

**THE HUNDRED
YEAR-OLD
MAN
WHO CLIMBED OUT
OF THE WINDOW
AND
DISAPPEARED**

Monday, August 24, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Betsy Sharkey— LA Times *Rated R* *114 Mins.*

Echoes of the hilarious ineptitude of Woody Allen's "Take the Money and Run" and the historic kookiness of "Forrest Gump" turn up throughout "The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared," starring Sweden's beloved comic actor Robert Gustafsson. It's a hoot and a half.

Based on the fanciful international bestseller of the same name, the film is directed with an appropriately wry touch by Felix Herngren. It captures the quintessential baby boom optimism about aging even as it offers up an appealing template for what adventures might unfold if, or when, someone hits the century mark.

Adapted by Herngren and co-writer Hans Ingemansson, "The 100-Year-Old Man" begins as preparations for Allan Karlsson's (Gustafsson) 100th birthday are in full swing at the nursing home to which he's recently been relegated. Candles are being counted, and recounted. News photographers are showing up. Speeches are being readied. There's so much hustle and bustle that no one notices Allan slipping out his window until the assembled crowd bursts into his room, candles blazing, to find him gone.

Allan, it turns out, is usually both innocent and guilty of whatever mischief is happening around him. He is an honest sort who, from an early age, loved blowing things up. Indeed, it was the dynamite surprise he designed for the fox who killed his cat when Allan was 99 that landed him in the nursing home.

The ripple effect of those characteristics — honesty and a preference for problem solving with explosive devices — undergoes expansive examination as he narrates the events of his life, which come along in a series of flashbacks. Meanwhile, Allan's new misadventure is also unfolding.

Allan, like Forrest Gump, turned up in the lives of many world leaders when seminal events were about to happen. And in each case, he somehow bumbles into the solution for whatever question or issue needs resolving each time. Which is exactly what happens to the newly escaped Allan at 100, except the people whose lives he's affecting are ordinary ones.

Herngren manages the constant movement between then and now with a great deal of ease. Director of photography Goran Hallberg, production designer Mikael Varhelyi and costume designer Madeleine Kihlbom Thor help keep the joke going as they conjure up comical parodies of the past and poke just as much fun at the present. Makeup artists Eva von Bahr and Love Larson keep the joke going in aging Allan, to say nothing of the fun they have with the folks whom casting director Claes Stenmark chose for the roles of such well-known figures as Spain's Gen. Franco (Koldo Losada), Josef Stalin (Algirdas Romualdas), Harry S. Truman (Kerry Shale) and a few lesser-knowns, like Al Einstein's brother Herbert (David Shackleton).

To be clear, Allan's is not a life of ease. And even at 100, he finds himself with a string of lethal foes. The first is a brash biker named Bolt (Simon Seppanen) who demands Allan hold on to his suitcase while he uses the bus station bathroom at Allan's first post-escape stop.

That suitcase, which happens to be filled with a great deal of money, will drive the rest of the action. Since driving any sort of action isn't easy if you're 100, helping Allan out is a new collection of friends he'll pick up along the way, starting with Julius (Iwar Wiklander), the old man who minds the non-working train station and is more than happy to tag along.



Before the suitcase and Allan reach their final destination, there will be a lot more bad guys to dispense with: a Chief Inspector Clouseau-type, Det. Chief Inspector Aronsson (Ralph Carlsson), to evade; a haplessly overeducated but ever-indecisive Benny (David Wiberg) to advise; the lovely bohemian Gunilla (Mia Skaringer) to bring along and the elephant she's rescued.

There is a great deal of silliness about Allan's journey from start to finish and no real message other than to never stop taking life as it comes. But there is also a great deal of fun in watching a 100-year-old man climb out a window and disappear.

In English, French, German, Swedish, Italian and Russian with English subtitles.

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tangerine

Monday, September 14, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Manohla Dargis - NYT *Rated R* *127 Mins.*

Little is as it seems in “Tangerine,” a fast, raucously funny comedy about love and other misadventures. That’s true of its main attractions, a pair of transgender lookers with motormouths and killer gams, as well as the nominally straight men occupying their hearts and minds. Appearances both deceive and delight in this tough yet tender, gritty yet gorgeous movie, which was made with ingenious skill and what would count as chump change at the big studios. Shot along a grubby stretch of Los Angeles, it takes place in the looming shadow of the Hollywood sign, but as far from industrial cinema as another galaxy.

