

9/4 1 SAFE ACTION

\$19 MILL BO 2271 SCREENS R 94 MINUTES



Jason Statham (CRANK, THE BANK JOB, TRANSPORTER, THE EXPENDABLES, THE MECHANIC)

Statham is a whirlwind of violence and sheer bone breaking badassery as Luke Wright. He's an ex-cop turned cage fighter turned homeless bum. The reasons for his plummet from grace are many, including the death of his wife and unborn child at the hands of a Russian mob, the price he paid for not taking a dive in a fight. Besides, not only not taking a dive, our hero actually puts his competition in a coma. That's double the insult to the guy paying him to take the dive.

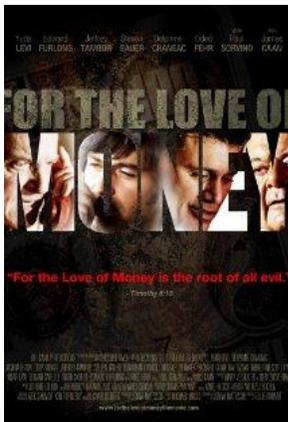
Things soon look up for Luke when he runs across 11 year old Mei, a Chinese prodigy currently in the service of the Chinese mob run by Uncle Han. Adopted by Han's nasty right hand man, Mei spends her days using her computer like brain to memorize numbers for the bad guys. Uncle doesn't want all of his critical information in a computer so he puts it all in the head of a kid he snatched off the streets of China and dumped on the mean streets of New York City.

Things go swimmingly for her for a while until the Russians decide to muscle in on Uncle's action. Mei is the target, and of course the set of numbers she has memorized. Things get messy as bodies start piling up on the clean streets of New York and before we know it, Mei is on the run. That is until she bumps into Luke and he punches, shoots, kicks and just shoves his way into the criminal underworld of New York City.

The action is terrific and the cast fits well to keep things moving along nicely as the story unfolds. Fans of THE HUNGER GAMES, BATTLESHIP, THE HUNTER, ACTO OF VALOR, 21 JUMP STREET, THE SAFE HOUSE and IMMORTALS will all like the action in this film.

9/4 3 FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY ACTION

\$2 MILL BO 254 SCREENS R 93 MINUTES



Eric Furlong (SNITCH, BELOW ZERO, TERMINATOR 3, CRUEL WORLD)

James Caan (CINDERELLA LIBERTY, THE GODFATHER, BRIAN'S SONG, MICKEY BLUE EYES)

Jonathan Lipniki (JERRY MCGUIRE, STUART LITTLE 2, TV'S MONK, THE FAMILY GUY)

Jeffrey Tambor (AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, TV'S ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT, THE HANGOVER, PAUL, WIN WIN)

Indie feature For The Love Of Money is an ambitious attempt to bring a personal story to the screen. It is extremely well shot, well directed, and well acted. Very fine actress Jenna Mattison is credited with having written and co-produced the film. She does an admirable job, and the characters and dialogue ring true

Director Ellie Kanner-Zuckerman does a great job with a very large array of locations and actors. While I'm sure many of the establishing shots may have been stock footage, the director – and editors Eric Strand and Karl T. Hirsch – are to be appropriately commended for assembling a massive amount of footage into a strong, cohesive film. and some of the talent gathered here prove once again how competent and capable they are; Jeffrey Tambor, Steven Bauer, Oded Fehr, James Caan, Paul Sorvino, Edward Furlong are among the recognizable names. Among the younger and less recognizable are some talented individuals; Yuda Levi, Delphine Chaneac, Joshua Biton, Jonathan Lipnicki and Richard Gunn. All of the performers do a fantastic job with their parts and help to make the episodic segments work. The biggest complaint this viewer has is in wanting time to get to know some of these characters better, to be given the opportunity to feel more for their individual stories.

FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY scans over two decades and follows the purportedly true account of an Israeli immigrant searching for his place in the American landscape. The story begins in 1973, when a young Izek is raised in a seedy, gangster-filled casino that operators behind the family bar. Over the next few decades we watch as he or his family become more involved in the criminal underworld which pervades his community. When he gains the opportunity to escape to the United States and the dream of starting over beckons as a new hope, the sins of his past prove they will not be ignored.

Writer Mattison and director Kanner-Zuckerman utilize a voiceover at various times in the film and, to some extent, it helps the viewer to follow Izek's arc. The use of known music from the various eras helps to follow the chronology. In spite of the episodic nature of the story, FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY is an engaging and intriguing glimpse into an aspect of a culture rarely seen in this country, and should prove enjoyable for anyone who loves a good indie feature.

9/11 1 SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN FANTASY/ACTION

\$149 MILL BO 3777 SCREENS PG-13 127 MINUTES



Kristen Stewart (TWILIGHT, THE RUNAWAYS, JUMPER, WHAT JUST HAPPENED)

Charleze Theron (HANCOCK, YOUNG ADULT, PROMETHEUS, NORTH COUNTRY, THE ITALIAN JOB)

Chris Hemsworth (THOR, THE AVENGERS, A PERFECT GETAWAY, STAR TREK)

Ian McShane (HBO's DEADWOOD, WE ARE MARSHALL, DEATH RACE, KUNG FU PANDA)

Years pass, and Snow White (now Kristen Stewart) has grown to adulthood in captivity, but seizes an opportunity to escape, Shawshank-style, into the Dark Forest. Since the Queen's magic won't work there, she enlists a simple Huntsman ("Thor's" Chris Hemsworth), who's become a bit of a drunkard since losing his

wife, to go and fetch the wayward girl.

