



DISASTER STRIKES, SORT OF, IN *FORCE MAJEURE*

SNOW BALLS

A moment of panic leads to domestic chill in *Force Majeure*

At the heart of most Hollywood films, from *The Wizard of Oz* to *World War Z*, is some perceived threat to the domestic tranquility of the nuclear family. Whether it's a tsunami, invading aliens or a stampeding horde of zombies, the danger that rattles our cinematic daydreams is the impending chaos of social disintegration, and it typically befalls an unlikely hero (usually dad, sometimes mom) to suddenly acquire a spine and ward off the forces of evil. Such neat and handy acts of transference — family dysfunction is a bitch, let's save the world instead — are the restorative fairy tales by which we live.

In *Force Majeure*, Swedish director Ruben Östlund completely inverts the heroic formula of an imperiled family discovering salvation in the overcoming of disaster, resulting in a tight, precise portrait of bourgeois despair that is by turns hilarious and disturbingly itchy. A young, attractive, well-to-do Swedish family, Tomas (Johannes Kuhnke) and Ebba (Lisa Loven Kongsli) and their kids, Harry (Vincent Wettergren) and Vera (Clara Wettergren), are on a skiing vacation in the French Alps. As they are enjoying lunch on the veranda one day, a controlled avalanche, set off by explosives to prevent larger catastrophes, begins gaining momentum, creating a panic among the customers: Ebba jumps to protect the children, while Tomas snatches his cell phone from the table and runs like hell.

Disaster is averted; the avalanche was all sound and fury, signifying a cloud of snow that disperses slowly to reveal a family deserted by its presumed patriarch. Tomas returns, nervously, to the table, acting as though nothing happened, but both he and Ebba know the truth — he fled in terror, and whether that act reveals a survival instinct of the reptilian brain or, rather, some essential cowardice lurking in his character, the damage has been done. Expectations have been shattered, including Tomas' own masculine expectations of himself as the protective head of the family.

Force Majeure plays out as one long aftermath of a single spontaneous decision, as husband and wife — joined on vacation by Tomas' old friend Mats (Kristofer Hivju) and his 20-year-old girlfriend, Fanni (Fanni Metelius) — negotiate the meaning of what happened. The cinematography is gorgeous, with vast fields of snow and majestic peaks providing the background to a game of romantic brinkmanship, wherein one couple struggles to find equilibrium based on the revelation of surprising new information about each other. And, like avalanches, they find their own disasters hard to control. (*Bijou Metro*)

Big Eyes

Tim Burton's *Big Eyes* falls firmly into the you-can't-make-this-stuff-up camp, which seems appropriate for a director best known for making all kinds of wonderful things up. In broad strokes and small details, family drama and art-world slyness, *Big Eyes* explores how Walter Keane (Christoph Waltz), a conniving would-be artist, convinced his painter wife, Margaret (Amy Adams), that no one would be interested in a woman's art. Burton's shiny, eerie, loving film is earnest and wry, its tone a cinematic reflection of the pop allure and moodiness of Margaret's paintings. (*Regal Valley River & Cinemark 17*)

The Babadook

Who — or, rather, what — is the Babadook? And why is it that, once you let the Babadook in, you can never get rid of it? The story, which draws on Victorian horror themes of domestic strife and loss of identity as well as from classic scary movies like *Let the Right One In* and *Rosemary's Baby*, is fairy-tale simple: A struggling single mother, Amelia (the excellent Essie Davis), is losing her grip on life. As Amelia reads to her son Samuel from a previously unnoticed book on their bookshelf — *Mister Babadook* — a sinister threat takes hold of mother and child: The pop-up storybook, about an insidious shadow creature who stalks the darkness, seems to immediately insinuate itself into the fabric of their lonely lives. With *The Babadook*, director Jennifer Kent taps a primal vein of parental anxiety — can I protect my child? And, worse, can I protect my child against my own darkest impulses?

