

8/7 1 DR. SEUSS' THE LORAX FAMILY \$211 MILL BO
3769 SCREENS 86 MINUTES

VOICES OF (Zac Efron, Taylor Swift, Danny DeVito, Betty White)

Dr. Seuss' The Lorax (2012) comes from the creators of Despicable Me and Hop and the children's story from Dr. Seuss. This is a story about a twelve year old boy named Ted who is determined to win the heart of his dream girl, Audrey and bring back nature to his overly industrialized world. In order to do this, he has to discover the story of the Lorax. The Lorax is a story of a grumpy, yet charming little creature that fights to protect his world from land developers. The character voices in this movie are very popular stars. Zac Efron is Ted, the boy, Taylor Swift is Audrey, the girl, Danny DeVito is the Lorax, and Betty White is Ted's wise Grammy. They help to bring this colorful and funny story to life. This is the third movie of this sort from Universal Studios.

Fans of **JOURNEY 2, RANGO, PUSS N' BOOTS, HAPPY FEET 2, ALVIN & THE CHIPMONKS: CHIPWRECKED, and THE SMURFS.**



8/7 3 BLUE LIKE JAZZ COMEDY \$1 MILL BO 166 SCREENS
PG-13

Marshall Allman (TV's *MEN OF A CERTAIN AGE, MAD MEN, CSI MIAMI*)

Jason Marsden (TV's *YOUNG JUSTICE, VIBE, THUNDERCATS*)

Claire Holt (TV's *THE VAMPIRE DIARIES, PRETTY LITTLE LIAR*)

Don (Marshall Allman), a Southern Baptist who veers from his Texas-raised path to attend Portland's über-liberal Reed College. The film charts a typical existential coming-of-age tale, yet remains atypical by being hip while also treating religion fairly. Though not deserving of too much applause for breaking ground, it feels like a rare tour of the role of God in young American culture, and it offers what may be the best possible guide: someone born and bred to bow to the cross, but ready and willing to let every other doctrine rush in.

The catalyst for Don's deviation is his mother's (Jenny Littleton) cradle-robbing affair with the parish youth pastor (Jason Marsden), who has a molester's aura and wields an offensive mariachi marionette during Bible study. It's all too much for Don, whose Christian ideals are permanently corrupted, leaving only his free-thinking father's love of jazz as a source of wisdom ("Jazz is like life," Dad says, "neither resolves itself"). Don arrives at Reed to find girls entering the boys' bathroom and praising Tori Amos as a "dyke messiah"; vendors condoms; and an outspoken swearing off the unethically peddled by another coed. A the whole alien spectacle, but sea of driven minds with causes, corporate book chains to lesbian dedication to gay issues. Don like they're drugs, and lets loose like a repressed freshman girl who frequents the boys' dorm. It's a quest for identity in a place where progressiveness and secular extremism permeate everything, right down to



gleefully showering passersby with blonde, Penny (Claire Holt), produced water bottles being reformed sponge, Don welcomes quickly finds he's a finless fish in a from Penny's assault against Lauryn's (Tania Raymonde) experiments with defining pastimes

the campus's annual Renn Fayre, which each year sees the selection of a new "Pope," the ultimate deity-mocking mascot.

The movie moves along pretty well with a young unknown cast doing a good job with their roles. Fans of **BEING FLYNN**, **MARGARET**, **WANDERLUST**, **BIG MIRACLE**, **CHRONICLE**, **THE IRON LADY**, and **LIKE CRAZY**.



8/14 **1** THE LUCKY ONE DRAMA \$62 MILL BO 3175
SCREENS PG-13 101 MINUTES

Zac Efron (*17 AGAIN, NEW YEAR'S EVE, CHARLIE ST. CLOUD, HAIRSPRAY*)
Blythe Danner (*WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER, MEET THE FOCKERS, MEET THE PARENTS, FORCES OF NATURE, LOVE LETTERS*)

Logan (Efron) is a marine with three tours of duty under his belt. He's haunted by the memory of seeing a fellow soldier dying in combat, and carries a photo of a woman that the dead soldier had lost. He walks 942 miles from Colorado to Louisiana to meet Best (Schilling), the woman in the photo. She is in deep mourning for her brother Drake and is prickly and skeptical of Logan, whom her grandmother (Danner) has taken a shine to. Soon, the ice in Beth's heart will be melted and they do fall hard for each other.

