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movie news | Fri. 05 26. 2006 6:00 AM EDT

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Nine Things You Need to Know Before Seeing 'X-Men' This Weekend

Storm finally causes real damage, fans put words in Juggernaut's mouth and more.

by Larry Carroll

← Halle Berry, Patrick Stewart and Hugh Jackman in "X-Men: The Last Stand" (20th Century Fox)

This weekend, millions of people will plop down in velvety theater seats, dig deep into their tubs of buttery popcorn, and open their eyes wide to watch the X-Men take their "Last Stand." You may very well be among them — but will you really see the whole movie?

Much like chameleon-like killer Mystique, the third "X-Men" flick offers more than meets the eye. Stuffed with secret scenes, in-jokes and geek-pleasing comic concessions, audience members in the know will experience a very different movie than their clueless theater-mates. Below, we offer a spoiler-free guide to unlocking the secrets that even a Professor X mind-meld couldn't get out of director Brett Ratner:

A Bitchin' Shout-Out — In one scene, the unstoppable Juggernaut (Vinnie Jones) bashes through wall after wall, until a naive Kitty Pryde (Ellen Page) slows him down by sinking him into the floor. The angry mutant declares, "I'm the Juggernaut, bitch!" and then continues on his quest, but the brief line sticks out glaringly in an otherwise vulgarity-free film. "When that line comes up, I'm probably going to start breakdancing, and Randy will scream out the phrase himself," 21-year-old college student Xavier Nazario said excitedly, thrilled over the prospect of watching Jones utter the line made popular by an Internet spoof Nazario released last February. Using an old



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"X-Men" cartoon, Nazario and pal Randy Hayes dubbed their voices in, giving birth to the now-famous catchphrase. Hayes, who voiced Juggernaut's ghetto persona in the top-rated YouTube.com clip, isn't quite so shocked that Ratner paid tribute to the clip. "Everybody loves the Juggernaut," he laughed.

Berry, Berry Badass — After two declawed performances, actress Halle Berry was tired of answering fan questions about Storm's relatively wimpy big-screen incarnation. Agreeing with the geeks, Berry begged the filmmakers to finally acknowledge that Storm's weather-controlling abilities could kick virtually any other mutant's butt. As a result, Berry's Storm is now much closer to the African goddess of the comics. Her inherent leadership skills are finally on display, along with considerably increased powers and a newfound ability to fly.

Excelsior! — In virtually every single Marvel Comics movie (the "Spider-Man" films, "Fantastic Four" and "Hulk" among them), 83-year-old legend Stan Lee has graced the screen with a brief cameo. Lee, the gray-haired mastermind behind many of the iconic characters, returns once again for the opening flashback in "X3." But the scene offers more than just a peek into the past of Jean Grey (Famke Janssen): The audience also gets a look at the crucial back story of the hotdog vendor from the first "X-Men" film. Holding a garden hose as the laws of gravity are turned upside down, Lee has clearly perfected the role of muted, astonished bystander. Longtime "X-Men" writer Chris Claremont also has a nonspeaking cameo as one of Jean's neighbors.

Wait, There's More! — Are you one of those unappreciative jerks who darts out of the theater without reading the names of the key grip and best boy? This one time, tuck in your knees and let everybody else pass on by because there's more to come after the credits roll. Once the names finish scrolling across the screen, a final scene rewards those who've stuck around. Without giving anything away, let's just say it's a major revelation concerning one of the series' biggest characters.

Was Dr. 90210 an On-Set Adviser? — In the aforementioned Jean Grey flashback scene, audiences may be shocked by the smooth, pulled-back skin adorning the faces of Patrick Stewart (Professor X) and Ian McKellen (Magneto). Before you start making accusations of Joan Rivers-like face lifts, know this: The scene employs a revolutionary new computer technique from Lola Visual Effects that painted over the veteran actors' faces, making them appear some 20 years younger. With a "Magneto" prequel in the works, McKellen has said he'd like to play a young Eric Lensherr himself and have his entire performance similarly painted over. How long, one must wonder, until every actor is negotiating a touch-up into their contracts?

A Kitty Litter — If you feel like you're having *déjà vu* watching Kitty Pryde run through walls and vanish into the floor, there's good reason: You've seen her before. Although Page's character is often listed among new X-Men, like Beast (Kelsey Grammer) and Angel (Ben Foster), Kitty has been in both previous films, brought to life by two other actresses who weren't allowed to say a peep.

This Leech Definitely Doesn't Suck — Although he's never referred to by the name, 12-year-old Cameron Bright ("Birth") plays a young version of the mutant known as Leech. One of the more powerful characters in the "X-Men" universe, Leech emits a field that cancels out any other mutant's powers. In the comic world, Leech has green skin — a feature not seen in the film.

15 Seconds of Fame? — "The Last Stand" features cameos of varying lengths from several "X-Men" comic-book characters that only the most loyal of readers might recognize. Included in some of the film's crowded action scenes are the shockwave-shooting Arclight (Dominican supermodel Omahyra Mota), the telepathic Kid Omega (Ken Leung), Angel's comic-book girlfriend Psylocke (Mei Melancon), the quickly cloning Multiple Man (Eric Dane), and Callisto (Dania Ramirez), the leader of the Morlock outcasts.

Mrs. Mojo Rising — The main plot of "The Last Stand" focuses on the resurrection of the newly redheaded Jean Grey, a concept cribbed from the "Dark Phoenix Saga." One of the most beloved and heavily referenced comic stories of all time, the issues were considered instant (although somewhat controversial) classics when published in the mid- to late '80s. If you think the movie's plotline rocks your world, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Make a visit to your local Comic Book Guy and ask for "Uncanny X-Men" issues 101-108 and 129-138.

This report is from MTV News.

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