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Television Review

Hannah's Law



Photo by Chris Large/Crown Media

Hannah's Law, on Hallmark Movie Channel is a late-1800s western with, in foreground, Greyston Holt as Wyatt Earp and Sara Canning in the title role.

Has Guns, Wears Dress, Seeks Justice

By NEIL GENZLINGER

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“Revenge” is between seasons, and “Dog the Bounty Hunter” is on its last legs. What’s a fan of revenge-and-bounty-hunting-themed television to do? On Saturday night the Hallmark Movie Channel steps forward with relief: “Hannah’s Law,” a tasty western tale that seems just right for a weekend in June.

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Like Amanda Clarke on ABC’s “Revenge,” Hannah Beaumont (Sara Canning of “The Vampire Diaries”) saw her world shattered when she was young and vows to make those who did the shattering pay. The story begins in 1866 in Abilene, Tex., with a stark scene in which outlaws unceremoniously kill Hannah’s parents and — perhaps; it’s not entirely clear — her brother while she watches from a hiding place.

When we next meet Hannah, she is a grown woman and in the bounty-hunting business, taking a particular interest, of course, in the gang members who made her an orphan. But unlike some of her competitors, she likes to bring the miscreants in alive so they can face justice.

John Fasano, who wrote the film, has fun with history, filling the fictional tale with real historical figures. Who's that good-looking lawman with a thing for Hannah? Why, it's Wyatt Earp (Greyston Holt). But Wyatt has trouble making any headway because Hannah is drawn to a more slippery character, Doc Holliday (Ryan Kennedy).

And Hannah's best friend Stagecoach Mary (Kimberly Elise), the famed mail courier. Danny Glover plays Isom Dart, another historical figure, who in Mr. Fasano's story is the man who raised Hannah.

For Mr. Glover and other well-known actors in the cast, like Billy Zane, a Hallmark film probably counts as a side project, the kind of job you take to pay the bills and fill in between more substantial efforts. That can be an invitation to mail in the performance, but Rachel Talalay, the director, has everyone here fully engaged. (That includes Ken Krawczyk, the director of photography; the film looks gorgeous.)

Mr. Kennedy is especially delightful, wielding an undefinable drawl like a surgical instrument, making his Holliday distinct from Val Kilmer's in "Tombstone." And Ms. Canning, whose scenes with Mr. Glover are downright touching, is a credible cowgirl. Someone could do worse than to use this film as the starting point for a television series.

Hannah's Law

Produced by Nomadic Pictures Productions 3 and Sony Pictures Television. Directed by Rachel Talalay; written by John Fasano; Mike Ogiens and Mr. Fasano, executive producers; Chad Oakes and Mike Frislev, producers; Ken Krawczyk, director of photography; John Blackie, production designer; Bridget Durnford, editor.

With: Sara Canning (Hannah Beaumont), John Pyper-Ferguson (Frank McMurphy), Greyston Holt (Wyatt Earp), Ryan Kennedy (Doc Holliday), Billy Zane (James Lockwood), Kimberly Elise (Stagecoach Mary) and Danny Glover (Isom Dart).

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