If Logan's PTSD isn't enough for us, Beth has a slew of emotional issues. Besides the survivor's guilt (she also lost both parents as a kid), she has lingering relationship issues and a possibly abusive marriage to Keith, and a precocious kid named Ben. Keith is not a very good dad even though he's the town sheriff and his own dad is running for mayor. Chafing under his dad's criticism and nastiness he takes a lot of this out on Logan, Beth, Ben and everyone else.

There is a lot of emotion throughout the whole film that you should have some Kleenex handy or just cry on your collective sleeves. The acting is good and the story hits home and will appeal to all that liked **THE VOW**, **CHRONICLE**, **THIS MEANS WAR**, **CRAZY STUPID LOVE**, **YOUNG ADULT**, **ONE FOR THE MONEY**, **NEW YEAR'S EVE**, and **WE BOUGHT A ZOO**.



8/14 **3** THE RAID: REDEMPTION ACTION \$8 MILL BO
991 SCREENS R 101 MINUTES

Amanda George (*SELIMUT BERDARAH*)
Ray Sahetap (*DILEMMA, DEMI DEWI*)

The Raid begins with perhaps the most direct scene of exposition you've ever seen. A SWAT team is on their way to a morning raid. The destination is a tenement building that has been taken over by underworld boss Tama (Ray Sahetap), who's filled it with crooks and lowlifes—and a narcotics lab. Their plan ("we'll take the place, floor by floor"), their foes, the dangers; it's all laid out in almost comically straightforward dialogue, and while it may not be artful, at least it's honest. This is all the stuff they've got to get out of the way. It's what we need to know to get these 20 cops in the doors, which are then locked behind them as Tama comes over the PA and tells his

sketchy residents that anyone who bags a cop can live there as long as they'd like, rent-free. "Now go to work," he tells them. "And please, enjoy yourselves."

And thus begins Gareth Huw Evans's masterfully constructed, smashingly entertaining Indonesian action extravaganza. Some have described it as "non-stop action," but that's not entirely accurate—this is a filmmaker who takes his pauses and lets us catch our breath (thank God). He knows when to put on the brakes and ramp up some tension, or how to use a momentary lull to deliver a good, hard jolt. He's also technically proficient, moving his camera with a swift, ruthless efficiency, the cinematography rolling with the punches (sometimes literally). Evans has a tremendous sense of film rhythm (he edited as well as writing and directing), engaging in a scrappy, boisterous roughhouse style that sweeps an audience along; he tosses out action beats and gory kills like well-aimed fastballs.



There's a slightly aged appearance to the film stock, the faded colors and slight muddiness recalling early John Woo pictures. Evans is not just reworking Woo's ballet-of-bullets aesthetic, though; when he grows tired of the guns, he puts his characters into a beautifully-choreographed knife fight. When that's been mined, he goes to straight hand-to-hand martial arts. One could grouse that it's awfully convenient that everyone agrees on how to battle it out, but the movie steams forward with such confidence that you go along with it; if it seems strange that no one brings a gun to a knife fight, credit to the director for finally having someone do just that, and being properly dismissed for his bad manners.

The fun is everywhere in this movie. It will take you for a ride and the cast does what they are paid to do. Fans of **CONTRABAND**, **FINAL DESTINATION 4**, **UNDERWORLD 4**, **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4**, **GONE**, **HAYWIRE**, and **GHOST RIDER 2**.



