

Christmas in April?

After walking downstairs this morning, I ALMOST looked at the calendar to make sure I knew what day it was. On the television, the [1994 remake](#) of the classic *Miracle on 34th Street* was playing. Whichever channel was playing this must have been pretty desperate, especially at the end of April when most people's thoughts are not focused on anything remotely related to Christmas. Plus, why choose such a horrible remake to play?

The beloved [1947 movie](#) starred [John Payne](#), [Maureen O'Hara](#), a young [Natalie Wood](#), and Edmund Gwenn who received the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his role as Kris Kringle. It also featured William Frawley who is best known for his role as Fred Mertz on "[I Love Lucy](#)."

The overall plot of both films is relatively the same. A department store Santa who claims to be the real thing, is put on trial to prove his sanity. He seeks to not only convince the court but also a young girl who has been trained by her mother to dismiss all notions of myths, fantasy, and imagination.

Too much was changed from the original to the most recent remake. Characters were dropped including a young man who works with and idolizes Kris. In the original, Kris sings a charming song to a young Dutch girl in her native tongue. Macy's department store was wise enough to not allow the use of its name in the remake; instead, the name was changed to Kohl's (or if you prefer, Coal's which 20th Century Fox should have been given in their collective stockings).

But, the casting of [Mara Wilson](#) as Susan sent shivers down my spine. Something about the youngster's acting just makes me cringe. This film and [Mrs. Doubtfire](#) are the only times I remember seeing her on screen.

There have been a few other television remakes of the immortal classic. However, as in most Hollywood remakes, the original is far better. Next holiday season, treat the entire family to this fun movie (even if you have to explain to the children why there is no color).