

Reel

BY BONNIE DATT

HOLLYWOOD'S GETTING A BIG OL' lump of coal in its stocking this year. Tim Allen's tossed out his pillows. Macauley Culkin's too busy partying to outfox those wascally burglars. Even Tiny Tim's probably off trying to sneak into *Showgirls*. We've got adventure, fantasy, drama and scandal, but no heart-warming holiday hash. If you want Bumble the abominable snowman, rent *Rudolph*.



Cutthroat Island

MGM/UA

It's 1650 on the high seas, where real men wore patches (for motion sickness — those waters were rough). Matthew Modine plays the swashbuckling, treasure-hunting, rum-swilling, skull-and-cross-bone-waving, timber-shivering lord of the plank. And Geena Davis plays the babe.

Othello

Castle Rock



Moor Shakespeare. And what's a Hollywood Brit pic without Kenneth Branagh? In this classic tragedy, Branagh plays Iago, one of Will's most legendary bad guys. Laurence Fishburne (*Higher Learning*) plays the tragic hero. Guess Keanu wasn't available.

Heat

Warner Bros.



Al Pacino is the heat. Robert De Niro is the thief he's burning to catch. Both are obsessive in their pursuits, so suspense should simmer as they try to outwit each other. Add Val Kilmer (the new Batman) to the picture, and this movie burns hot, hot, hot!

Nixon

Hollywood Pictures

Oliver Stone raked some muck with his take on JFK's story. Now he's going after Tricky Dick.

Anthony Hopkins plays Mr. I-Am-Not-a-Crook. Ed Harris (*Apollo 13*) also stars, but it just may need a scene with Juliette Lewis shimmying to liven it up à la Stone's *Natural Born Killers*.

Mary Reilly

Columbia/TriStar



Let's see. How to get a gorgeous woman in the old Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde story... Make the Jekyll half be a gorgeous woman? Done already. OK, make the gorgeous woman Dr. Jekyll's maid. Who falls in love with him. Julia Roberts is the maid. John Malkovich (*In the Line of Fire*) is the mad scientist.

Wild Bill

MGM/UA



It's about time someone glorified the Old West, brought to life some of those legendary heroes.... Ahem. Jeff Bridges (*Blown Away*) plays the famous sharpshooter Wild Bill Hickok. Ellen Barkin (*This Boy's Life*) plays Calamity Jane. And if you're really good, Buffalo Bill Cody will make an appearance, too.

Sabrina

Paramount



Bogart and Hepburn made the first one a classic. Now Julia Ormond (*First Knight*) fills Audrey's shoes. Harrison Ford Bogie's, in this Cinderella tale of two brothers vying for one girl. Greg Kinnear (the guy on after Conan) plays the playboy brother. Talk show guy or Han Solo? Tough call.

The Stupids

Savoy



Need we say more? Tom Arnold stars. Now, need we say more? OK, OK. Based on the best-selling kids' books, *The Stupids* is about the Stupid family, a clan so dumb it's happy. Even the dog, Kitty. We're thinking they live somewhere between the Coneheads and the Whiners.

Sudden Death

Universal



It's the seventh game of the Stanley Cup finals, the Pittsburgh Penguins vs. the Chicago Blackhawks. Terrorists take a hostage. Pittsburgh needs a hero. Mario Lemieux? No. Jean-Claude Van Damme plays a fireman who races the clock to save the day. Wonder if he has a hat trick up his sleeve.

Sense and Sensibility

Columbia/TriStar



Victorian sensibilities just didn't make sense — if Daddy died, the girls were sunk. Emma Thompson (*Howards End*) plays a daughter left with money and men problems. Hugh Grant plays one of the men. Thompson also adapted the script, so expect women with old-fashioned oomph.

Dracula: Dead and Loving It

Castle Rock



He's spoofed westerns, space and Kevin Costner. Prince of Thieves. Now Mel Brooks (*Robin Hood: Men in Tights*) is taking a bite out of the horror genre. Leslie Nielsen (*Naked Gun*), another king of satire, stars as a clutzy Dracula. He's not a bad guy — he just wants to neck.

Father of the Bride Part II

Touchstone Pictures

The bride (Kimberly Williams) is expecting; so is her father. Can Steve Martin deal with being an old Daddy and a young Grandpap? Didn't Dianne Wiest do this in another Steve Martin movie (*Parent Hood*)? Martin Short returns, only this time he's coordinating the baby shower.

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Screen Saver

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

You're not still a virgin, are you? Isn't there some sort of rule that you have to do it by Thanksgiving break? Why not do it this Saturday night, at midnight — and don't forget your squirt gun.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show, one movie that only gets better the more you watch it, turned 20 this year. And it's still going strong, probably at a cheesy theater near you.

Rocky Horror features Tim Curry (*The Hunt for Red October*) as Frank N Furter, the sweet transvestite from the planet Transylvania. He provides shelter — and a whole lot more — for Brad (asshole!) and Janet (slut!) on a dark and stormy night. A pre-*Bull Durham* Susan Sarandon plays Janet.

Rocky Horror is the longest-running film in cinema history. How could it die? It's not like you can pop it in your living room VCR, dance around in lingerie, throw toast at your brother and shout at the TV. Well, maybe you can. But you kind of miss something if you can't have group sex in a packed theater and learn new responses from people who have taken in *Shows* around the nation.

Why such a cult following for a movie that's just plain bad?

"Maybe it's like being in love," suggests Sarandon. "You shouldn't try and dissect it."



The Reel Deal

Mighty Aphrodite

And you thought there would never be use in knowing *deus ex machina* and all that other Greek tragedy crap. *Mighty Aphrodite*, written and directed by Woody Allen, has all the elements: A hero whose *hubris* almost gets the best of him, a blind soothsayer named Tiresias, a Chorus that narrates the tale from an outdoor amphitheater — then steps into the hero's New York apartment to stop him from calling a prostitute. It's classic.

Allen and Helena Bonham Carter (*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*) play a couple who adopt a baby (no Woody Allen adoptee cracks, please). Mira Sorvino (*Quiz Show*) plays Linda, the birth mother, a porn star and actress/hairdresser wannabe.

Sorvino, whose character has an apartment tastefully decorated with phallic symbols, calls her part the greatest dumb blonde role in the past 25 years, if not ever.

"I walked around in Philly in spiked heels and in crazy little fluffy sweaters and outrageous leopard prints, and I was Linda for three days in preparation for starting the film."

When the Chorus breaks into a Broadway number, you know you're watching high comedy. Er, tragedy. Whatever. Euripides would be proud.