8/18 **1** THE HUNGER GAMES ACTION \$394 MILL BO
4137 SCREENS PG-13 142 MINUTES

Jennifer Lawrence (*DEVIL YOU KNOW, WINTER'S BONE, LIKE CRAZY*)
Woody Harrelson (*RAMPART, ZOMBIELAND, WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP, MONEY TRAIN*)
Elizabeth Banks (*MAN ON A LEDGE, OUR IDIOT BROTHER, ROLE MODELS, W.*)

Relentlessly paced like the bestselling book, unflagging in its sense of peril and blessed with a spunky protagonist who can hold her own against any other female heroine. The viewer is quickly immersed in the mud and grime of District 12. It is the poorest of a dozen civilian sectors that make up the futuristic nation of Panem. The government maintains order through nationally televised blood sports known as The Hunger Games, in which two "tributes" from each district, a boy and a girl, must participate in a winner-kills-all-and- takes-all bloodbath.

Set in a near-future North America called Panem where 12 Districts work in squalor to provide the resources consumed by the glittering Capitol, *the film takes* its title from an annual competition where each district provides a boy and girl, picked by lottery, who are then taken to the Capitol to be trained, media-massaged to provide pre-show entertainment and then forced to fight to the death. First place wins a life of privilege and riches. There is no second place.

Jennifer Lawrence plays Katniss Everdeen, the saga's hero, who reluctantly volunteers for the games to take the place of her little sister Prim (**Willow Shields**). Lawrence is treading similar ground to her Sundance breakout, Oscar-nominated work in *Winter's Bone*, where she played yet another poor girl fighting to save her family against long and dangerous odds. But Lawrence wholly embraces the film's emotional currents and makes the more outlandish material—a fusion of sci-fi and soap opera that shouldn't work—resonate in a real and centered way. Her Katniss isn't a cardboard saint, but rather, a fully-drawn character. Much as the first *Twilight* film was improved by Kristen Stewart's performance, where she clearly had not been told she was in a vampire movie based on a horrible book, no one clued Lawrence in that she could coast.



The cast are good-to-excellent—Stanley Tucci's grinning and grim emcee is a standout—while Josh Hutcherson and Liam Hemsworth spin their stock love interest parts into nicely-tuned turns.

As action, as allegory, as cinema, **THE HUNGER GAMES** is the best American science-fiction film since *The Matrix*, and if Ross and his crew stay with the series for the next two books, we may get that rarest of things: a blockbuster franchise that earns our money through craft, emotion and execution, not merely marketing and effects. This will be a monster hit with all fans of every movie from **HAYWIRE**, **ACT OF VALOR**, **CONTRABAND** and **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4**, to **IRON LADY**, **ALBERT NOBBS**, **WAR HORSE**, **WE BOUGHT A ZOO** and **THE ARTIST**.



8/21 **1** THE DICTATOR COMEDY \$60 MILL BO 3014
SCREENS R 83 MINUTES

Sacha Baron Cohen (*Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*, *HUGO*, *BRUNO*)

Ben Kingsley (*SHUTTER ISLAND*, *SCHINDLER'S LIST*, *GHANDI*, *HUGO*, *TEEN PATTI*)

John C. Reilly (*CARNAGE*, *WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN*, *CEDAR RAPIDS*, *CYRUS*, *A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION*)

Admiral General Aladeen (Cohen), the despot of the North African country of Wadiya. He has a funny little walk and carries a gold gun and surrounds himself with hot-babe bodyguards. When he is called to the United Nations to account for his weapons-of-mass-destruction program, he arrives in New York on the back of a camel and flanked by a caravan of Lamborghinis. His official visit is cut short though, when he is kidnapped by an amateur torturer (Reilly) in a nefarious plot orchestrated by his uncle and trusted advisor Tamir (Kingsley). Tamir replaces the good Admiral with a double who declares Wadiya a democracy so that Tamir can pocket the country's oil profits.

Aladeen escapes, but not before his captor shaves him, and sans beard he is unrecognizable as the Supreme Leader of Wadiya. Mistaken instead for a dissident, he's taken in by Zoey (Anna Ferris), who offers him a job at her feminist vegan co-op. The setting is ideal, of course, for Cohen's signature brand of trenchant comedy and it works very well seeing him take smug Brooklynites to task with the same zeal as he has done with rednecks in the past.

