

# New 'X-men' falls short

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'X-Men: The Last Stand' is enjoyable but not satisfying

'X-Men: The Last Stand,' an epic fanwank that comic books everywhere have been waiting for, is cinematic sex without the pay-off.

The third installment in the X-Men trilogy, the overeager 'Last Stand' finishes before the viewer can, building and building but never quite satisfying.

The movie opens seductively enough — a flashback to a convincingly younger Professor X (played by Patrick Stewart) and Magneto (Ian McKellen) — and continues with a tantalizing procession of characters and cameos.

When it all goes horribly wrong, titillation gives way to awkward attempts at excitement as the movie tries to sort out what's going on with nearly a dozen established char-

acters, while simultaneously introducing at least as many new characters.

Highlighting the awkwardness are a number of uncomfortable attempts at pleasing moviegoers: Halle Berry's talentless overacting as Storm, Kelsey Grammer's unconvincing makeup as Beast, countless undeveloped or barely touched on characters, blatant pandering so poorly executed they cause involuntary twitches and, worst of all, rushing through everything to fit it into an allotment of time that is far too short to contain it all.

It isn't until about halfway through, when it eases into a comfortable rhythm, that the movie manages to penetrate the viewer's imagination and really start taking them on a wild ride. Grammer's performance is complete perfection in spite of his makeup, the moments in the film that work do so with a fiery passion, and even Berry's unbearable overacting is used to the advantage of a couple scenes.

Unfortunately, it's not long before the movie loses control



Internet Photo

Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman and Ian McKellen (among others) star in the latest X-Men film "The Last Stand."

and consummates the story in a climax that looks more like a B-rated video game cinematic than a movie. Then it's done, and as the movie settles down again it tries to apologize with some epilogues that would be quite pleasant — if it weren't for the fact that the viewer is still too frustrated and unfulfilled to properly enjoy them.

The only hope fans have

is the movie's promise that "X-Men 4," which is left wide open, will be a better lover.

In the end, "X-Men: The Last Stand" may not be mind-blowing and it may be frustrating, but it can't be called an unpleasant experience.

As far as cinematic coitus goes, it's awkward, rushed sex that doesn't fully satisfy. But it's sex nonetheless.

# 'Da Vinci Code' no mystery; it's God awful



Internet Graphic

C.J. Ciaramella  
Tayo Stalnaker

The Clackamas Print

Director Ron Howard's latest movie "The Da Vinci Code," based on Dan Brown's best-selling novel, opened in theaters world-wide last weekend.

The Clackamas Print sent two reporters to review the film. What follows are their unfiltered thoughts after watching the movie.

**Ciaramella:** So did you hear Jesus isn't the son of God?

**Stalnaker:** Do you really want to start out like that?

**Ciaramella:** So "The Da Vinci Code" starred Tom Hanks, Ian McKellen, Jean Reno, Alfred Molina and Audrey Tautou.

**Stalnaker:** The movie is about Robert Langdon (Hanks), a Harvard professor of Symbology, who gets framed for a murder that took place in the Louvre museum in Paris. What follows is a bunch of convoluted dialogue and clichéd chase scenes throughout France and the U.K.

**Ciaramella:** Personally, if I see one more backward car chase I'm going to scream.

**Stalnaker:** I agree. Also, even though there's a ton of dialogue, it does very little for character development.

**Ciaramella:** It would have the same effect if the dialogue was delivered by inanimate objects, like a stick and a garbage can.

**Stalnaker:** The only interesting aspect of the film was the conspiracy theory that it's based on.

**Ciaramella:** Yeah, I thought Ian McKellen's acting was good, but I kept waiting for him to shout something wizardly.

**Stalnaker:** Tom Hanks acted

like he just graduated from the Steven Seagal Acting Center. You know, the movie probably could've used a little Steven Seagal to save the viewers from boredom.

**Ciaramella:** And Ian McKellen's nose. However, Jean Reno has the best five o'clock shadow in Hollywood.

**Stalnaker:** What's sad is that for "Castaway" Tom Hanks had to lose a hundred pounds or something for the role, but for this movie he only had to grow a mullet.

**Ciaramella:** You have to give the movie some credit, look at its source material.

**Stalnaker:** It's like my old man used to say, "You can't polish a turd."

**Ciaramella:** To be fair, there was some great cinematography.

**Stalnaker:** Only when the camera wasn't focused on the actors.

**Ciaramella:** What's strange is the film rushed through the book but still seemed unbearably long.

**Stalnaker:** Yeah, the plot was given away too early in the film.

**Ciaramella:** The book was no better.

**Stalnaker:** If people are really interested in this conspiracy theory, I would recommend they read "Holy Blood, Holy Grail." It's where Dan Brown got the idea to write this horrible suspense novel.

**Ciaramella:** I'd just advise them to stop being a big nerd.

**Stalnaker:** It's just sad how Tom Hanks' career isn't what it used to be.

**Ciaramella:** Yeah, it really went downhill after "Bachelor Party."



## Interface tries to bring gamers, family together

"With each passing year, video gaming has become an exclusive experience."

This quote can be found at the official website for the Nintendo Wii (pronounced "we") under the heading "Philosophy." So far, they're right.

"The complexities of some of the newest games have alienated those who used to play games with their entire families," it continues.

It's true some games have been known to be family affairs, though it's not nearly as true today as it was in the '80's when lights would blink to the amusement of the consumer and their parents.

"Wii changes all that!"

Wait... what?

This seems like a hefty claim for Nintendo to make, considering they came in third in sales for both hardware and software since the introduction of the Gamecube. But what if this time they're on to something?

At this year's two-day Electronic Entertainment Expo, BBC America reported that Nintendo's lines to try out their new console — unlike their competitors — didn't get any shorter since their opening day. Does that mean people are really that curious about Nintendo's new controller?

For those who haven't heard about it yet, Nintendo's new controller contains a motion sensor that detects player movement in all three dimensions (up, down, left, right, in and out) and is roughly the same size and shape as the average TV remote.

My first reaction when Nintendo introduced the new controller last year was much like my reaction to the touch screen on their handheld DS: "what the f—?" But as I started to read through forums and news bits, something dawned on me.

Nintendo was the first to successfully apply a light-sensitive interface (think "Duck Hunt"), a real-time motion sensitive interface (the Power Glove), shoulder buttons, an analog stick, a real-time radio-wireless control interface (the WaveBird), a true LCD touch-screen and voice-recognition (think "Nintendogs").

Gaming as we know it would be nothing like it is without the innovations of Nintendo. As interfaces and the necessary motor functions required to operate them continue to shift from one device to the next, Nintendo is going to keep pushing the limits of what it really means to be "a gamer."

I can't speak for my friends, my fellow gamers or my three readers, but I can't imagine a world where my parents are fighting over "who's got next." I also have a hard time believing my mom grew up listening to Bob Dylan and The Beatles, but the times they are a changing, and Nintendo's trying to make it happen. Personally, I wish them luck.

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