



12/2 2 AS ABOVE, SO BELOW HORROR
\$22 MILL BO 2192 SCREENS R 93 MINUTES

Perdita Weeks (TV—TITANIC, THE PROMISE, FOUR SEASONS, THE TUDORS)
Ben Feldman (TV—DROP DEAD DIVA, SILICON VALLEY, THE MINDY PROJECT, MAJOR CRIMES)
Edwin Hodge (TV---CHICAGO FIRE, NCIS: LA, COUGAR TOWN—FILM—PURGE, PURGE: ANARCHY, RED DAWN)

Scarlett (Perdita Weeks) follows in her alchemist father's footsteps by traveling into Iran and beneath its surface, looking for clues that will lead her to the philosopher's stone. She finds one, only to be subsumed by a noisy and dark show of supernatural terror that seems as if it was realized with as little as a few red glowsticks and a camera tumbling into a dimly lit abyss. It's a predictable preview of the bigger freak-out that follows, but in between, as it persuasively depicts Scarlett's talents for sleuthing, conveying her passion for her life's work as being unmotivated by the allure of treasure, the film promises, if not a dissertation on alchemy exactly, then a character study informed as much by what goes bump in the night as it is by one woman's reckoning with grief.

In the end the film is content as it is to present itself as a mere twist on *Cube*, with Scarlett and a team of fellow explorers struggling to find, and then evade, the twisted, puzzle-like pull of the gates of hell beneath the streets of Paris. The film alternates in scaring its characters by tapping into their deepest fears and having them rub shoulders with the relics of a past that As an agoraphobic's worst nightmare, it's unpretentious and tensely executed. It allows them to imagine unexpected sights materializing inside the limestone-walled bowels of a cosmopolitan city.



This one should do as well as **OCULUS, THE QUIET ONES, OPEN GRAVE, SABOTAGE, VAMPIRE ACADEMY, DEVIL'S DUE, YOU'RE NEXT** and **INSIDIOUS 2**.



12/2 1 DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES
SCI/FI/ ACTION
\$207 MILL BO 4136 SCREENS PG-13 130 MINUTES

Gary Oldman (ROBO COP, PARANOIA, LAWLESS, THE DARK KNIGHT RISES, THE BOOK OF ELI, RED RIDING HOOD, AIR FORCE ONE, THE CONTENDER)
Keri Russell (DARK SKIES, AUSTENLAND, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE III, WE ARE SOLDIERS)

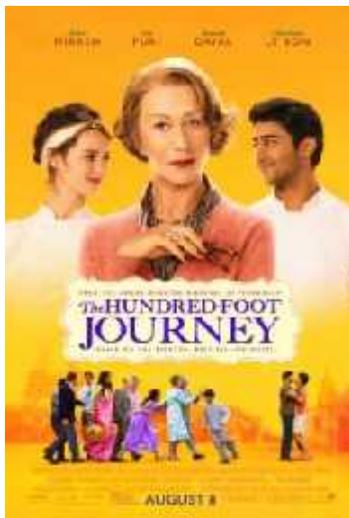
Years after the events depicted in **RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**, Caesar and the liberated apes have developed a forested encampment outside of San Francisco; the so-called "Simian Flu" unleashed by Franco's well-intentioned Alzheimer's researcher has scrubbed out much of humanity, and shattered the country's infrastructure. Armed to the teeth, human survivors huddle in a walled-off armory with sporadic power, led by Malcolm (Jason Clarke) and Dreyfus (Gary Oldman). The characters routinely allude to the riots and human-on-human bloodshed of the interceding years, and the same chaos promises to return once the power runs out, which is why Malcolm desperately needs to reactivate an electrical dam located on the cliffs near—you guessed it—the ape village.



When Carver (Kirk Acevedo), a member of his team, comes across two of Caesar's foot soldiers in the woods, he panics and shoots one of them; nobody could be blamed for gasping at the abruptness of the gunfire, nor for anticipating a bloody retribution from Caesar. But instead, the chimp-king begrudgingly forgives him, allowing the humans access to the dam, provided they hand over their guns. Caesar confides in his head lieutenant, Koba (Toby Kebbell), that preserving the apes' lives is priority one: The humans' sad intrusion was more or less inevitable, and this wager is Caesar's "one chance for peace" between humans and apes.

That Koba has other plans isn't much of a spoiler, but the less explicated about the breathtaking final hour of this movie the better. But Reeves counterbalances a solidly world-weary cast (including Keri Russell and Kodi Schmitt-McPhee, who, as Malcolm's frail, indie-comic-reading son, could certainly have been *more* annoying) against some of the strongest mo-cap effects ever put on screen, allowing Kibbell and Serkis to breathe unmistakable gravity into both Koba's vengeful sadism and Caesar's sad-eyed realization that apes and humans have more in common than he'd like to admit.