Baron Cohen is an equal opportunity offender and he continues he reign of this kind of humor in this film as he has with his others and his ALI G show that was on HBO. The rest of the cast works well

against him and with him and this will attract all that liked **BRUNO, CHRONICLE, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4, CONTRABAND, THE SITTER, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO, and FAST FIVE** for some taste diversity. Broad appeal.



8/21 **2** A SEPARATION DRAMA \$9 MILL BO 1876
SCREENS PG-13 122 MINUTES

Leila Hatami (40 YEARS OLD, FELICITY LAND, SHIRIN)
Peyman Moadi (COMA, ABOUT LILLY, SWAN SONG)

Sophisticated and universal yet deeply intimate, *A Separation* is an exquisitely conceived family drama that has the coiled power of a top-notch thriller. From the first scene, we're instantly hooked by this window into contemporary Iran. The scene is deceptively simple.

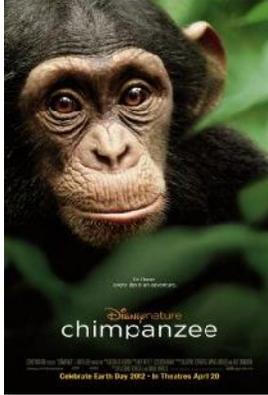
An upper-middle-class couple seek to divorce, but bureaucratic powers set up roadblocks. Simin (Leila Hatami) wants to leave Tehran and go abroad with their 11-year-old daughter, Termeh (Sarina Farhadi), and her husband, Nader (Peyman Moadi), so that their daughter will have better educational opportunities. But Nader wants to stay to care for his elderly father, who has Alzheimer's. Simin argues that his father barely he's my father," Nader responds. It's a positions of both parties are The adolescent Termeh, a diligent in the hopes that her mother will be about the split, least of all the sad-eyed, Razieh (Sareh Bayat) to take care of his Shahbazi) while he is at work. A devout and religious quandary in her duties tending to the man. Her volatile husband, Hodjat (Shahab Hosseini), complicates things further.



knows Nader is his son. "But I know painfully real domestic dispute, and the understandable. The couple separate. student, remains at home with her father compelled to return. No one is happy bespectacled Termeh. Nader hires mostly bedridden father (Ali Asghar-Muslim, Razieh early on faces a moral



Disasters build upon each other, and Razieh and Nader have a misunderstanding that results in a murder charge. They become further embroiled in the labyrinthine Iranian judicial system, and religious, cultural and class chasms loom large. The brilliantly calibrated plot grows ever more complex with ethical dilemmas, emotional upheaval and issues of responsibility woven in artfully, never simply for the sake of trumped-up tension. In Farsi, with English subtitles, this beautifully photographed, superbly acted film, written and directed by Asghar Farhadi, is naturally suspenseful in the way of the most universally engaging and deeply humanistic stories. The viewer's sympathies are always engaged, though it's impossible to take sides, despite an early inclination to do so. Just as we think we're identifying with one character, another will reveal new dimensions and our concerns shift. All the parties involved must navigate perilous terrain. But Farhadi keeps the emotional story believable, never straying into melodrama. Realistically messy, unexpectedly devastating and as tense as any Hitchcock thriller, *A Separation* ensures that no one emerges unscathed. Nor will audiences watch this profoundly resonant film without being captivated and possibly haunted for days afterward. This will have very strong appeal to all that liked **THE TEMPEST, THE IRON LADY, THE DEBT, THE GUARD, THE TREE OF LIFE and J. EDGAR.**



8/21 2 CHIMPANZEE ADVENTURE \$29 MILL BO 1567
 SCREENS G 78 MINUTES

Oscar is the youngest member of alpha-male Freddie's chimpanzee clan and is cared for by his loving mother, Isha. A rival group, led by Scar, wants to take over Freddie's territory and its plentiful food supply and, during the melee, Isha is lost to little Oscar. The three-year old must fend for himself, but the odds are against this little "Chimpanzee."

