



**Pack the camera.**



**Leave the paper.**

Donate your newspaper to Times in Education while you're on vacation.

Call 1.888.465.2525 or go to [myaccount.latimes.com](http://myaccount.latimes.com)

For home delivery: [myaccount.latimes.com](http://myaccount.latimes.com) or 1.800.LA.TIMES.

**Los Angeles Times**  
IN EDUCATION



MICHAEL COURTNEY Lionsgate

**MONSTER'S BALL:** *Carrie-Anne Moss as Helen dances with her domestic zombie, played by Billy Connolly, in "Fido."*

## MOVIE REVIEW

# The flesh-eating farce

'Fido's' no dog, and the humor is deliciously funny as it attacks dearly held beliefs.

By **ROBERT ABELE**  
*Special to The Times*

A crafty mixture of George Romero and Douglas Sirk, "Fido" is a boy and his zombie movie that may have an unusually pastoral color scheme but tears into its many satirical targets — war, class, nuclear families, the '50s, our culture of death and violence — with the vigor of a freshly reborn flesh-eater.

Director and co-writer Andrew Currie shows that style and wit in a zombie movie need not solely be relegated to a top-notch gore effects department. It's a manicured, martini-ed small-town suburbia named Willard where "Fido" is set, the only evidence of a nasty war with the undead being the taming of the enemy into a docile (if clumsily

slow) working class. Zombies are now milkmen, gardeners and domestic help, and the bio-technology that allows this — a collar whose red light indicates OK-to-engage — comes from the ubiquitous corporation Zomcon, whose soothing newsreels promise a future free of biting and, going unspoken naturally, safe for humans to live with their comforting diet of repression.

Such is the lot of 11-year-old Timmy Robinson (K'Sun Ray), bullied at school and ignored by his golf-obsessed dad (Dylan Baker). When his exquisitely presentable homemaker mother (aquiline beauty Carrie-Anne Moss) finally keeps up with the Joneses and gets her own zombie servant (Billy Connolly), Timmy sees in their new dull-eyed, grey-skinned possession a companion to love and protect. And in a delicious twist on the Golden Rule, it seems that in moments of crisis, even with that instinct-tamping collar off, a well-treated zombie remembers who its friends are. (One of them isn't, however, cranky old Mrs. Henderson.)

The expected "Lassie" gag comes an hour in, but it's worth the wait, especially when Currie and co-writers Robert Chomiak

and Dennis Heaton have already been providing pointed laughs. Most consistently funny is a deadpan Henry Czerny as the pipe-smoking, battle-hardened Zomcon head of security, who blithely asks a roomful of schoolchildren how many of them have killed a zombie and asserts to the Robinsons over cocktails how quickly he'd take his wife's head off if he had to. ("He's always saying that," she says with a giggle.)

Scottish comedian-actor Connolly has the real trench work though, giving what must be cinema's first fully realized zombie portrayal. Yes, he nails the growls with expected rabidity and reacts to a playful spray from a garden hose with hilariously stifled joy, but when reacting to the perfumed scent of Moss' lonely housewife, Connolly subtly suggests all that the undead have lost. It's a surprising moment in a mostly jokey film, but it indicates as much as the cultural satire and gleamingly effective period décor that, ironically enough, there's still a lot of life left in the zombie flick.

"Fido." MPA rating: R for zombie-related violence. Running time: 1 hour, 31 minutes. Exclusively at the Landmark Nuart, 11272 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A. (310) 281-8223.

**"THE BEST 'PIRATES' YET!  
EPIC AND AMAZING!"**

MARTIN SCORSESE PRESENTS

The New York Times

A BEAUTIFUL  
DREAM OF A FILM

**"VERY FUNNY"**