

Film Clips: Feb. 15, 2021

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David Lührssen, Lisa Miller

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***I Care A Lot* (Streaming February 19 on Netflix)**

Marla Grayson (Rosamund Pike) is a professional legal guardian, exploiting elderly clients to enhance her own personal wealth. After years of success, Marla chooses the wrong mark in Jennifer (Dianne Wiest) whom she places in assisted-living under lock-and-key. Marla is unaware of Jennifer's powerhouse allies: underworld crook Roman Lunyov (Peter Dinklage). To hold her own against Roman's icy intelligence, Marla plumbs the depths of her most ruthless instincts. Sharp staging and witty repartee from the mind of writer/director J. Blakeson, makes use of each ironic event to deftly ratchet up the suspense. You hardly notice his light touch until the damage has been done. (Lisa Miller)

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***Flora and Ulysses* (Streaming February 19 on Disney+)**

An avowed comic book fan and dedicated cynic, 10-year-old Flora (Matilda Lawler) rescues a cute squirrel (voice of John Kassir) from a vacuum cleaner's jaws. Naming him Ulysses, when Flora learns he has super powers, it's her duty to teach the squirrel how to right injustices and generally save the world. Too bad Flora's mom (Alyson Hannigan) disdains the little varmint. Her parents recently divorced, Flora persuades Dad (Ben Schwartz) that she and

Ulysses should live with him because Dad is clueless about the chaos he's signing up for. Adapted from Kate DiCamillo's children's novel, director Lena Khan works overtime cultivating the adorability factor that does Disney proud. (Lisa Miller)

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***My Favorite Blonde* (Kino Lorber Blu-ray)**

Bob Hope ran on autopilot for the final decades of his career but early on, he was one of Hollywood's funniest funny men. He brought perfect timing to characters whose unreasonably high self-esteem left them vulnerable to frustration. In *My Favorite Blonde* (1942), Hope plays a comedian on the run with a beautiful British agent (Madeline Carroll), chased by Nazi spies and the police. The movie spoofs the emerging conventions of film noir and Hitchcock thrillers before turning into a hilarious screwball comedy. *My Favorite Blonde* even goes meta, commenting on itself when the voice of Bob Hope comes on the radio and the Hope character proclaims, "I can't stand that guy." (David Lührssen)

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***Once Upon a River* (Film Movement DVD)**

Margo is 15 in 1977 when life slips out of control after the Native American girl's mother left her with her father in rural Michigan. More trouble comes when her dad's half-brother, deemed white and important in the town, rapes her and in the ensuing violence, her father is killed. She's on the run. Kenadi DelaCerna gives an emotionally convincing performance in this film festival favorite as Margo, registering shame, fear, defiance and determination as she makes her way cross country in search of her missing mother. (David Lührssen)

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***Queen of Hearts: Audrey Flack* (Film Movement DVD)**

When Audrey Flack was at Cooper's Union in the late 1940s, the school was surrounded by the studios of New York's Abstract Expressionists. She was friends with them and painted in dynamic bursts of color—but had other ideas. Still active at 88, Flack tells her story in the documentary *Queen of Hearts*. At Yale during the oppressive heyday of sterile Modernism, she covertly copied the Old Masters and rebelled against the precepts of her teachers. "A feminist who is an artist, not a feminist artist," as she describes herself, Flack became a leading figure in the resurgence of figurative art. *Queen of Hearts* recalls an age when artists could live cheaply in Manhattan, vacation in Europe and work in an atmosphere relatively free hype and artspeak. (David Lührssen)

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