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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well done renewing members! Our membership is full again after very few sad departures.

As film lovers, it is important to remember that every frame is planned by the director and the cinematographer and interpreted by the actors. The editors are vital, too.

Sometimes we must see films several times to appreciate the art: it is a narrative in several dimensions.

We will collect your PINK cards at June screenings...your new cards will be posted to your home address in early July. The colour will be a surprise (but NOT pink...surprising how many people get muddled!)

Best wishes to all from us,

Roz Garwen

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FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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Membership is closed

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We are grateful to our sponsors : EMPIRE CINEMA

ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 21st June 2026

8.15 pm Tuesday 23rd June 2026

The Teacher Who Promised the Sea

[Spain 2024]

Director: Patricia Font

Running Time: 105mins

Rating: M (mature)

Synopsis:

A troubled young woman seeking to find out what happened to her great-grandfather becomes interested in the story of a charismatic village school teacher in rural 1930s Spain.

Review: Jane Freebury

The centrepiece of this fine film set rural Spain in the 1930s is a journal produced by children who had never laid eyes on the sea. Their teacher had promised them a trip to the coast in the summer, but his promise could not be kept in that time of political turbulence. It was a trip to the coast on offer, and so much more in this story of an inspiring teacher who tried to show his pupils the best way forward.

Making this solemn film was a delicate project for all involved, from the start. Including the art department tasked with reconstructing the mass gravesite discovered in Burgos province in 2010 that held the bodies of opponents of the fascist regime that wrested power during civil war. More than 100,000 supporters of the Republic went missing in Spain, executed and buried in unmarked graves during the coup d'état of 1936-39 that saw Franco rise to power.

Our way into this turbulent past is Ariadna (Laia Costa), a troubled young woman, who wants to grant her grandfather, Carlos, his dying wish. The body of his father, (and Ariadna's great grandfather), Bernardo Ramirez, who disappeared during the military coup has never been found. As the ailing man passes his final days slumped in a wheelchair, gazing out to sea, his granddaughter sets off for Burgos province, to visit the unmarked mass grave, recently discovered. It may be her great grandfather's final resting place.

When the search for the body of her great grandfather fails to find any trace, she becomes interested in the teacher at his village school, an unorthodox and charismatic Antonio Benaiges (a very engaging performance by Enric Auquer), who introduced progressive teaching methods based on the Freinet pedagogy that emphasised giving pupils the opportunity to express themselves.

The moment that Antonio arrived in the village of Banuelos de Bureba he shook things up. He bought a printing press, banished rote learning and dispensed with the large crucifix that clung grimly to the classroom wall. The class of children, aged between six and 12, basked in his nurturing approach.

It's a shocking moment when the military arrive, making a bonfire of what they deemed to be subversive books, and dealing with that 'communist teacher' Antonio. No doubt, elements in the community who were suspicious of outsiders and their revolutionary ideas formed a fatal partnership with the Catholic church to be rid of the meddlesome left-winger from Tarragona in their midst.

The screenplay for *The Teacher Who Promised the Sea* is based on the novel of the same name by Catalan journalist and broadcaster Francesc Escribano, and adapted for screen by Albert Val.

This is a low key, impressively restrained piece from director Patricia Font, with its beautiful, subtle cinematography by David Valldeperez, and intense, understated performances from the cast. The exuberant Antonio is of course the exception to the solemn mood of the piece, as one of those special teachers who everyone remembers.

While Costa offers an impressively subtle portrayal of a contemporary woman on a lonely quest, with issues that are never really specified, it is Auquer whose gentle, roguish character lifts the film with an expansive promise for the future in a trip to the sea.

Source: www.janefreeburywriter.com ~ Jane Freebury 27/7/2024 Edited extracts. Accessed 14/1/26.

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COMING UP:

June	<i>The Teacher who Promised the Sea</i> [Spain]	Sunday 21 st & Tuesday 23 rd
July	<i>It Was just an Accident</i> [Iran]	Sunday 19 th & Tuesday 21 st
August	<i>Calle Malaga</i> [Morocco/Spain]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th
September	<i>A Thousand Lines</i> [Germany]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd
October	<i>The President's Cake</i> [Iraq/Qatar/US]	Sunday 18 th & Tuesday 20 th
November	<i>The Thread</i> [France]	Sunday 15 th & Tuesday 17 th
December	<i>The Golden Spurtle</i> [Australia]	Sunday 13 th & Tuesday 15 th
February '27	<i>Number 24</i> [Norway]	Sunday 14 th & Tuesday 16 th

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Some thoughts on: *The Third Man*

The restoration by Studio Canal of this 77-year- old film is wonderful.

The cinematography is amazing, especially the lighting and sculptural, nocturnal use of shadows which lent itself to black and white filming. In fact, The Guardian reviewer called it “near perfect” and a “noir classic” (no pun intended). It was an excellent decision to choose bomb-damaged Vienna as the correct setting and especially to use the sewer sequence.

It was bold (and successful) not to use subtitles, to allow the audience greater participation.

Orson Wells’s late entry in the story added mystery to the story and allowed a little amnesia about the title of the film. But his nod in the last scene was memorable.

My personal opinions: I love the Harry Lime theme but found it over-used and less subtle than it could have been in volume, and I found the actors’ performances (except for Orson Wells’s) to be rather dated.

This film is a major credit to Carol Reed, the director, and to Graham Green’s recurring theme of Good vs Evil.

Another good choice, FISH!

A Mystery Reviewer