DisneyNature produces an excellent looking "living with the chimps" tale that will appeal to little kids and their parents only. Well, maybe not the parents, but definitely for the little kids. The "story" is narrated by Tim Allen.

This one actually feels a little less anthropomorphized than usual, given that the filmmakers have documented real chimp behavior - using rocks to open nuts and strategy to hunt monkeys. Like "The Hunger Games," the filmmakers shield children from any upsetting visuals which means that the highly touted 'wars' between Freddy's 'team' and Scar's amount to a bunch of chimps swinging around trees. The Capuchin monkey hunt is bloodless - we only see a strand of flesh as a chimp eats. The loss of Isha, Oscar's mother is an artsy montage jungle and leopard scored with a roar and a chimp screech.



"Chimpanzee" is an often admirable effort, and will appeal to the kids that liked ***THE SMURFS, HAPPY FEET 2, ALVIN & THE CHIPMONKS: CHIPWRECKED, PUSS N' BOOTS,*** and ***HUGO.***



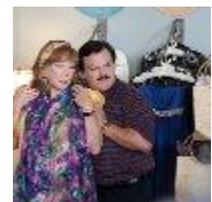
8/21 1 BERNIE COMEDY \$7 MILL BO 332 SCREENS
 PG-13 104 MINUTES

Jack Black (*SCHOOL OF ROCK, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, THE BIG YEAR, YEAR ONE*)

Shirley Maclaine (*BRUNO, THE APARTMENT, GUARDING TESS, POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE*)

Matthew McConaughey (*THE LINCOLN LAWYER, TROPIC THUNDER, SURFER DUDE, TWO FOR THE MONEY*)

The upscale East Texas town of Carthage drew unexpected headlines in August 1997. This was when the body of the wealthiest woman in town, Marjorie Nugent, was discovered at the bottom of her own freezer. Police soon expected a confession from a very cooperative Bernie Tiede (Black), a mortician who had been her best friend, business manager and sole beneficiary. The opening scene establishes the link between the protagonist and death, as portly, mustachioed Bernie methodically grooms the corpse for an open casket memorial service. He handles this act with great care, dignity and attention to detail and takes great pride on a job well done.



These qualities have endeared they address the camera directly as they devotion to his work and his tireless continue to speak in warm glowing



him to the other residents of the town as describe Bernie's strong Christian faith, his efforts to improve the community. They terms even as less flattering details ripple to

the surface. Chiefly his interest in the town's wealthy widow population, his ambiguous sexuality and his increasingly strange relationship with the hateful departed Nugent (MacLaine).



Taking an almost immediate liking to the first person in ages to show her any kindness, Margie brings Bernie into her life and her gated home and makes him her constant companion. The gossip starts of their romantic entanglement and she then starts to become very demanding of his time.

As the case against Bernie unravels, the town is so unwavering in its support of Bernie the DA Danny Buck Davidson (McConaughey), one of the few who view Bernie as a conniving phony, has difficulty in building a case.

The film holds together very well as the story unfolds in ways that only good acting and a good script will allow. The fans that liked **BEING FLYNN, THE DOUBT, RAMPART, ALBERT NOBBS, THE IRON LADY, LIKE CRAZY, MY WEEK WITH MARILYN, J. EDGAR and MONEYBALL** will like this one as well.



8/28 **1** BATTLESHIP ACTION \$63 MILL BO 3702 SCREENS
PG-13 131 MINUTES

Taylor Kitsch (TV's *FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS, THE BANG BANG CLUB, JOHN CARTER, SNAKES ON A PLANE*)

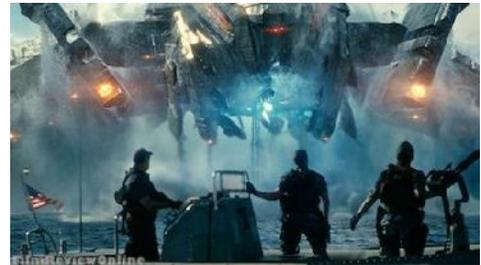
Alexander Skarsgard (HBO's *TRUE BLOOD, STRAW DOGS, MELANHOLIA, TRUST ME*)

Liam Neeson (*THE GREY, WRATH OF THE TITANS, TAKEN, KINSEY, GANGS OF NEW YORK*)

Extremely hostile aliens discover that world domination is a hard game to win. They are confronted by drunken slacker Alex Hopper (Kitsch) Beast (John Tul)

and Raikes (Rihanna).

