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Land

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Land

Abstract

This is a film review of *Land* (2021), directed by Robin Wright.

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Author Notes

Jodi McDavid is an instructor in Folklore and Gender & Women's Studies at Cape Breton University. She earned her BA at St. Thomas University (New Brunswick) and her MA and PhD from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her PhD dissertation was on anticlericalism in folk and popular culture. Her current research interests include vernacular religion, the folklore and folklife of children and adolescents, and gender and women's studies.



Land (2021), dir. Robin Wright

As a woman who is into homesteading, 45, and a feminist, I desperately wanted to like *Land*. Set in the Rocky Mountains, Robin Wright's directorial debut follows Edee (Wright) as she gets over a personal tragedy by giving everything up and moving to an abandoned cabin in the woods. What follows is an unintentional comedy of errors, when she asks the local realtor to remove her car, and lives there without any transportation. Edee has trouble with a bear entering her cabin and eating her food when she leaves the door open to go use the outhouse. In the following scene she cleans out her cabin and burns cardboard and the like outside, while that night she cannot start a fire (perhaps cardboard or a preexistent flame would help). The pure exasperation coursing through my veins at this point was high, however, I did try to put it in the context of a character dealing with grief and not in her right mind.

At this point, Edee almost dies, but is found by a Mexican hunter who tells her he saw a fire in her cabin on his way out to hunt, and none on his way back, which is why he stopped in.

The hunter, played by Demián Bichir, nurses Edee back to health, bringing her food and feeding her, and becoming her only contact with the outside world. We learn very little about him, or any characters to be honest, until the last quarter of the film. There is a slight opportunity for viewing the relationship as potentially romantic, but the film does not play this up. As Edee gets better, he teaches her how to hunt.

Those familiar with the movie trope of the “magical negro” (the term used by Spike Lee in 2001 to describe people of color whose role in a film is strictly to come to the aid of the white protagonist) could easily see this character as fulfilling a similar role, unfortunately.

These two frustrations with the film, its tropes, and its depiction of a female character with such a lack of awareness of her surroundings, placing herself in such dire consequences, made me unable to enjoy the film. It is unfortunate as there are a lack of female-driven scripts for mature women, and the film was well acted, and had a beautiful location.