

Two Films Not to Miss

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land and I almost missed it. I literally saw its last show and chose it over two other films headed out of town because it told a story of three generations of black women. (When do we get that opportunity?) This slow burn of a film paid off in the end—and what a pay-off! I'm going to offer some slight spoilers to intrigue you enough to give this film a chance.

It's the story of Ruth (the ever-skilled Gugu Mbatha-Raw), a woman on the run in a dystopian future in which America has gone eight years without rain. This film carries showing-not-telling to some extremes, so it is awhile before we understand that she is on the run because of seizures that she feels coming on but can't control, and which provoke earthquakes. She is on the run because she's dangerous, and also because the government would like to exploit her. Fellow women of color, does this provoke any sense of recognition?

She returns home to her mother (an excellent Lorraine Toussaint) and a daughter whom she left behind for her own safety. And we come to realize eventually that superpowers run in this family of black women, but they have learned to hide them because the

world is not safe for them if people know—and some, like Ruth find them difficult to manage. (Again, fellow women of color, do you feel a stir of recognition?) How they have handled their power, and a shift that happens in the end in recognition of how much the world needs them, is the payoff that made this film exactly what I needed on the hard day I watched it.

I later heard an interview in which Mbatha-Raw indicated that the director, Julia Hart, who wrote the screenplay with her husband, Jordan Horowitz, had not written these characters specifically as black women. I'm not sure what to make of that; to me the story derives its resonance from the fact they are black, so who knows how that all shook out and what angels guided Hart to the choices she ultimately made. All I know is, benefiting from excellent performances from two black women who perhaps carry a lot of knowing in their bones, this film conveys some things that are deeply true about the powerful gifts that women of color bring to the world, the dangers and struggles they face in bearing those gifts, and the stakes for all of us in them finding a way to share their power. Watch for it to stream on-

line, hopefully soon.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. Find her movie blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com.



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Coach a True Hero

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Portland Chief Danielle Outlaw also praised Lowe for his bravery.

Parkrose was evacuated and a nearby middle school was on lockdown for several hours as the investigation unfolded. The high school students were bused to a nearby parking lot where they were reunited with their parents.

That was a point of relief, Parkrose High School freshman Justine Smith told the Portland Observer.

She added that though the incident was "terrifying," she praised the school for "doing an amazing job supporting us."

"All the teachers have been there for us and asked us if we needed to take a break or if we needed to just vent," Smith said, as she was leaving school Monday.

This week the school arranged for a team of counselor support for high school staff and students, made similar arrangements for nearby Parkrose Middle School staff and students, arranged for specific support for students who were in the building that was directly impacted by the incident,

and increased security for protocol--not due to an additional threat--Parkrose Superintendent Michael Lopes Serrao said in a letter to Parkrose families Monday.

"There are so many people who deserve our deepest gratitude. The reports of staff heroism are true and many staff stepped up and put their lives in front of our students to keep them safe," he added.



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