After that, the movie gives way to a series of episodic battles and escapes, the best of which visually includes a too-brief encounter with a massive troll. Grudgingly, the Huntsman assumes the responsibility of protecting Snow White, who wants to reunite with those loyal to her father, a band that includes a noble boy, William (Sam Claflin), with whom she cavorted as a youth.

The cast does what it can -- especially Theron, whose frequent fits add "drama" and "raging" to her regal title -- but can't overcome a degree of flatness to the middle section or lack of consistent excitement at the end. Nor does Hemsworth's roguish charm come across as effortlessly as it did in "Thor." In years past,

all this might have made for a perfectly acceptable Saturday matinee -- something like "The Magic Sword" comes to mind -- but the current requirements of theatrical tentpoles don't allow for such modestly scaled ambitions.

The movie and its villain share a common bond: Conjuring a touch of magic is one thing, but sustaining great helpings of it is something else entirely. And in truth, none of this will matter because viewers will flock to the theater and then see it again on DVD. Critics be damned. It's still a fun movie and fans of **THE HUNGER GAMES, THE DICTATOR, BATTLESHIP, THE SAFE HOUSE, THE GREY,** and **THE VOW** will be very much at home here.

9/11 1 **WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARE EXPECTING** COMEDY

\$44 MILL BO 3021 SCREENS PG-13 110 MINUTES



Cameron Diaz (VANILLA SKY, MINORITY REPORT, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY, BAD TEACHER)

Jennifer Lopez (OUT OF SIGHT, SHALL WE DANCE, MONSTER-IN-LAW, GIGLI, THE BACK-UP PLAN)

Elizabeth Banks (OUR IDIOT BROTHER, THE HUNGER GAMES, MAN ON A LEDGE, THE NEXT THREE DAYS)

Dennis Quaid (THE BIG EASY, THE ROOKIE, SILVERADO, PANDORUM, SOUL SURFER)

Chris Rock (HEAD OF STATE, GROWN UPS, DEATH AT A FUNERAL, I THINK I LOVE MY WIFE)

Celebrity fitness guru Jules (Diaz); is stunned to learn she and her boyfriend dancer Evan (GLEE'S Matthew Morrison) are pregnant. Likewise, food-truck manager Rosie is surprised that her one night stand with her hunky rival, Marco leaves her preggers. No one is more amazed than lactation specialist Wendy (Banks), who nearly threw in the towel after two years of trying with her husband Gary. Always looking to overshadow his son, Gary's dad Ramsey (Quaid), announces at a family brunch that he and trophy wife Sklyer (Brooklyn Decker) are also expecting.

Photographer Holly (Lopez) and her husband Alex become parents through adoption. After discovering a baby is coming their way from Ethiopia, Holly is thrilled while Alex is terrified. That leads Alex to solicit the advice of a "dudes group", a roving quartet of Baby Bjorn out-fitted, stroller toting dads including Chris Rock and the ever acerbic Tom Lennon. Though the warn Alex that he may never have fun again, the guys also show a tender side to fatherhood.

The cast is quite good and subdued when needed and the story has an across the board appeal to all that liked **THE FIVE YEAR ENGAGEMENT, THE VOW, THINK LIKE A MAN, THIS MEANS WAR, FRIENDS WITH KIDS, 21 JUMP STREET, WANDERLUST,** and **ONE FOR THE MONEY.**

9/11 2 CLEANSKIN THRILLER

\$2 MILL BO 287 SCREENS R 108 MINUTES



Sean Bean (NORTH COUNTRY, LORD OF THE RINGS, NATIONAL TREASURE, MIRROR MIRROR)
Charlotte Rampling (BLAME IT ON MUM, NEVER LET ME GO, BASIC INSTINCT 2, THE VERDICT)

The slick opening of this one immediately takes us into the contemporary world of espionage and the terrorism it tries to counteract. The set up at a London hotel, where Secret Service Agent Ewan, (played by the increasingly gruff but charismatic Sean Bean) fails to protect those he should is neatly done, and a fair text book opener.

However, Ewan is sent, undercover by his boss, acerbically and brutally played by Charlotte Rampling, to investigate and quietly execute those responsible. As Ewan follows on the trail of the terrorist cell responsible, the movie evolves into an interesting ensemble piece, which gives a unique perspective from all sides of terrorism, the secret services, governments

and religious views and standpoints that make the whole thing the hornets' nest it is in reality. Without preaching, or flinching, the points of view are laid out bare in a naturalistic way. This coupled with some pretty imaginative stunts, cruelty and imaginative writing, make it unusual and not your usual Terrorist thriller.