Birdman

Birdman rests squarely on the shoulders of one put-upon fellow: Actor-writer-director Riggin Thomson (Michael Keaton) is struggling to open a Broadway adaptation of Raymond Carver's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love." He's got all the normal problems — needy actors, budgetary concerns — as well as an alter ego that speaks to him in the form of Birdman, the superhero character with which he made his name (as Keaton himself did with *Batman*), years ago. Foul-mouthed and hateful, Birdman is that voice in your ear that tells you you're a failure, a fraud, washed-up, worn-out, worthless; that this arty stuff isn't what anyone cares about. But the false dichotomy of art versus entertainment is just a distraction, a spare idea the film tosses in and then leaves alone. The only conflict it's really interested in is one man versus himself: the part that soars and the part that's always looking down, aware how far there is to fall. (*Bijou Metro*)

BIJOU Showtimes
January 9-15
492 E. 13th Ave.
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THE IMITATION GAME 1:50, 4:25, 7:00, 9:30
THE INTERVIEW Fri-Sat 8:00, 10:30
Su-Tu 8:00
Wed 10:00 Thu 8:00
THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING Fri-Tu 2:40, 5:20
Wed 2:40
Thu 2:40, 5:20

Showtimes and info: 541-686-2458

BIJOU METRO 43 W. Broadway
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Ninkasi Brewing presents
THE BABADOOK Fri-Sat 7:40, 10:15
Sun 10:15
Mo-Thu 7:40, 10:00
BIRDMAN 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:35
CITIZENFOUR 2:40, 5:10
FORCE MAJEURE 1:45, 4:25, 7:00, 9:40
THE HOMESMAN Fri-Sun 12:00, 2:15, 5:00, 7:40
Mo-Thu 2:15, 5:00, 7:40, 10:10

Izakaya Meiji Company presents
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PONYO (2009) Sun 12:00 (dub), 7:35 (sub)

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INTO THE WOODS [CC,DV] (PG) ★ Fri. - Sat.(110) 410 720 1005
UNBROKEN [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat.(1240 345) 645 945
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HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES 3D [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat.950 PM
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CHEF 7:00*

THE EQUALIZER 7:00*
SKELETON TWINS 9:15*
TUSK 9:15*

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ANNIE (2014) (DIG) (PG) 12:15, 3:55, 7:25, 10:15
BIG EYES (DIG) (PG-13) 11:20, 2:20, 4:55, 7:45, 10:20
BIG HERO 6 (DIG) (PG) 12:20, 4:00, 6:55, 9:45
EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS (DIG) (PG-13) 7:00, 10:25
GAMBLER, THE (DIG) (R) 11:15, 2:00, 4:45, 7:35, 10:25
HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES (3D) (PG-13) 11:00, 2:15, 5:30, 7:10, 10:30
HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES (DIG) (PG-13) 12:30, 3:50, 8:45
HUNGER GAMES: THE MOCKINGJAY, PART 1 (DIG) (PG-13) 12:10, 3:45, 7:15, 10:10

THE IMITATION GAME (DIG) (PG-13) 11:05, 1:50, 4:35, 7:30, 10:15
INTO THE WOODS (DIG) (PG) 12:05, 3:40, 7:05, 10:00
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: SECRET OF THE TOMB (DIG) (PG) 11:35, 2:25, 5:00, 7:50, 10:20
THE PENGUINS OF MADAGASCAR (DIG) (PG) 11:25, 1:55, 4:25
SELMA (DIG) (PG-13) 12:00, 3:35, 7:05, 10:05
TAKEN 3 (DIG) (PG-13) 11:10, 12:25, 2:10, 3:25, 4:50, 6:15, 7:40, 9:05, 10:30
UNBROKEN (DIG) (PG-13) 11:55, 3:30, 7:00, 10:10
WILD (DIG) (R) 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:20, 10:05
WOMAN IN BLACK 2: ANGEL OF DEATH (DIG) (PG-13) 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:55, 10:35

*Visit cinemark.com for restrictions that apply.

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10:00AM-5:30PM - Artisan Fair
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1:30PM - Pie Sale
PERFORMANCES
7:30PM Tom Paxton
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Sky in the Road
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