This will explode in rentals just like **CAPTAIN AMERICA**, **GODZILLA**, **LONE SURVIVOR**, **DIVERGENT**, **NON STOP**, and **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS**.



12/2 1 THE HUNDRED FOOT JOURNEY

COMEDY

\$54 MILL BO 2176 SCREENS PG 122 MINUTES

Helen Mirren (RED 2, ARTHUR, LOVE RANCH, THE DEBT, THE QUEEN, THE CLEARING)

Manish Dayal (TV—THE GOOD WIFE, 90210, FILM--BREAKING THE GIRLS, CALIFORNIA SCHEMING, ON THE OTHER SIDE)

In this fine film, the Kadam family—doe-eyed Hassan (Dayal), a chef who learned all he knows from his mother; his bullheaded father, referred to only as Papa (Om Puri); and Papa's four other children—leave India when their family restaurant is torched. The fire, a hate crime that incinerates Hassan's mother, is described only as the result of "some election" and quickly dismissed, as there's no place for grief in this upbeat dramedy. Instead, as Hassan tells the family's story to a customs officer, a brisk mix of exposition and flashbacks sets the lightly comic, surface-skimming tone that the film will stick to as the nomadic clan briefly touches down in England, then moves to France. It's there that they settle down in a postcard-perfect town with a bustling greenmarket, red-tiled rooftops, a cobblestoned town square, and an abandoned restaurant, where they recreate the warmly lit, welcoming establishment they left behind in Mumbai, only to enter into a battle with the restaurant across the street.

Luckily for us, Madame Mallory, the manager of the rival restaurant, is played by the great Helen Mirren, who injects the proceedings with genuine emotion as the ferocious Madame first tries to put the

Kadams out of business and then warms to them, accepting Papa as her suitor and employing Hassan as her head chef in hopes of scoring a second Michelin star (his move from the family restaurant to hers is the hundred-foot journey of the title). It may have been a foregone conclusion that Madame Mallory's restaurant would win that second star after Hassan became her chef, but when she embraces Hassan to thank him for the feat, the pro forma turns profound. Mirren also comes close to selling the film's main form of wish fulfillment, which is not its softcore foodie porn, but its vision of a world in which xenophobia is easily conquered by right-thinking people. The lecture Madame Mallory delivers to her head chef about the right and wrong ways to be French is thrillingly acidic, and Mirren is a formidable enough presence to make you almost believe that Madame Mallory could single-handedly hold all the town's prejudice at bay.

This will rent as well as **PHILOMENA, CHEF, THE IRON LADY, HEAVEN IS FOR REAL, HER, AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, DALLAS BUYER'S CLUB, and ANNA KARENINA.**



12/9 1 DOLPHIN TALE 2 ADVENTURE
\$38 MILL BO 2698 SCREENS PG 107 MINUTES

Morgan Freeman (THE BUCKET LIST, THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, UNFORGIVEN, STREET SMART, NOW YOU SEE ME, OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN, RED)
Ashley Judd (OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN, DIVERGENT, DE-LOVELY, EYE OF THE BEHOLDER)

This sequel's drama revolves around Winter—following the death of her surrogate mother—being threatened with a one-way ticket to Texas by the USDA after the Clearwater Marine Aquarium's Dr. Clay Haskett (Harry Connick Jr.) deems her potential new roommate, Mandy, fit to return to sea (according to regulations, dolphins cannot be housed alone). This causes Clay's daughter, Hazel (Cozi Zuehlsoff), much

distress, as she feels she has no voice in Winter's well-being, while also stranding his acolyte, Sawyer (Nathan Gamble), between a rock and a hard place: to accept a full scholarship to a prestigious marine biology program or stay behind in the hopes of finding a female dolphin capable of sharing the same tank with Winter.

Like its predecessor, the film is in no small part a showcase for Smith's less-than-acute ear for dialogue and symbolism. Venting to Sawyer's mother, Lorraine (Judd), about her father, a petulant Hazel likens herself to a plate-glass doesn't even see me." Of speaking about Sawyer, who admittedly subtle puppy-him, perhaps because he's his own troubles, which Dr. happily obliges with both an stopwatch and words of and another opening.



window because, natch, "he course, she may as well be doesn't seem to register her doggish signs of affection for too busy seeking guidance for Cameron McCarthy (Freeman) allegorical hand-me-down wisdom about one door closing

But Smith's tin ear is as unmistakable as his enormous heart. Both movies and its predecessor feature scenes of humans without limbs finding kinship in Winter's loss of her dorsal fin—scenes that might have been intolerably mawkish if not for the sincerity of Smith's quizzical vision, an aesthetic register that intuits with lucid simplicity the sense of fear, joy, and sadness animals such as Winter no doubt feel. A dolphin's eye view is a recurring visual motif throughout, testifying to how the survival of so much marine life hinges on an open flow of empathy. It's the kind of message only a SeaWorld stockholder would dare to begrudge.