This is largely due to the efforts of Director, Producer and Writer – Hadi Hajaig. Speaking with an individual voice that carries throughout the film, Hajaig's writing and directing are seamless, and original. Here is a creative voice at work that has great potential. **CLEANSKIN** is his 3rd Feature, and in a truly creative way only true artists have, he has chosen a different genre for each one.

The cast plays everything well and the story is smoldering and explosive and will thrill all that liked **HAYWIRE, ACT OF VALOR, HEADHUNTERS, BATTLESHIP, MAN O N A LEDGE** and **CONTRABAND**.

9/11 3 GOATS COMEDY

\$1 MILL BO 187 SCREENS R 92 MINUTES



David Duchovny (ZOLANDER, THE X FILES, RETURN TO ME, EVOLUTION)

Keri Russell (LEAVES OF GRASS, WAITRESS, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III)
Vera Farmiga (SAFE HOUSE, THE DEPARTED, UP IN THE AIR, HENRY'S CRIME)
Ty Burrell (TV's MODERN FAMILY, THE INCREDIBLE HULK, LEAVES OF GRASS)

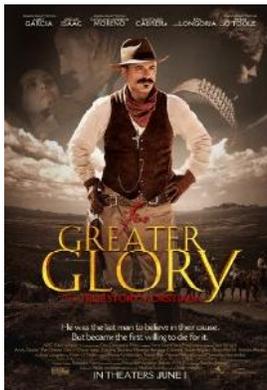
Several fine performers end up mostly spinning their wheels in *Goats*, a boilerplate coming-of-age story from director Christopher Neil. The cast is chock full of likable people: David Duchovny, Vera Farmiga, Ty Burrell, Justin Kirk, and Keri Russell all turn up, and all are appealing. *The Good Wife's* Graham Phillips stars as Ellis, the product of a long-broken marriage. Mother Wendy (Farmiga) is a New Ager with a trust fund, constantly looking for a new guru or spiritual plan; Father Frank (Burrell) has remarried and moved far away, leaving as Ellis's primary father figure the wistfully-named Goat Man (Duchovny) Goat Man has lived on Wendy's property as long as anyone can remember, doing the landscaping and pool upkeep, growing weed, and occasionally taking off on long "treks" with Ellis and his goats.

That idyllic, free-spirited life is coming to a close for Ellis, however, who is going off to the exclusive prep school his father attended. Over the course of the year, needless to say, lessons are learned--about his relationships with his parents, about his trust of Goat Man, about (of course) himself. There's not much in it you haven't seen before, though it's wittily acted and handsomely mounted (the lovely cinematography is by Wyatt Troll, who's got a clean sense of composition, particularly in images of solitude and loneliness, of which there are many).

As mentioned, the performances are enticing. Duchovny is an actor who all but oozes warmth and affability, both of which are plenty welcome in this role, while Farmiga dodges the clichés of her rather stock character by honing in on the rough edges. Burrell and Russell don't get much to do, though they make the most of their limited screen time, and Kirk is at his wry smuggest (which is saying something). Fans of **THE DICTATOR**, **WANDERLUST**, **PROJECT X**, **CHRONICLE**, **BERNIE** and **JACK AND JILL** will like this one.

9/11 3 FOR GREATER GLORY ACTION

\$6 MILL BO R



Andy Garcia (SEA OF LOVE, OCEAN'S TWELVE, HOODLUM, DESPERATE MEASURES)

Peter O'Toole (MY FAVORITE YEAR, HIGH SPIRITS, THE LION IN WINER, GOODBYE MR. CHIPS, ZULU DAWN)

Although he converted to marry his devoutly Catholic wife in 1926, Graham Greene was famously *called* to the faith during his time in Mexico, where he exiled himself in 1938, after an over-stimulated review of a Shirley Temple movie threatened him with extradition to the United States on libel charges. It was in Mexico that Greene conceived the first novel in his "Catholic trilogy," *The Power and the Glory*, about a priest on the run during the Cristero War.

Where Greene's hero was racked with doubt, there's very little of that at the outset of *For Greater Glory*; the embalming agents of history will do that to a story.

President Calles (Rubén Blades) informs the press that "Mexico is under siege," and describes his campaign to rid the country of its overweening religious influences. Calles passed legislation that banned Catholic services, forbid priests and nuns from being seen in clerical garb, and severely restricted the rights of the faithful. Religion-neutral revolutionary war hero-turned-mogul General Gorostieta (Garcia) addresses the concerns of his devout wife (Eva Longoria): "As an ex-military man I can tell you it's only a

matter of time until Calles is overthrown." The rebels (including Catalina Sandino Moreno and Santiago Cabrera) amassing an underground alliance are as certain in their beliefs, and pledge a peaceful resistance. Young José (astonishing newcomer Mauricio Kuri) is chastised by his father (Nestor Carbonell) for taunting a priest (O'Toole); the priest responds by making José an altar boy.

