



DISOBEY AND PUNISH

Disobedience plays with power within a love story

Ronit (Rachel Weisz) works in a hip studio, photographing old men with Jesus tattoos in New York City when she finds out her father, a well-loved rabbi in a Jewish Orthodox cloister of London, has died while delivering a sermon. Before she returns home, she first drinks, ice skates and has a random hook up in a bar bathroom.

Her homecoming isn't exactly happy. She was estranged from the beloved rabbi. In fact, the local Hebrew-language newspaper writes in his obituary that he died without any surviving family. Moreover, she's surprised to see two friends from her youth have married: Dovid (Alessandro Nivola) and Esti (Rachel McAdams). Dovid, a student of Ronit's father, offers her to stay at their home. Pushing further the sub-theme of "you can never go home again," Ronit seems to have forgotten basic Jewish manners — mainly, don't discuss business on the Sabbath.

The story unravels slowly as we find that during Ronit's stay, a love is rekindled between her and Esti.

Naturally, the love between Esti and Ronit causes tensions, allowing the role of power to be explored during the movie. Esti is the central focus of two power dynamics: Western liberalism personified through Ronit and faith anchored in the belief system of an Orthodox Jewish community. Should she invest in her own individual wellbeing and leave for love? Or stay for the sake of duty — start a family and support Dovid as he works toward his advancement in the community?

And that's the role of institutions. We're all susceptible to power and its role in disciplining us to act accordingly, whether this power comes from a hip New York City photographer or gender roles from the Torah.

The power dynamics within the movie aren't fictitious. *Disobedience* is based on a novel of the same name by Naomi Alderman. Alderman told *The Guardian* that the book's inspiration came from her time working in the publishing industry in New York City, where she met gay and lesbian Orthodox Jews who were told they were doing Hitler's work if they didn't get married and have children.

Although the characters could have been developed further, the effect of the tensions that emerge when having to choose between faith and the self are illustrated through the camera shots selected by director and co-writer Sebastián Lelio. The extreme close shots of Rachel McAdams portray her struggle of choice and his catalog of camera shots of McAdams and Weisz's faces alone could easily tell their love story.

But, as powerful as their performances were, Nivola's lecture discussing freedom of choice delivers one of the most memorable scenes, as he himself ponders friendship and faith, accented through shaky, close up camerawork that breaks in and out of focus.

Disobedience, in the end, is a love story about the question of losing one's faith, amplified by power dynamics of social institutions, whether it's in institutions of Western liberalism that favors individualism or agreeing to see oneself within a community. (*Broadway Metro*)

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A pastor of a small church in upstate New York spirals out of control after a soul-shaking encounter with an unstable environmental activist and his pregnant wife. Written & Directed by Paul Schrader (Taxi Driver) and starring Ethan Hawke.
1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30

RBG (PG)
An intimate portrait of an unlikely rock star: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. With unprecedented access, the filmmakers explore how her early legal battles changed the world for women.
Friday - Tuesday 1:30, 3:40, 5:45, 8:00
Wednesday & Thursday 1:30, 3:45, 8:15

THE RELUCTANT RADICAL with Ken Ward in Person! (NR)
Follows activist Ken Ward as he confronts his fears and puts himself in the direct path of the fossil fuel industry to combat climate change.
Wednesday 6:00 pm

BECOMING WHO I WAS (NR)
After a boy is discovered to be the reincarnation of a centuries-old Tibetan monk, his godfather takes him on an epic journey through treacherous and magnificent natural landscapes to discover his past in a story of profound faith and unconditional love.
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