

DVDs THIS WEEK

By Michael Giltz



Tobey Maguire as Jockey Red Pollard in "Seabiscuit." "SEABISCUIT"

This horse-racing saga starring the dependable **Tobey Maguire** (\$26.98, Universal) would have been better if they'd focused in tightly on the arcane world of jockeys, rather than constantly emphasizing world events (such as the Depression) swirling around the unlikely champion. Still, it's earnest in a good way and an ideal fall-back gift for the holidays. Just buy a few copies and keep them on hand for whomever you've forgotten, be they teenage girls (Tobey), sports fans (the horsing milieu), people over 60 (thanks to its old-fashioned charm), or book lovers (it has a literary pedigree).

"I CAPTURE THE CASTLE"

Sometimes, good casting can hurt a movie. "I Capture the Castle" (\$24.96, Columbia TriStar) is an eccentric romantic drama about a family of artists in pre-war Britain, with a dad suffering from writer's block (**Bill Nighy** of "Love Actually") and two daughters suffering from pangs of first love for the rich young men next door (**Henry Thomas** of "E.T." and **Marc Blucas** of "Buffy"). The family gardener is a young man desperately in love with one of the girls, Cassandra, and unfortunately he's played by the stunningly attractive **Henry Cavill**. Reasonably described as a combination of every Greek god rolled up into one, Cavill is throbbingly passionate for Cassandra and he's so beautiful and pure of heart that the idea she could resist his charms even for a moment is impossible to accept. Obviously, others agree: Cavill has a slew of feature films in the works.

"FREAKY FRIDAY"

Jamie Lee Curtis got all the press for this amiable, if slight, remake of the Disney comedy about a mom and daughter who magically switch bodies and learn what life is like for the other (\$29.99, Disney). But co-star **Lindsay Lohan** — who starred in a remake of "The Parent Trap" five years ago and then did little else — is just as memorable as the rock 'n' roll daughter who loosens up her mom's life.

"THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN"

Sean Connery plaintively admitted he'd turned down the role of Gandalf in "The Lord of the Rings" and then the **Laurence Fishburne** part in "The Matrix." Realizing he'd goofed, Connery reportedly panicked and said yes to playing Allan Quartermain in this dreadful Victorian action flick (\$27.98, Fox). Co-star **Stuart Townsend** (as Dorian Gray) has an even sadder tale: He was cast as Aragorn in "LOTR" and then asked to step aside after shooting began. Commentary tracks from actors, producers, costumers, makeup and visual effects people, but nothing from embattled director **Stephen Norrington**.

Also out:

A bunch of holiday-themed DVDs to get you in the proper mood, including the "20th Anniversary Special Edition a Christmas Story" (\$26.99, Warner Bros.), with **Peter Billingsley** forever yearning for that BB gun; "The Homecoming" (\$14.99, Paramount), the — there's no other word for it — heart-warming TV movie starring **Patricia Neal** and **Richard Thomas** that launched "The Waltons"; the long-awaited DVD release of **Albert Finney** in the musical "Scrooge" (\$14.99, Paramount); "Christmas With the Simpsons" (\$14.98, Fox), with five wintry episodes including the hilarious "Mr. Plow"; the British holiday special "Robbie the Reindeer" (\$14.99, BBC Video); and "Happy Holidays With Bing and Frank" (\$19.99, Hart Sharp), a too expensive curio strictly for fans of ring-a-ding dialogue.