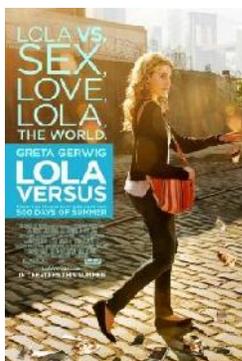
Soon after, O'Toole is martyred before his protégé's eyes, galvanizing the boy's faith where it might have been understandably thrown into chaos. The scene is shameless, the pair locking eyes and praying together at the moment of execution, and comes very early on. But *For Greater Glory* is just getting started, both with its jarring emotional pace and deliberate muddling of the issue of whether our heroes are fighting for their God or for a larger freedom of religious belief. Garcia's General is positioned as the lightning rod for this question: When the Cristeros decide to fight back, they seek to recruit him as a leader, but the only glory the General is interested in has to do with medals and kill counts. Bored with his soap factory, Garcia squares his mercenary interest in the offer with the idea, as he later hisses to his old war buddy Calles, that the latter "declared war on freedom." (Oh no he did not!)

But the General's reluctant conversion – the result of the bond he develops with José, who joins the revolt – manages to sidestep the idea of a motivating ideology. Instead *Glory* relies more on sentiment for its climax, mixing in just enough piety to fully and finally confuse the film's perspective. Michael Love's script is full of beans and Catholic loopholes: In one scene a priest tells his men that they might fire bullets, but God decides where they land. In another he counsels that God doesn't worry about those who kill a body, only those who kill a soul. There doesn't seem to be any scrutinizing awareness surrounding these lines; certainly director (and effects maven) Dean Wright appears to rejoice in depicting the war's violence, whether it's the bodies swinging from telephone poles or the constant *puh-pow, puh-pow, p-chew, p-chew* of the shoot 'em up scenes (though the renegade fighter played by Oscar Isaac has a welcome, snarling vitality).

Decent enough film covering the politics of their plight with the cast doing pretty well. Fans of **THE MONITOR, RAMPART, WAR HORSE, THE THREE MUSKETEERS, TREE OF LIFE**, and **BARNEY'S VERSION** will like this one.

9/11 2 LOLA VERSUS COMEDY

\$3 MILL BO 354 SCREENS R 87 MINUTES



Greta Gerwig (NO STRINGS ATTACHED, ARTHUR, NORTHERN COMFORT, ART HOUSE)

Bill Pullman (THE KILLER INSIDE ME, ALIEN AUTOPSY, SCARY MOVIE 4)

Joel Kinnaman (SAFE HOUSE, THE DARKEST HOUR, THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO)

Here's a comedy about a girl named Lola (Greta Gerwig) who's dumped three weeks before her wedding. Lola is a bright and daffy Manhattan grad student. She lives in an improbably swank loft with her improbably attractive fiancé (Kinnaman), rocks a summer dress like it's a second skin and bikes around the neighborhood with a blithely self-actualized perma-smile that's half urbanite, half fairytale princess. Lola is what Cameron Crowe might describe as the last guileless girl in New York, but she's on the cusp of 30, and if movies have taught us anything it's that turning 30 is the ultimate human crisis. Sure enough, her fiancé takes off without much of an explanation before the opening credits can finish, and her once-perfect life is left in tatters.

And so begins a romantic-comedy that rejects the typical flow of its genre, dispensing with "girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl marries boy so she never has to go through this agonizing (but quirky) process again" mechanics in favor of a story structured like the stages of grief. Lola struggles to learn twee lessons about how happiness has to come from within. Lola struggles for cash and turns to her parents for help, Lola dips a toe back into the dating pool, and Lola commiserates with her best friend Alice (whom Zoe Lister Jones reduces to a collection of safe zingers). Gerwig is so effortlessly winsome

that the film is seldom painful (and whenever it teeters over the edge, Bill Pullman shows up to take Lola on a walk along the Highline and dispense some fatherly advice), but it's a classic case of "likable actress in an unlikable role."

This is a nice little movie that has an attractive cast working well together. The appeal will be to those that liked **THE LUCKY ONE**, **THE 5 YEAR ENGAGEMENT**, **THE VOW**, **CHRONICLE**, **WE BOUGHT A ZOO**, and **THIS MEANS WAR**.

9/18 **1** THE CABIN IN THE WOODS THRILLER/HORROR

\$46 MILL BO 2811 SCREENS R 95 MINUTES



Kristen Connolly (TV's **NURSE JACKIE**, **THE GOOD WIFE**, **CERTAINTY**)

Chris Hemsworth (**THOR**, **THE AVENGERS**, **SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN**)

Bradley Whitford (TV's **WESTWING**, **LAW AND ORDER LA**, **THE MENTALIST**, **IN PLAIN SIGHT**)

Richard Jenkins (**HALL PASS**, **FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS**, **THE VISITOR**, **BURN AFTER READING**, **EAT PRAY LOVE**)

This film gets us going from the first scene. The causally smug, cynical lab-coated technicians (Whitford and Jenkins) relate to the five bright, sexy college kids we see as they take off for a cousin's countryside retreat.

