the literary classic *Beowulf*. (If *Beowulf* were really all *that* exciting, generations of English majors wouldn't dread reading it.) Now, Dickens' haunting meditation on regret and death has been gussied up with dizzying flights through the streets of

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 08 November 2009 15:18

---

London, bedpost rockets that shoot Ebenezer Scrooge (voiced and "acted," sort of, by Jim Carrey) into orbit, and a really, really

ill-conceived chase scene featuring a miniaturized version of the Dickensian crank - all this, plus a typically bombastic and unbearable Alan Silvestri score that's like a musical sledgehammer to the brain.

Happily, though, in this cinematic tug-of-war between commerce and art, art wins out. Its previews may have suggested that the author's spirit would be all but obliterated here, but *Disney's A Christmas Carol*

is, in truth, remarkably faithful to its source material, with Dickens' original dialogue surviving almost completely intact, and the director and his animators capturing - brilliantly - the feel of Dickensian London in both its devastating squalor and (for the fortunately wealthy) its overindulgences.

This isn't to say that Zemeckis' technical innovations aren't memorable, and you'll frequently be in thrall to his oftentimes deeply creepy re-imaginings of *A Christmas Carol's* spectral figures: Jacob Marley, dragging beneath him cinder blocks and chains; the Ghost of Christmas Present, a towering Viking with a braying laugh; Christmas Past, whose sprightly, off-kilter shimmying suggests

*Peaks*

dwarf as played by a Zippo lighter. Yet it's also a relief to see that Zemeckis hasn't completely

lost interest in humans; Carrey provides readings that are magnificently tortured yet surprisingly thoughtful, and heartfelt vocals are delivered by the likes of Gary Oldman, Colin Firth, and Bob Hoskins. (Unfortunately, Scrooge excepted, most of the characters here still possess that eerily vacant - and oddly cross-eyed - video-game-avatar look that made

*The Polar Express*

so disturbing.)

Despite its occasional, unnecessary forays into Hollywood-blockbuster terrain, *Disney's A Christmas Carol*

is a first-rate rendering of Dickens' holiday mainstay. I do hope, though, that following this success, Zemeckis chooses to take a breather from his recent spate of literary-adaptation roller coasters. The notion of a jacked-up, computer-animated

*Goodnight, Moon*

is almost too much to bear.



## ***THE FOURTH KIND***

Against all expectation, logic, and common sense, I had a pretty great time at the sci-fi thriller *The Fourth Kind*; the movie is so serious that it's downright silly, and so silly that it's downright irresistible.

A blend of fabricated "documentary" footage and Hollywood "re-enactments," director Olatunde Osunsanmi's alien-abduction saga tells of a series of unexplained visions, disappearances, and killings that plagued Nome, Alaska, in the fall of 2000, and before the narrative even gets underway, *The Fourth Kind* is already earnest to the point of self-parody. (You might, in truth, find it hard to avoid giggling within the film's first *seconds*, as lead actress Milla Jovovich introduces herself to the camera - how friendly of her! - and warns us that, "some of what you are about to see is extremely disturbing," like she's hosting a big-screen version of *Unsolved Mysteries*

.) Yet strangely, even though the movie is all sorts of ridiculous, you don't laugh at it; the fierce, if misapplied, sincerity of Jovovich and Osunsanmi won't *let* you.

The *faux*-documentary sequences - especially those featuring Jovovich's crazy-eyed character inspiration, psychologist Abigail Tyler - are staged with just enough low-rent believability to be enjoyably nerve-racking, and the split-screen action is presented with considerable wit;

*The Fourth Kind*

may be a joke, but it's a punchy, surprisingly well-executed joke. And while there are a few pokey detours and a weak wrap-up, the film also boasts a satisfying number of shocks and shivers, and Jovovich and Elias Koteas at least lend the film as much emotional authenticity as it can bear. Overall, it's a good, trashy time at the cineplex, and I was personally grateful for that introduction, in which our star reveals that the "J" in her last name is actually pronounced as a

"Y" sound. That means I've spent the past 18 years pronouncing "Jovovich" incorrectly. Who says Hollywood entertainments can't be educational?



### ***THE MEN WHO STARE AT GOATS***

In the absurdist comedy *The Men Who Stare at Goats*, George Clooney is in his self-deprecating, nutball *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

mode, Jeff Bridges suggests what might've happened had Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski enlisted in the armed forces, Kevin Spacey consumes eggs laced with LSD ... and the movie's *still*

only half-good. There are plenty of terrific moments in director Grant Heslov's tale (purportedly based on true events) of psychic warfare and America's peace-seeking "New Earth Army," including scenes of cleverly staged slapstick, witty repartee, and a priceless bit in which Clooney attempts (and fails) to cook hamburgers via solar power. Yet after about 70 minutes of amusing flashbacks and goofy encounters, you find yourself still waiting for the plot to kick in, and begin to realize that amusing flashbacks and goofy encounters are all there

*is* to the film. Despite its attempts at a framing narrative, with Ewan McGregor portraying an understandably puzzled journalist,

*Goats* merely flits along from one random, sketch-comedy conceit to another, and while the results are modestly entertaining, it's hard not to be disappointed that so much talent is being put in service of a slapdash, military-themed episode of

*Saturday Night Live*

# Marley and Me: "Disney's A Christmas Carol," "The Fourth Kind," "The Men Who Stare at Goats," and "The

Written by Mike Schulz

Sunday, 08 November 2009 15:18

---



~~THE FOLK who write/direct the wonderfully strange and creepy Dragon Bait and the m~~