When we first meet Hopper, he is trying to impress huge busted Sam Shane (Brooklyn Decker) by stealing a burrito. Arrested for his efforts, he is convinced by his exasperated navy commander brother Stone (Skarsgard) that it is time for a "game change". In a narrative leap we next see Alex as a clean cut navy lieutenant preparing to ask Sam's gruff Navy admiral dad (Neeson) for Sam's hand in marriage.



First though, there are international military exercises to undertake. Unwelcome visitors are alien ships attracted by a NASA beacon project begun when a distant Earth-like planet was discovered. Skittish scientist Cal Zapata warned against the idea, arguing that our first contact might turn out to be Columbus and the Indians scenario but of course no one listens or takes heed.



The monolithic alien mother ship throws a miles wide force field around itself and various naval vessels. The fierce battles ensue as the warship fail to take out the invaders. Zapata and others work hard at keeping these evil ET's from using mountaintop satellite dishes. The battles scenes are pretty exciting with everything being blown up and the navy using some incredible weapons and stuff. The cast works hard at bringing everything home and the entertainment level will be very high for all that liked **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4, THE HUNTER, 21 JUMP STREET, MAN ON A LEDGE, UNDERWORLD 4, HAYWIRE, TOWER HEIST and TRESPASS.**



8/28 **3** HEADHUNTERS ACTION \$2 MILL BO 60 SCREENS
R 100 MINUTES

Askel Hennie (A SOMEWHAT GENTLE MAN, COLD LUNCH, CRY IN THE WOODS)

Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (HBO's GAME OF THRONES)

This is a film that is fantastically exciting. The opening scenes suck you right in with its playfulness and humor. The humor is evident even during some very violent scenes. The story opens with a narration by Roger Brown (Hennie) the main character and the story is set up in minutes.

Brown is a corporate headhunter. Seeking out candidates for big business is just his day job. What he does on the side isn't exactly legal. Brown moonlights as an art thief. What makes this interesting is that he often steals paintings from the candidates that he interviews for the job. He does this he says because he needs to support his wife who lives for everything luxurious. He is in horrible debt and barely surviving. His wife wants to open an art gallery which puts more pressure on him. Brown also has a woman on the side because he is convinced that his wife only loved him for the money he had.



These scenes move the story along very nicely and then really kicks into high gear as the art gallery opens where we meet the film's villain Clas Greve (Coster-Waldau) who is cheerfully diabolical and is a terrific villain. He used to work for a major military corporation in the Netherlands and just recently stepped down. He also used to be a black ops mercenary who was a specialist in tracking down people. Brown wants to sign him to a rival military firm in Norway. Then Brown learns that Greve has a fabulously valuable painting and of course wants to steal it. But does Clas know more than he is letting on?



The cat and mouse game is really well done. Brown realizes quickly that his is way over his head and the chase is on and it does get pretty violent and at times gruesome. The cast is terrific and the appeal will be very strong to all that liked **RAMPART, THE SAFE HOUSE, IMMORTALS, ACT OF VALOR, CONTRABAND, and THE GUARD.**



8/28 **1** THE FIVE-YEAR ENGAGEMENT COMEDY \$32 MILL
BO 2941 SCREENS R 124 MINUTES

Jason Segel (JEFF WHO LIVES AT HOME, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, BAD TEACHER, I LOVE YOU MAN)

Emily Blunt (THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU, YOUR SISTER'S SISTER, THE WOLFMAN, WILD TARGET)

Rhys Ifans (PIRATE RADIO, MR. NICE, NANCY MCPHEE RETURNS, ANONYMOUS)