We meet the usual gang of good-looking monster meat as they pack up for the weekend in the stick—and we're already primed to distrust their archetypes. It breaks down like

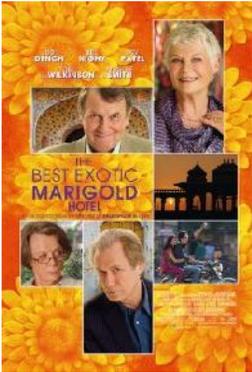
this: Hemsworth is the jock and Anna Hutchinson (most recent film credit: **ROTTING HILL**) is the oversexed blonde at his side. The meeker faction is comprised of Jesse Williams as the soft-spoken wildcard, Kristen Connolly as the mousy but resilient heroine and Fran Kranz as the wisecracking comic relief (Kranz steals the show, though to appreciate his work I still have to forcibly remind myself that *The TV Set* wasn't a documentary).

When Goddard the director, begins to eviscerate his cast, he walks a fine line between wanting you to watch, and wanting you to knowingly engage in the act of watching—this pas-de-deux begins with the cabin's one-way mirrors, maintained by the film's returns to its sci-fi side-plot, and resolves with a naked declaration of intent that's so fun and brilliantly orchestrated that it hardly ever feels didactic. It's familiar territory, sure, but Goddard gives it new life by drenching it in death—Of course, none of this stuff would work if Goddard hadn't mastered the basics, and one of the reasons that **THE CABIN IN THE WOODS** is the best "slasher" film in ages is that it's also one of the scariest. The jolts and dread are all refined ideals of the form, and the chatter—sweet and snarky, as one would expect of anything bearing the Joss Whedon brand—is always there to remind you this isn't the usual schlock. The cast is up to the task (**DOLLHOUSE** fans will feel right at home), with Kranz and Connolly doing outstanding work, and inspiring genuine affection even if they play characters the script insists are "stock."

Nevertheless, the movie gets so much right so often that such quibbles don't factor until long after the credits have rolled. The points Goddard raises are gleefully flattened by the joy he takes in making them, and whatever the film ultimately concludes about horror films—when they're as good as this one, you're just glad they exist. Everyone loving **CLOVERFIELD**, **SCREAM**, **FINAL DESTINATION**, **THE HUNGER GAMES**, **THE GREY**, **THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO** and **MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4** will love this one too.

9/18 1 THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL

COMEDY \$44 MILL BO 1298 SCREENS PG-13 124 MINUTES



Judi Dench (MY WEEK WITH MARILYN, J. EDGAR, THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK, DIE ANOTHER DAY, THE SHIPPING NEWS)

Maggie Smith (LADIES IN LAVENDER, GOSFORD PARK, NANNY MCPHEE RETURNS, HOOK, THE FIRST WIVES CLUB)

Bill Nighy (PIRATE RADIO, UNDERWORLD 3, G-FORCE, HOT FUZZ, CHALET GIRL)

Tom Wilkinson (THE DEBT, THE GREEN HORNET, 44 INCH CHEST, VALKERIE, MICHAEL CLAYTON)

The film weaves through the intersecting lives of several English retirees who arrive and live at The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel for the Elderly and Beautiful. They were lured there on the promise of a cheap residence, an exotic location and paid travel expenses. But the idyllic hotel turns out to be a rundown old building operated by a single plucky young man named Sonny (Dev Patel). We then follow the characters as they adjust to their foreign environment and, in most cases, fall in love with it.

The film begins spryly enough. The opening sequence peeks in on short interludes from each of the characters' lives in England to show what brings them to India. The most poignant scene features Judi Dench as Evelyn, a widow whose husband left her in a financial shambles. She's trying to explain to a call center operator that she can't put her husband, the named account holder, on the line because he's dead. The operator is so fixed on her script that she doesn't even acknowledge the information. Maggie Smith plays a comically detestable racist named Muriel, who requires a medical procedure on her leg that she can't afford locally. She reluctantly agrees to visit India to take advantage of a medical exchange program. Muriel makes no secret of her hatred of Indians, ranting about it to anyone who'll listen. The character provides gasp-worthy comedy until she abruptly changes.

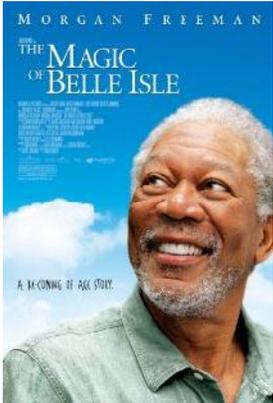
Bill Nighy and Penelope Wilton play Douglas and Jean, a couple who should be settling into a comfy retirement, but have lost most of their money and are forced to slum it. Tom Wilkinson plays Graham, a retired High Court judge who has mysterious personal motivations for returning to India. Celia Imrie plays Madge, who's looking to find a nice man, and Ronald Pickup plays the sex-starved Norman, who has left his country because the dating scene sucks. Nighy, to no surprise, is absolutely wonderful as the hesitant, non-confrontational Douglas. Every line of dialogue he delivers is a delight. His body language tells its own backstory. His dry facial expressions land laughs and evoke emotions with equal simplicity. As he forges a friendship with Evelyn, his relationship with his wife becomes increasingly uneasy.

Apart from its cast, the film's greatest asset is its warm, eye-catching visuals. The art direction revels in the country's picturesque decay. Everything's run-down and falling apart—though in the most beautiful fashion—but as pretty as it is, the film offers no real sense of life in India.