That much is obvious the moment the movie opens on Sin-Dee Rella (Kitana Kiki Rodriguez) and Alexandra (Mya Taylor), face to face in a doughnut shop, a single sprinkled confection grandly set before them. Tight friends, Sin-Dee and Alexandra share much in common, including a taste for sweets, a weakness for men and absolute faith in the transformational power of a luxurious wig. Given the girl talk and high-pitched shrieks of laughter, you may not immediately notice that the women are transgender, with identities that speak to the cultural moment. “Tangerine” encompasses dizzying multitudes — it’s a neo-screwball chase flick with a dash of Rainer Werner Fassbinder — but mostly, movingly, it is a female-friendship movie about two people who each started life with an XY chromosome set.

The story, from a script by the director Sean Baker and Chris Bergoch, is largely an excuse to chase after Sin-Dee and Alexandra as they navigate the frayed, less-familiar margins of Los Angeles. It’s Christmas Eve, and Sin-Dee, having been released from jail, is looking to reconnect with her boyfriend and pimp, Chester (James Ransone), when she learns that he’s stepped out on her. That cheating is an occupational prerogative for a pimp doesn’t much concern Sin-Dee, who soon is hot in search of Chester and his mystery woman (Mickey O’Hagan as Dinah). Alexandra, the more pacific of the friends, vainly tries to calm Sin-Dee, a fast-talker and -walker whose bodily rhythms create a time signature that’s answered by the editing, camera swoops and pumping musical beats.



Mr. Baker has justifiably received a lot of attention for shooting “Tangerine” with a few tricked out iPhones and some special lenses. His low-budget triumphalism and mother-of-invention ingenuity hews to a familiar heroic indie-film arc, though more remarkable still is Mr. Baker’s casting of Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Taylor, both fluid, forceful screen presences. He met Ms. Taylor at the Los Angeles L.G.B.T. Center, the 21st-century version of Lana Turner’s apocryphal discovery at Schwab’s; Ms. Taylor introduced him to Ms. Rodriguez. Like Turner, an old-fashioned Hollywood invention, the women embody an on-screen ideal of sexualized, glamorized femininity that means radically different things depending on the bodies expressing it. For Turner, femininity could look like a bad performance, like tawdry drag, even prison. Here, it looks like liberation.

Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t. “Tangerine” doesn’t dive deep into transgender identity; the movie is a dizzy, often exuberant down-and-dirty romp, not a lesson. It casually reminds you that femininity is a mask that can be slipped on and off, as when Sin-Dee’s voice mischievously drops an octave or when Alexandra reminds a foolish client (Scott Krinsky as the parsimonious John) that she’s easily his physical match. What’s radical about “Tangerine” isn’t identity — which enters directly and obliquely, playfully and powerfully — but that Sin-Dee and Alexandra aren’t limited by it. There’s something blissfully freeing about that, just as there’s something shocking when you remember that, not long ago, characters like these would have often been called on to decorate the story’s edges or just laid out on a slab.



Step by humorous, occasionally hurting step, Sin-Dee’s quest takes her across Hollywood, which may be a state of mind to some but is a real neighborhood to others. Rarely since Michael Mann directed “Collateral” has a filmmaker mapped Los Angeles as lovingly and, with such open eyes, as Mr. Baker has. This isn’t the usual movie-made city of fallen, monotonously stereotypical angels, with its suburban mega-fortresses, oceanside views, clogged freeways and Joan Didion anomie. It is, instead, a viscerally, vibrantly lived-in metropolis filled with people of different hues who walk (in Los Angeles!), ride the subway (yes, the subway), hop buses and occasionally jump into the cab of a frisky Armenian, Razmik (Karren Karagulian), whose home life and passengers all add layers to the diversified picture.

This mix feels bracing, honest and unforced. It’s also political (as is the focus, however narratively expedient, on public transportation), which is sometimes the case when black and brown bodies take up this much time and space on an American movie screen and so beautifully, too. Unlike a lot of white directors, putatively independent and not, Mr. Baker hasn’t simply looked in a mirror for his inspiration, but into that infinite world of possibility that is other people. When he bathes Sin-Dee and Alexandra in the luscious orange of another smoggy Los Angeles sunset, you may note the warm, radiant palette and, almost in passing, admire how the harmonious performances fit with the gracefulness of the filmmaking — but what you see, really see, are two women shimmering in the sun.

