

THE ODD LIFE OF TIMOTHY GREEN

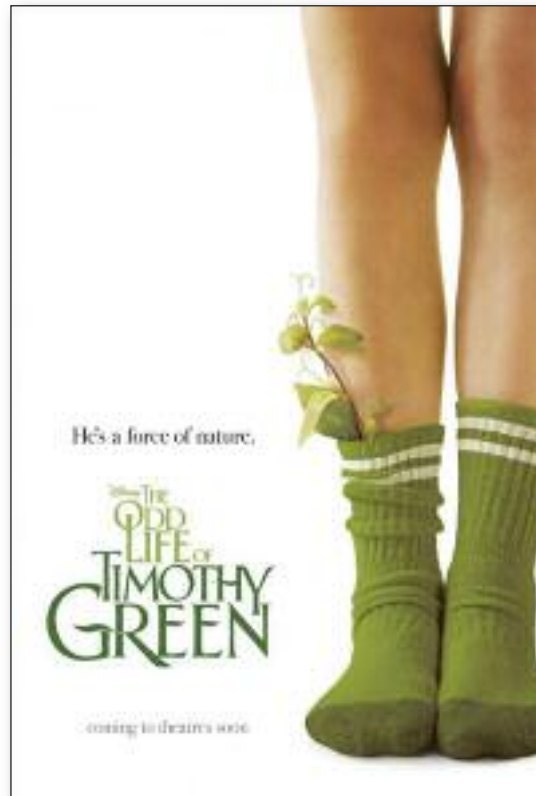
A Disney Presentation. A film by Peter Hedges. A Scott Sanders Production.

A film review by Franco P. Visser

A topic that is very dear to my heart is that of adoption. As someone with personal experience of adoption it was 'per chance' that I came upon the fantasy drama film *The odd life of Timothy Green* which led to me choosing this film to review for this edition of the Journal. Although nothing happens without a reason some might say... Jim and Cindy Green (played by Joel Edgerton and Jennifer Garner respectively) are a childless couple desperately longing to have a child of their own. The film starts with Jim and Cindy sitting in the Adoption Agency's office discussing their application to adopt a child with two rather strict and sceptical agency counsellors. In order for them to be chosen as suitable adoptive parents, Jim and Cindy need to present a motivation to the agency's counsellors. The content of their motivation leads to the unfolding of a rather incredible and magical story that I will briefly outline for you here.

After Jim and Cindy's hopes to conceive a baby naturally are crushed yet again by their fertility specialist, they return home broken-hearted. Jim finds Cindy sobbing in the nursery that they had already prepared for their baby. He takes her down-stairs and together they sit discussing their options and whether or not they will stop trying to have a child. Jim refuses to give up and he grabs hold of paper, and together Jim and Cindy starts dreaming and writing down the qualities and characteristics that their child will have one day. They place the pieces of paper with their hopes and aspirations for their child in a wooden box which they bury outside in the garden. They return to the house and retire to bed.

That evening a freakish storm hits their house and Jim is soon woken by the noise of the storm and the banging of the back door of the house. Whilst closing and locking the back door, Jim notices a figure running inside the house. Cindy soon joins him as they switch on every light in the house looking for the 'intruder'. What they find in the kitchen is an extraordinary sight to behold – a muddy young boy with leaves growing from his legs named Timothy (played by CJ Adams), who starts calling them 'dad' and 'mom'. The couple are thrown into parenthood in a matter of moments, and they now have to take care of this boy who in true Disney style literally 'grew' from the wooden box that Jim and Cindy buried outside earlier on that fateful night. Not only do they



need to adapt to parenthood overnight, but Jim and Cindy also need to explain Timothy's presence to their family members - in addition to getting him settled in a school and within the community.

On his part Timothy befriends an odd girl at school by the name of Joni Jerome (played by Odeya Rush). Together the two friends embark on a magical and creative friendship path of their own. Unbeknownst to everybody, Timothy loses a leaf from the vines sprouting from his legs every time that he fulfils one of the qualities and characteristics that Jim and Cindy had originally written down and placed in the wooden box on the night of the storm. Timothy reveals this to Jim and Cindy, in addition to revealing to them that his time with them is short. Jim and Cindy are heartbroken when they realise that at some stage Timothy will disappear in the same manner

that he just appeared in their kitchen several months before.

Jim is employed at a pencil-making factory run by the Crudstaff family in the small, drought-stricken town of Stanleyville, North Carolina, whilst Cindy is employed in the pencil-making factory's museum that is overseen by a very haughty Bernice Crudstaff (played by the two-time Academy Award winning actress Dianne Wiest). The pencil factory is on the verge of closing, and Timothy's appearance in the lives of Jim and Cindy has far-reaching consequences and effects for not only the Greens, but also the pencil factory and the whole community of Stanleyville. Naturally I will not divulge the further important happenings portrayed in the film, nor will I tell you how the film ends, as I want you the viewer to discover the magic for yourself.

Timothy Green touches the hearts of many in the Stanleyville community, and his character also touched my heart. Having viewed the film I was left with a truly magical and unforgettable experience, albeit farfetched and fantastical. Nevertheless, *The odd life of Timothy Green* is a film worth watching, especially for those struggling with having a child or children of their own. Here is a fantasy story with real-life lessons and inspirations for all who view it. Take time out of your busy schedules for a bit of magic and view the film for Timothy Green and his story will also touch your heart and life. Enjoy.