

LATEST FILMS

Fred Claus

REVIEWED BY DNA SMITH
Special to Florida Weekly

Running Time: 107 minutes
MPAA rating: PG

GRADE: F



Every year there's at least one teeth-gratingly awful Christmas movie inflicted upon an unsuspecting public ("Christmas With the Kranks" or "Jingle All the Way" or "Bad Santa" — you get the picture). This year is no exception.

"Fred Claus" is to Christmas movies as Dr. Kevorkian is to comedy. Yes, I made a Kevorkian joke. Heck, if the makers of "Fred Claus" are too lazy to make good jokes, why should I?

Vince Vaughn stars as, well ... Vince Vaughn.

Seriously. This guy is STILL playing the same character he played in "Swingers," "The Breakup" and "The Wedding Crashers." The cocky hipster hustler schtick has worn thin, and Vaughn doesn't have the acting chops to carry a film.

Vaughn is the older brother of Santa Claus (played by Paul Giamatti in the most mind-bogglingly bizarre casting choice EVER).

Santa and his North Pole crew are in danger of being shut down by the faceless

board of directors who oversee holidays (they fired the Easter Bunny). A smarmy efficiency expert (Kevin Spacey) is there to find fault with Claus' operation, and he is going to exploit Vince Vaughn's sibling rivalry with Santa in order to shut down Santa's operation.

In the process, Vaughn screws things up with Santa, the elves, his girlfriend, everybody. But thankfully, by the end of the movie he learns Important Lessons about Family and The Spirit of Christmas. You, on the other hand, will be wondering how to get two hours of your life back.

Please. Trust me. Avoid this movie. There are so many great Christmas movies you can rent or own. You don't need to waste your time or money on this abomination. ■

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Waitress
A film by Adrienne Shelly
Keri Russell
"Delicious fun!" — USA Today
"Sweetheart of a comedy!" — Rolling Stone
PG-13
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