

To Tell the Truth

Secrets & Lies •
20th Century Fox
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Rife with rawness and vulnerability, director Mike Leigh's (*Naked*, *Life Is Sweet*) *Secrets & Lies* dives so deeply into the hearts of its characters that you are left with no choice but to feel. Hortense (Marianne Jean-Baptiste) is an unassuming optometrist who



Hortense comes over to her new family's house, there is a scene so beautifully blatant and understated that we can almost feel the hearts and souls of the clan bursting at the seams. The intense performances that Blethyn and Jean-Baptiste deliver offer a study in

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repression and need; the two actors have been rightly graced with numerous accolades. The one thing that symbolizes both the pity and kindness Cynthia feels so strongly is the word "sweetheart," wailed on the verge of tears throughout the movie. It is in her phrasing of this word that the complexity and pain of *Secrets & Lies* beautifully converge.

—Rebecca Kraus

seeks out her birth mother, Cynthia (Brenda Blethyn). Cynthia is a dejected London factory worker whose life bleeds with self-pity and shame. The two are connected by little; not class, not temperament, not even skin color. It is pathos alone that serves as their bond. Cynthia's family, one of heartbreaking repression and dysfunction, provides the framework upon which the secrets and lies of all their lives unravel. When

Kingdom for a Ransom

Ransom • Touchstone
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Ransom grabs you in the first few minutes and never lets go. Mel Gibson plays an airline tycoon whose son is kidnapped. At first, he plays the game, willing to pay a ransom. When he realizes the kidnappers are going to kill his son, he reverses himself and decides to offer a reward for the kidnappers' heads. Renée Russo plays his wife, Kate, who is horrified to learn of her hubby's desperate plans on television. When you see their son, Sean, (played by Nick Nolte's 10-year-old offspring, Brawley) with his eyes taped up and handcuffed to a bed, your heart will sink. The kidnappers include a renegade cop (Gary Sinese), his girlfriend (Lili Taylor), and accomplice Cubby. For the role of Cubby, director Ron Howard chose former New Kid on the Block Donnie Wahlberg, who shows surprisingly broad range. Another real standout is Lonnie Hawkins as the lead FBI agent. *Ransom* is not the best Howard has offered, but for a rental that takes you on an action-packed, emotional roller-coaster ride, you can't go wrong.

—Michael Castner

Ransom is a film that takes you on an action-packed, emotional roller-coaster ride.



10 TOP TEN



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The Rock
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