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel treats its characters the same way it treats India. They live in a world in which personality flaws, hang-ups and other obstacles aren't real problems because they can easily be wiped away with plot mechanics and character revelations. In the end, the film launches an assault of cuteness that undermines any character depth it developed along the way; except for Bill Nighy. No one could forget him. The rest of the cast is also pretty darn good. Fans of **SHAME, IRON LADY, WAR HORSE, MARGARET, BEING FLYNN, DEEP BLUE SEA, THE ARTIST, DESCENDANTS, THE GUARD**, and **THE DEBT**.

9/18 3 THE MAGIC OF BELLE ISLE DRAMA

2 MILL BO 287 SCREENS PG 109 MINUTES



**Morgan Freeman (UNFORGIVEN, BRUCE ALMIGHTY, DRIVING MISS DAISY, THE BUCKET LIST, 10 ITEMS OR LESS)
Virginia Madsen (SIDEWAYS, A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION, RED RIDING HOOD)**

Set in upstate New York, at the idyllic lakeside town of the title, this gooey reteaming of Rob Reiner and Morgan Freeman is crammed tight with baldly manipulative elements, its tearjerker quota busting at the seams. A cute dog, a mentally challenged neighbor, a caricatured Muslim cashier, a precocious young girl, her adorable sisters, a kindly single mom, and Freeman's redemption-bound curmudgeon are all accounted for, in a setting where the sun kisses everything and everyone knows your name. Freeman's character, a washed-up, wheelchair-bound author, goes by the name of Monte Wildhorn, and like the hero in the western novel that made his career, Monte exudes the moody heartache of a lonely cowboy—or, at least, that's what we're supposed to think. When Monte moves into a rent-free cabin with little more than a snarl, a Larry McMurtry typewriter, and a soon-to-be-replenished supply of scotch, he's greeted by all but the violins. Finnegan O'Neil (Emma Fuhrmann), the curious tween next door, takes an overeager interest on cue. Carl Loop (Ash Christian), the "special" boy in town, catches Monte's eye by bunny-hopping about in scuba goggles. And Ringo, the resident yellow lab Monte inflexibly renames Spot, is good for canine comic relief from minute one. Somehow, some way, amid all its puppeteering, this TV-ready trope fest reveals an affecting spirit, particularly in small moments between Monte and the O'Neil clan, and especially in that Monte's race is never once addressed, despite an otherwise all-white population.

Freeman's performance is the film's best asset. Though it further tramples the theory that the Oscar winner can spin garbage into gold, a late monologue, before becoming too poetic for comfort, proves highly captivating, and scenes Monte shares with Finnegan's mom, Charlotte (Virginia Madsen), have a certain genuine sweetness. Actors of this caliber can bring sustained beauty to fleeting passages, and fend off the slaughter of their characters' romances by such lines as, "You walk into a room like a warm breeze after a rain."

The cast and storyline will drive this home to those that liked **HAPPY FEAT 2, A DOLPHIN'S TALE, DARLING COMPANION, MARLEY AND ME, BIG MIRACLE, HOP** and **SUPER 8**.

9/18 3 DETACHMENT DRAMA

\$2 MILL BO 232 SCREENS NR 97 MINUTES

**Adrian Brody (PREDATORS, THE PIANIST, CADILLAC RECORDS)
Marcia Gay Harden (INTO THE WILD, WHIP IT, THE MAIDEN HEIST, AMERICAN GUN)**



Directed by Tony Kaye **DETACHMENT** tells the story of an emotionally withdrawn substitute teacher, Henry Barthes (Brody), whose world is turned upside down as his professional and personal life simultaneously begin to unravel and the walls he's built around himself crumble, leaving him completely exposed. Henry's story is echoed in the lives of his fellow high school teachers, each trying their hardest to maintain a healthy emotional perspective and distance in an environment that pushes each of them to the edge of chaos.

Henry visits his senile grandfather, who suffers from advanced dementia, every day in the hospital. His grandfather is constantly haunted by hallucinations of his daughter, Henry's mother, who killed herself when Henry was just a young boy. In a rare moment of clarity, Henry's grandfather suggests that it was this event that caused Henry to shut down emotionally for the rest of his life. Henry's defensive armor, however, is slowly chipped away throughout the film by three women: Meredith (Betty Kaye), an artistically gifted student who is brutally mocked by her peers; Ms. Madison (Christina Hendricks), a fellow teacher and love interest; and Erica (Sami Gayle), a young girl prostituting herself on the street whom he takes into his home.

The film deals with the conception of teachers and students in public high schools in America, and manages to become something profound. The story is not simply about youth, angst and violence in the face of authority; it explores the human capacity to contain and categorize these day-to-day atrocities and disassociate mentally and emotionally from reality. The film demonstrates how the callous fronts of each of these teachers belie a fragile, volatile interior. This facade of stability and control is easily cracked, and it becomes difficult for each of the characters to keep their school life separate from their private one, and their interior rage, confusion and impotency from exploding into the world around them. The film is exceptionally well-acted. Its all-star cast gives nuanced and complex performances that bring each character to life. The plot, although initially appearing simple and uncomplicated, explores its issues in a way that offers a richer, fuller examination of the situation.

