

## Blu-ray Review: Bizarre Misfire ‘The Odd Life of Timothy Green’ Falls Flat

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CHICAGO – “The Odd Life of Timothy Green” is the sort of extravagantly wrong-headed misfire that perhaps only could’ve been made by talented people. The director is Peter Hedges, an accomplished screenwriter best known for adapting his excellent book, “What’s Eating Gilbert Grape,” for the big screen. The ensemble cast reads like a roll call of America’s most reliable character actors.

What went wrong? Oh, where to begin? It appears as if Hedges had set out to construct a heartwarming family drama out of increasingly uncomfortable, squirm-inducing scenarios. Consider the multitude of moments in which goggle-eyed adults ask a child if they can touch him and he happily complies. Or the scene where that same creepy kid draws a startlingly sexy portrait of an old curmudgeon. Or how about all of those times when the saintly brat just stands there smiling for no apparent reason.



Blu-ray Rating: **1.5/5.0**

Meet the extremely odd Timothy Green, played by CJ Adams in the least effective child performance since Thomas Horn in “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.” To be fair, Adams is presented with an impossible acting assignment. He plays a chipper boy who grows out of the ground during a magical rainstorm and enters the lives of a childless couple, Cindy (lackluster Jennifer Garner) and Jim (Joel Edgerton). Grieving over their inability to conceive, the lovers are granted a mystical angel-child who probably works for the same firm as Mary Poppins. Leaves sprout out from the boy’s legs, a fanciful conceit that looks flat-out cheap. Once the leaves fall to the ground, Timothy’s time on earth has reached its end. But until then, the boy spreads joy to all who come in contact with him, while teaching Cindy and Jim the true meaning of parenting...I guess. He’s like an ungodly hybrid of Pollyanna, Jesus Christ and Frosty the Snowman. No wonder why Adams had no idea how to play him, and no wonder why Disney dumped this into theaters without any semblance of a marketing campaign. Regardless of whether Hedges crafted the story with sincerity, every frame of his picture rings entirely false.



The Odd Life of Timothy Green was released on Blu-ray and DVD on December 4th, 2012.

Photo credit: Disney

Part of what makes supernatural escapism so much fun is its ability to approximate how earthbound humans would react to unexplainable phenomena. None of the characters in Hedges' script act like real humans. When the naked, mud-caked Timothy suddenly materializes in their house, Cindy and Jim's initial reaction is more "awww" than "AAAAH!" Another grave miscalculation is the casting of Rosemarie DeWitt and Dianne Wiest (two of modern cinema's most engaging actress) as sour, petulant shrews. Garner has done good work in the past, particularly in "13 Going on 30" and "Juno," but here her performance is so painfully broad that it comes off as amateurish. Perhaps even Garner couldn't bring herself to believe in the film's subject matter. Who could?

"The Odd Life of Timothy Green" is presented in 1080p High Definition (with a 1.85:1 aspect ratio), accompanied by English, French and Spanish audio tracks and includes Blu-ray and DVD copies of the film. Among the extras are an audio commentary track with Hedges, where he admits that it was his goal to make an enduring classic along the lines of "It's a Wonderful Life" or "E.T." (always a dangerously high bar to set for oneself), and a brief gallery of deleted scenes (highlighted by a funny ad-lib from DeWitt). The most diverting extra is an extended interview with Glen Hansard, who wrote and performed the film's rivetingly soulful song, "This Gift." He says that he connected to the film's theme of a fleeting relationship that ends up altering the course of one's own life, yet Hansard's song was likely inspired more by his own short-lived romance with his "Once" collaborator, Markéta Irglová (who also provides vocals for "This Gift"). Hansard's music is so raw and passionate that it puts the ultra-bland "Timothy Green" to shame.

*'The Odd Life of Timothy Green' is released by Disney and stars Jennifer Garner, Joel Edgerton, CJ Adams, Odeya Rush, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Rosemarie DeWitt, David Morse, M. Emmet Walsh, Lois Smith, Ron Livingston, Common and Dianne Wiest. It was written and directed by Peter Hedges. It was released on December 4th, 2012. It is rated PG.*



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By [MATT FAGERHOLM](#) [14]  
Staff Writer  
HollywoodChicago.com  
[matt@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:matt@hollywoodchicago.com) [13]

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