TESTAMENT *of* YOUTH

Monday, September 28, 7:30 pm

Reviewed by Stephen Holden - NYT Rated PG-13 129 Mins.

"Testament of Youth," James Kent's stately screen adaptation of the British author Vera Brittain's 1933 World War I memoir, evokes the march of history with a balance and restraint exhibited by few movies with such grand ambitions. Most similar films strain at the seams with bombast and sentimentality. This one, with a screenplay by Juliette Towhidi ("Calendar Girls"), is consciously old-fashioned — or should I say traditional? — while maintaining a sober perspective.

An even more conspicuous allusion is a crane shot at a French field hospital where countless wounded and dying soldiers are surveyed from above as the widening focus takes in almost unimaginable suffering in a sea of mud. This powerful moment isn't spoiled by its resemblance to a similar overhead shot of the streets of Atlanta packed with wounded Confederate soldiers in "Gone With the Wind." Quite the contrary, it reminds you of the degree to which Hollywood molded our ideas of conflict and places "Testament of Youth" in a continuum of commercial high-minded war movies.

"Testament of Youth," however, is not fiction; Vera and the other major characters are real-life figures who faced the horrors of the First World War. The movie is also the stronger for having no battle sequences or scenes depicting acts of courage, though you hear about such heroics after the fact. There are just enough shots of life in the trenches to give a glimpse of a hell, peopled by exhausted, mud-covered soldiers who are almost unrecognizable from the vital young men who left Britain thinking they were bound for glory. Other scenes in army hospitals in England and behind the lines in France are unrelievedly grim tableaux.

All this is viewed through the eyes of Vera, portrayed by the Swedish actress Alicia Vikander ("Anna Karenina," "Ex Machina"), who gives her character a purposeful edge of impatience and bitterness. "Testament of Youth" might be described as a feminist war film, because it is saturated with Vera's frustration at her parents' limited ambitions for her and later with her contempt for war. It isn't until the end that she delivers a scathing antiwar diatribe.

The film begins on Armistice Day 1918, then flashes back four years to a scene of Vera, her younger brother Edward (Taron Egerton) and his prep school friends Victor Richardson (Colin Morgan) and Roland Leighton (Kit Harington from "Game of Thrones") frolicking in the countryside.

Vera chafes at her parents' efforts to groom her into a model future wife. Determined to go to Oxford, she rejects the piano her father (Dominic West) gives her and reminds him that it cost the same as a year in college. Contrary to the wishes of her severe, eagle-eyed mother (Emily Watson), Vera is not a flower waiting to be picked by a wealthy suitor, and her parents are aghast when she announces she will never marry. A wary attraction develops between Vera and Roland, both of whom write poetry, but they can meet only with a chaperone present. Nevertheless, they fall in love.

No sooner is war declared than first Roland, then Edward, then Victor — who pines after Vera — succumb to war fever and heed the call to fight. Vera's father relents and sends her to Oxford, where she has a stern but sympathetic adviser in Miss Lorimer (Miranda Richardson).

Soon Vera leaves Oxford for grueling training as a nurse. The movie never asks us to regard her as a swoon-worthy angel of mercy but as a tough, smart woman of action who chokes back her fear and revulsion to do what must be done. At no point does "Testament of Youth" coddle her with misty soft-focus photography.

The absence of battlefield heroics fortifies the movie's staunchly antiwar perspective. The more Vera sees, the more she internalizes the grim reality she absorbs. In one of the saddest scenes, Roland returns on leave with symptoms of what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder. When she asks if he has written any poems while at the front, he contemptuously scoffs: "Poetry! Oh, for God's sake!"

While hardly cold, "Testament of Youth" avoids the temptation to elicit tears, although a reading in the film of Roland Leighton's poem "Villanelle" cuts to the bone. As for the bright, handsome eager beavers who excitedly troop off to a war they believe will end in a matter of weeks, they haven't an inkling of the fate that awaits them.

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YEAR-OLD OF THE WINDOW AND
MAN DISAPPEARED**

"An absurdist comic fable."
David Rooney, Hollywood Reporter
Monday, August 24 at 7:30 pm

"A visually innovative knockout that grabs you
from the first frame."

Peter Travers, Rolling Stone

Monday, September 14 at 7:30 pm



**TESTAMENT
of YOUTH**

"Stunningly Good . . . Desperately Moving."
David Sexton, Evening Standard
Monday, September 28 at 7:30 pm