Fans of movies like **BLUE LIKE JAZZ, BERNIE, MY WEEK WITH MARILYN, MARGARET, LIKE CRAZY** and **WE BOUGHT A ZOO** will enjoy this fine film as well.

9/25 **1** THE AVENGERS ADVENTURE

\$615 MILL BO 4349 SCREENS PG-13 143 MINUTES



Chris Hemsworth (THOR, CASH, A PERFECT GETAWAY, STAR TREK)

Chris Evans (FANTASTIC FOUR, CELLULAR, THE NANNY DIARIES, PUNCTURE, PUSH)

Robert Downey, JR (IRON MAN, SHERLOCK HOLMES, THE WONDER BOYS, U. S. MARSHALLS, ZODIAK, LUCKY MAN)

Samuel L. Jackson (PULP FICTION, INGLORIOUS BASTARDS, MEETING EVIL, LAKEVIEW TERRACE, SNAKES ON A PLANE, FREEDOMLAND)

Scarlett Johansson (LOST IN TRANSLATION, THE PERFECT SCORE, VKICKYH CHRISTINA BARCELONA, WE BOUGHT A ZOO, IRON MAN 2)

Marvel's **THE AVENGERS** fully keeps the promise implicit in that plea, taking one of the dominant movie trends of recent years -- the nonstop proliferation of comicbook-based superheroes -- and pushing it to orgiastic new levels of CG-inflated, 3D-augmented geek-out mayhem. Expensive and expansive though it may be, however, the film is no bloated behemoth. As written and directed by the ever genre-savvy Whedon, it's a clean-burning, six-cylinder entertainment that exudes discipline in every particular, from the script's balance of sincerity and self-effacing humor to the well-integrated visual effects to the keen

sense of proportion that governs the ensemble. Whenever the possibility of boredom or excess rears its head, Whedon finds an elegant solution.

Crucially, sequences that might have played as laborious buildup are handled in a brisk, straight-ahead manner that quickly focuses attention while methodically elevating the stakes, scene by scene. A new threat of global annihilation looms from the outset when Thor's megalomaniacal brother, Loki (Tom Hiddleston), arrives on Earth in a petulant huff and steals the Tesseract, the all-powerful energy cube found at the bottom of the ocean in "Captain America."

Overruling his colleagues in the shadowy law-enforcement agency Shield, Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) seeks to mobilize an elite squad of save-the-dayers known as the Avengers. A superhero summit is held aboard Fury's enormous airship, though it's more like a misfit meet-and-greet. The script deftly blends comedy, tension and on-the-fly character recaps as these life-size action figures, some of whom have superhuman egos to match their abilities, come into contact.

The best lines, naturally, go to dryly sarcastic playboy billionaire Tony Stark/Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), who immediately clashes with earnest WWII relic Steve Rogers/Captain America (Chris Evans). An amusing early sequence finds these two squaring off with imperious god Thor (Chris Hemsworth) before they realize they share the same objective: Recover the cube before the evil Loki, ironically pronounced "low-key," harnesses its power to summon a nasty intergalactic army that will enslave humanity.

Providing an extra dash of suspense is the deceptively reserved Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), serving in a strictly scientific capacity, as his transformation into the uncontrollable Hulk would (and eventually does) threaten the safety of everyone onboard the ship. That includes Fury's whip-smart operative, Natasha Romanoff/Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), who more than holds her own amid all the chrome and testosterone, and gets more of a chance to flesh out her troubled backstory here than she did in "Iron Man 2." Specifically, she has a vested interest in breaking the spell Loki has placed on her old ally, Clint Barton/Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner, briefly glimpsed in "Thor"), a skilled archer with uniquely deadly arrows.

The prior pics tried to position each hero at the center of his own personal psychodrama, but here the balance feels right; these fighters work better, and hold one's attention more effectively, as a unit. In a prime example of Whedon's ability to turn problems to his advantage, the Hulk, seemingly the weakest link in terms of character engagement (Ruffalo is the third actor to play the role in a decade), comes satisfyingly into his own as the Avengers' secret weapon.

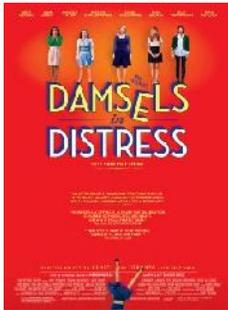
While Downey consistently steals the show with his desert-dry delivery, each actor in the freshly re-energized cast gets the chance not only to crack wise, but to touchingly express the self-doubt that lies at the heart of every superhero. The inevitable question of whether the world needs this motley crew is answered most sweetly by Shield's Agent Coulson (Clark Gregg), a series fixture who stands in here for the film's targeted fanboy audience. On the other side, Hiddleston gamely handles his villain-in-chief duties, which mostly consist of issuing petulant putdowns ("You crave subjugation!") to the entirety of the human race.