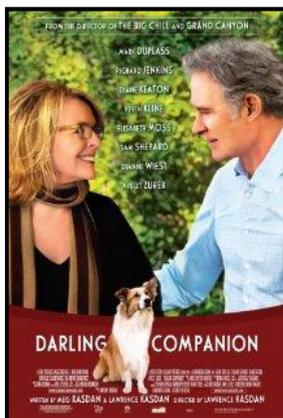
Tom (Segel) and Violet (Blunt) decide to get married at a New Year's Eve party a year after they meet. That decision is frustrated by the sudden shotgun wedding of his boorish best friend Alex to Violet's sister Suzie (Alison Brie). It sort of kills the thunder from Tom and Violet's pending nuptials. Then the plans are complicated by Violet's acceptance into the

University of Michigan's post grad psych department. This means moving from San Francisco to Ann Arbor, and requires aspiring chef Tom to give up an opportunity to run his own place.

Suddenly ensconced in frigid Michigan, Violet thrives under the tutelage of Professor Winton (Ifans), while Tom struggle to find his way eventually making sandwiches at Zingerman's. Postponing the wedding in order to get comfortable in their new digs and then dealing with family deaths back home, they slowly grow apart. Tom resents her careerism and she seems to be going toward the waiting arms of Winton.



Tom and Violet are clearly defined by their professions and their hang-ups with each other and their circumstances. They get some support from their new friends and from older friends back home. Everyone hopes that h is couple can pull it all back together and have the life full of promise that brought them together in the first place. The cast does a good job and the film will be enjoyed by those that liked ***THE BREAK-UP, 21 JUMP STREET, FOOTLOOSE, ONE FOR THE MONEY, CRAZY STUPID LOVE, ONE DAY, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, and WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER.***



8/28 **3** DARLING COMPANION DRAMA \$68,000 BO 89
SCREENS PG-13 103 MINUTES

Diane Keaton (*ANNIE HALL, THE GODFATHER, SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE, MAD MONEY, FATHER OF THE BRIDE, THE FIRST WIVES CLUB*)
Kevin Kline (*WILD WILD WEST, THE ICE STORM, FRENCH KISS, IN AND OUT, A FISH CALLED WANDA*)

Lawrence Kasdan's film, which he co-wrote with his wife Meg, is a perfectly serviceable family drama centered on a dog. One can feel the good intentions with which this movie was made, as the Kasdans based it on their own experience of losing their mutt in the Colorado Rockies. In the film, Beth (Keaton) is struggling with having no one to mother—one of her daughters lives in New York with her husband and child; the other, Grace (Elisabeth Moss), is in grad school—when she rescues a dog abandoned on the side of the highway. She names him Freeway, and, despite objections from her grumpy surgeon husband Joseph (Kline), takes him home.



A year later, Grace marries their vet at the family's home in the mountains, and as the two newlyweds head to their honeymoon, Beth, Joseph and a few guests relax at the house for the weekend. The guests include Joseph's sister Penny (Dianne Wiest) and her aggressively friendly date Russell (Richard Jenkins), who has a questionable business proposition for the group; Penny's son Bryan (Mark Duplass), who is also a surgeon and works with Joseph; and the gypsy housekeeper Carmen (Ayelet Zurer), who claims mysterious powers to "find" things. When Joseph loses Freeway during a walk in the woods, Beth won't leave without her beloved pet.



The search that follows provides an opportunity for quarreling pairs of family members to reconnect while they look for Freeway: Both Joseph and Bryan are given the opportunity to get to know Russell better and learn he's a decent guy, while Joseph and Beth, driven apart by the clash between his cold pragmatism and her emotional sensitivity, bond over the course of a cold, rainy night lost in the woods.

Fans of ***WE BOUGHT A ZOO, FRIENDS WITH KIDS, BIG MIRACLE, MARLEY, JOURNEY 2, WAR HORSE, and HOP*** will all like this one as well.



