

A Fantastic Old Guard

ENJOY THE IMMORTAL PLEASURE OF WATCHING CHARLIZE THERON MIX IT UP ON SCREEN

By Molly Templeton

Recently, *The New York Times* ran an entire article about how enjoyable it is to watch Charlize Theron fight. Frankly, it wasn't long enough. Given how much I like to watch Theron punch people, I'd like to read several thousand more words on the subject.

Instead, I rewatched Gina Prince-Bythewood's *The Old Guard* (Netflix), in which Theron plays an immortal warrior who, with a small team of other immortals, tries to do some good in the world by taking out bad guys. She has centuries of experience, but the villains have changed over the years. Once, she fought armies. Now, the enemy is an amoral pharmaceutical CEO who looks at Andy (Theron) and her team and sees deathless lab rats. (The movie is based on a comic by Greg Rucka, who also wrote the screenplay.)

But let's not get distracted by the plot, which does what it needs to do in satisfying and even subtle ways. The draw here is twofold: One, yes, is watching Theron fight, watching her climb the walls of a tiny airplane or flip men over her shoulders. The other is the lived-in found-family feel of Andy's team. The youngest, Booker (Matthias Schoenaerts), puts whiskey in his tea and mourns the loss of his sons, a mere 200 years



ago. Joe (Marwan Kenzari) and Nicky (Luca Marinelli) found each other in the Crusades, when they fought on opposite sides; they've been a couple ever since they stopped fighting.

Deftly, lovingly, Rucka's screenplay establishes how much history these four have: They tease and praise each other, switching effortlessly between languages, fighting like an eight-armed single being. Prince-Bythewood can suggest entire lifetimes with close-ups of Theron's face, where all her years of love, exhaustion, trust and gratitude show plainly in every expression. When a new immortal appears, Andy's response is mixed. She wants to bring young, scared Nile (KiKi Layne) into the fold. But she knows what a burden immortality is.

This weight — the weight of centuries — fuels *The Old Guard*. In Andy and Booker, the years feel real, and heavy, and hard. And lonely. They've lost people; half their stories are about lost family, whether blood or chosen. But they can still be surprised. When Nile's anger and fear boil up and she throws herself into a fight with Andy, Theron's face is stoic, tired — until it's not. Until it lights up with surprise, with delight at what this new member of her family is already capable of.

Responsibility and love exist here in careful balance. Joe and Nicky's love balances Booker's overwhelming grief; Andy's sense of purpose, which only grows stronger throughout the film, is a counterweight to the wry practicality with which she approaches immortality. She has no answers for Nile's most basic questions: there is no "why." There's only "what": What will you do with your time? Does it matter if you don't know how much of it there is?

The Old Guard can be a little on the nose sometimes, especially in its music choices. When it finally gets around to a sequence of the whole gang fighting together, I desperately wished for more of that; the choreography is stellar character work. Joe and Nicky need more story (if only this were a series, and we could have whole episodes of them!). But there's so much more to like than to correct. Action films often veer from heroics to hate, with little room for nuance and little time for forgiveness. *The Old Guard* makes that space. Sure, when you're immortal, you have more time to learn from your mistakes. But it's a thing all of us need the time and the grace to do. ■

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NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS Claims against the Estate of Erik Woodley Rasmussen, Deceased, Lane County Circuit Court Case No. 20PB04985, are required to be presented to the Personal Representative, Christian P. Rasmussen, at 440 East Broadway, Suite 300, Eugene, Oregon 97401, within four (4) months from 08/06/20, the date of first publication of this notice, or such claims may be barred. Any person whose rights may be affected by the proceeding may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the Personal Representative, or the attorneys for the Personal Representative. GAYDOS, CHURNSIDE & BALTHROP, P.C., Attorneys for Personal Representative

Jonesin' Crossword

BY MATT JONES

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"Food for Thought"

the first Jonesin' puzzle ever. (#1, May 2001)

Across

1 Band that's the theme of this puzzle
6 "Heroz4hire" rapper --- the Damaja
10 Slasher flick props
14 "... quack quack there, --- quack ..."
15 Actor Arkin
16 "99 Luftballons" singer
17 Impulsive, courageous person, so they say
18 Hollywood cross street
19 He was a real Dick on "NewsRadio"
20 1-Across guitarist and vocalist
23 Summer month, for short
24 Speaks like a heavy smoker
26 Shop class tool
29 Cry convulsively
31 Letters on a Cardinals hat
32 "Bali ---" ("South Pacific" song)
34 1-Across and The Dude of Life album released in 1994
38 "Hell's Half ---" (1954 movie)
39 Velvet Underground vocalist Reed
40 Singers lower than soprani
41 1-Across predecessors and mentors
46 Jazz band's song list
47 They taketh away on Apr. 15
48 --- Fighters (Dave Grohl band)
49 Org. that gives out 9-digit IDs
50 Sends to hell
52 Sound from a lamb
54 1-Across keyboardist who started as a fan
61 Cheat, in a way
63 Cleopatra's river
64 "Jeremy" singer Vedder

65 Subject of "Weird" Al Yankovic's "The White [31-Down]"
66 The last word in sermons?
67 "___ White Swan" (T. Rex song)
68 They're separated on some old sitcoms
69 Elevator, to Elvis Costello
70 European compilation album for 1-Across

Down

1 ___ Farm (bygone clothing line)
2 Mister, in Munich
3 Powerful and pleasing, to a Rasta
4 "Later"
5 Is of practical value
6 Coffeehouse quaff
7 Yale students, familiarly
8 Blow a gasket
9 Dig up
10 "Henry and June" diarist Nin
11 They adore strange things
12 Jim Morrison song, with "The"
13 "___ Anything" (John Cusack movie)
21 Gps. like CARE and Amnesty International
22 Word after bake or garage
25 Ubiquitous December mall guys
26 Sings like Kurt Elling
27 Like an angry cat's back
28 Spied via the telephone
30 Neckwear for Frankenstein's monster?
31 Nondescript category
33 "___ bad, bad thing"
35 1000 K
36 Friend's opposite
37 "Spy vs. Spy" magazine
42 Decoder's wear?
43 "Your ___" (Morrissey album)
44 Man, in Mantua
45 Cars given while yours is in the shop, e.g.
51 Sandwich spreads
53 "We love to fly ___ shows" (Delta slogan)
55 "Rent" character
56 F or G, on sheet music
57 It's worth next to nothing
58 Old Icelandic saga
59 "What ___ Beneath"
60 Remini of "The King of Queens"
61 Corn remnants
62 Raw metal source