Apart from a punchy setpiece in Stuttgart, Germany, Whedon confines the action to the airship for much of the picture, all the better to maximize the impact of an extended climax that involves, as it must, the catastrophic destruction of a major metropolis. Most memorable for the image of a giant blue sphincter excreting armed-and-dangerous floaties over the city, this endgame is too pro forma to convey real danger, images of civilians fleeing en masse notwithstanding. Even still, the battles are excitingly staged, with a sweep and coherence that actually gain something from the 3D conversion, especially when the camera starts to pinball from building to building in a breathless flurry of digital zooms and tracking shots.

The film is delightful for anyone 10 and up. The cast perfect and the appeal to all that loved **IRON MAN, BATMAN, SUPERMAN, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, STAR TREK, HANGOVER, THE HUNGER GAMES** and **HARRY POTTER**.

9/25 **3** DAMSELS IN DISTRESS COMEDY

\$2 MILL BO 1365 SCREENS **R** 99 MINUTES



Greta Gerwig (NO STRINGS ATTACHED, THE DISH AND THE SPOON, ARTHOUSE, ARTHUR)

Ryan Metcalf (FIGHTING FISH)

For ringleader Violet (Gerwig) and her lieutenants Rose (Megalyne Echikunwoke) and Heather (Carrie MacLemore), their idea of helping others is to man the campus suicide center (complete with a “Come on, it’s not that bad!” poster, tap-dance classes and a very strict donut policy) and to socialize with a fraternity whose members are rich, attractive and particularly thick-headed. These pursuits might seem completely pointless, but then Seven Oaks is the kind of place where grad students attempt to kill themselves by jumping off the roof of a two-story building, and where frat boys admit under duress that they don’t know the names of the colors. What’s really on everyone’s mind, of course, is love — although Violet has the additional agenda of trying to launch a national dance craze. (And while writing this, I’m chuckling all over again at her attribution of the Twist to one “Chubbert Checker.”) Violet loses her fella to one of her would-be suicides, while Lily is ardently pursued by white-collar charmer Charlie (Adam Brody), whose every move is dismissed by the hard-bitten Rose as being “playboy or operator-type.” (Her constant repetition of this phrase renders it side-splittingly hilarious by the end of the film.) In terms of performance, Stillman’s dialogue — Violet is prone to statements like “I think we should learn as many clichés and hackneyed statements as possible” and “I’d like to thank you for this chastisement” — resembles the songs of Cole Porter and Stephen Sondheim; the actor has to take a mouthful of verbiage and utter it in the most effortless way possible. This is a pleasant enough little movie perfect for a night of just kicking back and closing the mind. The cast is good and the appeal will be to all who liked **THE SITTER, JACK AND JILL, PROJECT X, WANDERLUST, CHRONICLE**, and **WHAT’S YOUR NUMBER**.

9/25 **3** THE SAMARITAN THRILLER

\$2 MILL BO 465 SCREENS R 90 MINUTES



Samuel L. Jackson (PULP FICTION, LAKEVIEW TERRACE, BLACK SNAKE MOAN, SOUL MEN)

Luke Kirby (TV SERIES include FLASHPOINT, CRASH AND BURN, LAW AND ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT)

Ruth Negga (TV SERIES include FIVE DAUGHTERS, MISFITS, NATIVITY)

In *The Samaritan*, Jackson plays a grifter named Foley, who's been released from prison after serving 25 years for killing his partner. But now he's a free man, got himself a construction job, and even met himself a fine piece by the name of Iris (Ruth Negga). Iris has other issues such as being a whore and a druggie, but after Foley risks his neck saving her life, she's all his. But Foley's life is about to change when enters Ethan (Luke Kirby), the son of Foley's ex-partner, who also works for a no-goodnick named Xavier (Tom Wilkinson). Ethan wants Foley in on the ultimate con against a mark that he knows he can get over on. But Foley isn't on board – I mean the dude just got out and fallen in love; he ain't lookin for a reason to go back to the pen. But Ethan has a secret he reveals to Foley, ensuring his participation in his scheme and should Foley go against it, Ethan will be sure to expose this secret, fucking up his life but good. The con that Ethan wants to use is a popular one by Foley called "The Samaritan". And the mark? Ethan's boss Xavier.

The Samaritan is an engaging thriller that grabs you from the jump and holds you and is rock solid and very entertaining. There is a plot twist that happens almost midway through and it's quite jaw-dropping. What carries the film overall are its performers starting with Sam "The Man" Jackson, who always brings his A-Game to any film he appears. Even the bad ones are worth at least one sit through if he's in it. In

THE SAMARITAN he plays the down and out grifter quite well. The dude is tough, yet compassionate but still you don't wanna mess with him because he will fuck you up! You can see it in his eyes and feel it in his voice (then again that's how Sam talks in most films). It's brilliant... just brilliant. I'll also give it up to Luke Kirby for playing Foley's adversary. It's like a game of chess between the two and you're gonna love to hate this guy.

This movie has all of the ingredients to entertain a lot of the folks that liked **HEADHUNTERS**, **BATTLESHIP**, **LOCKOUT**, **ACT OF VALOR**, **JOHN CARTER**, **HAYWIRE**, **RAMPART**, and **RED TAILS**. The cast is terrific as well.