8/28 **1** THINK LIKE A MAN COMEDY \$90 MILL BO 2052
 SCREENS PG-13 122 MINUTES

Chris Brown (*TAKE IT, INTO THE WOODS*)
Kevin Hart (*LITTLE FOCKERS, DEATH AT A FUNERAL, LET GO*)
Jerry Ferrara (*HBO'S ENTOURAGE, BROOKLYN RULES, WHERE GOD LEFT HIS SHOES*)

Based on the novel "Act Like A Lady, Think Like A Man" that was such a sensation that women began rushing to absorb its secrets and crack the male code. The twist is to practice the teachings to achieve their goals only to have the guys buy the book themselves and realize that they have been manipulated.



Regarding those male, several varieties are represented by one group of friends who play basketball together several times a week. They include the



momma's boy who gets involved with a single mom Candace (Regina Hall); the dreamer (Easley), who stumbles into a liaison with Lauren, a successful businesswoman who wants a man equally well situated, the non-committer (Ferrara), whose Peter Pan bit is wearing thin on his longtime girlfriend; and the ladies' man who is forced to actually try wooing Mya, who after one too many one night stands follows the books' maxim about withholding sex in order to find true love. Finally, there's Cedric (Hart), the divorced guy who keeps regaling the group with stories about his ex-wife, frequents strip clubs and functions as narrator, while providing a steady infusion of manic energy.

Blending all of the plots together offers an interesting way of telling the story and the cast does a good job of moving things along. It will all play well to those that liked *AMERICAN REUNION*, *FRIENDS WITH KIDS*, *THE VOW*, *ONE FOR THE MONEY*, *WANDERLUST*, *WE BOUGHT A ZOO*, and *LIKE CRAZY*.



8/28 **1** THE PIRATES! BAND OF MISFITS FAMILY
 \$32 MILL BO 3358 SCREENS PG 88 MINUTES

With Wallace & Gromit currently enjoying a nice hiatus with a pot of tea and some cheese, Aardman's decision to focus on CGI only partly paid off with the so-so *Flushed Away* and the sweeter *Arthur Christmas*. However, the decision to return to their claymation roots means that *Pirates!* arrives after 5 years of work, roughly the length of all the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies combined.

Here, the Pirate Captain (well voiced by Hugh Grant) is intent on winning the coveted 'Pirate of the Year' award. Only problem - he's not much good as a pirate; a fact borne out by his rather empty treasure chests. However when he stumbles across Charles Darwin's (David Super Tennant) ship he chances upon a discovery that might land him some glory at least, even if it's as a scientist rather than a pirate.

As any Aardman fan will know, each of their films' lovingly-crafted frames are often packed with enough in-jokes and visual gags to rival an entire episode of *Community*, and so it is with *Pirates!* Who can't fail to laugh at a pirate who wears a Blue Peter badge so proudly on his hat, or chuckle when it's revealed what Queen Victoria's dress is really hiding?

So while those gags come thick and fast, the rather mashed-together plot sees our 'heroes' take in the high seas, Victorian London and a huge battleship as it moves rather swiftly from one location to

another. So, aside from the main three characters themselves (Martin Freeman dons his usual 'assistant' hat as the crew's No.2) the likes of Ashley Jensen's lovable deckhand and Jeremy Piven's egotistical Black Bellamy don't really get the screen time they deserve.

However, when the action's this much fun it's really a minor niggle if anything. A stand-out chase through Darwin's cavernous London home in a bathtub and a rope-dangling finale (lifted from *Chicken Run* it would appear) mean *Pirates!* is never less than thoroughly entertaining, even if there is a sense that we've seen it all a bit before, often in superior Aardman productions.

But any film that features Brian Blessed dressed as Elvis or a monkey butler communicating through cue cards isn't short on imagination and wit, meaning *Pirates!* is never less than a hugely fun voyage; something Johnny Depp's pirates might want to consider the next time they set out on the high seas.

The appeal for this one will be for all that liked ***RANGO, RIO, THE SMURFS, THE MUPPETS, CARS 2*** and ***KUNG FU PANDA 2***.