This movie will easily rent as well as **THE FAULT IN OUR STARS, THE LEGO MOVIE, FROZEN, HOBBIT 2, THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY, and ANCHOR MAN 2.**



12/9 1 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

FANTASY/ADVENTURE

\$324 MILL BO 4657 SCREENS PG-13 121 MINUTES

Chris Pratt (TV'S PARKS AND RECREATION---FILM---HER, DELIVERY MAN, MONEY BALL, ZERO DARK THIRTY)

Vin Diesel (FAST AND FURIOUS, RIDDICK, FAST FIVE, FIND ME GUILTY, THE PACIFIER)

Bradley Cooper (TV'S NIP AND TUCK, ALIAS---FILMS--AMERICAN HUSTLE, THE HANGOVER, VALENTINE'S DAY, ALL ABOUT STEVE)

Deep in the cosmos a manhunt is on to find the human outlaw, Peter Quill (Pratt), who is in possession of an orb with power to destroy worlds. A radical from the alien race the Kree, Ronan (Lee Pace), is working to find Quill, get the orb and deliver it to Thanos. When Quill discovers the evil orb plan he forms an anti-Ronan squad made up of an assassin, Gamora (Zoe Saldana), a brute named Drax (Dave Bautista), a genetically engineered rodent, Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper), and a talking alien tree called Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel).

The training wheels are off with this movie and it's refreshing to be in the depths of space exploring new worlds, far vistas of Marvel films. There's Quill hits play on a Walkman in dances around ruins on a planet that environment is captivating and incredible. Senses go into environments, spaceships and shades of the amazing colors by deep space telescopes. The digital effects beautifully craft these locales, and they feel lived in.



removed from the familiar a declaration of adventure as one of the opening scenes and distant planet. Every the visual details are overdrive with the varieties of alien races, all in various of the stunning nebulas spied. The digital effects beautifully look a little beat up and it all

The story bounces around in 'meanwhile' mode for a little as the narrative tracks the course of the Guardians and the big bad Ronan. It's standard Marvel procedure and the structure is similar to *The Avengers* with the Guardians getting beaten down and torn apart in order to realize their mistakes and become a team. What separates *this film* apart from their costumed counterparts is that they're all orphans and a dysfunctional family forms as they bond. They're also missing the gloss of the traditional 'superheroes' and come across as a bite-size cosmic Dirty Dozen.

This will rent like crazy just as you did with **DIVERGENT, GODZILLA, NEIGHBORS, THE AMAZING SPIDER MAN, 300:RISE OF AN EMPIRE,** and **LONE SURVIVOR.**



12/9 3 WHEN THE GAME STANDS TALL

DRAMA

\$31 MILL BO 2076 SCREENS PG 113 MINUTES

Jim Caviezel (TV—PERSON OF INTEREST—FILM—OUTLANDER, ESCAPE PLAN, UNKNOWN, THE PASSION OF CHRIST, PAY IT FORWARD, THE ROCK)
Michael Chiklis (TV—THE SHIELD, AMERICAN HORROR STORY, NO ORDINARY FAMILY---FILM THE FANTASTIC FOUR, THE THREE STOOGES, EAGLE EYE, WIRED)

As if to drive the notion of football as a character-building apparatus home, the story kicks off its narrative arc with a loss that shocks a team right to their core. From 1992 through 2003, De La Salle, a private Catholic school in the suburban San Francisco Bay Area, racked up a startling legacy of wins. Under the leadership of head coach Bob Ladouceur (Caviezel), the team triumphed in 151 straight games. The movie opens with the last of these before turning its gaze on the 2004 team. Thanks in part to the other coaches in a fed-up (and beat-up) conference, the Spartans are more or less forced to branch out and face infinitely tougher teams, and consequently drop the very first game of their season.

For Ladouceur, an incongruously taciturn man seemingly allergic to game fuel and a coach whose endorsement of gentility and mutual support align him more closely with Fred Rogers than Mike Ditka, this incredibly painful loss presents the opportunity of a lifetime to put those lessons he's been teaching in the classroom about the Book of Job into practice. And his suddenly more receptive (no pun intended) gridiron apostles have much to learn both on the field and off; among the standard-issue positions covered here are the golden-boy BMOC whose vicarious-living father is mercilessly goading him behind the scenes, the boastful superstar in the making who counts at least a half dozen I's in "T-E-A-M," and even the diminutive third-stringer who's just happy to keep the bench warm for his team.

Ladouceur insists the team's winning streak was always tangential to the other measures of success, that all he requires from his players isn't a perfect game, but "a perfect effort." Caviezel commits only to the level of God-like omniscience that Mel Gibson whipped into him a decade ago, and as such his character often seems less a teacher than an appropriately shadowy figurehead of authority. In the grand scheme of mud-caked football parables, it's notable that the movie's brand of triumph focuses on cleansing the spirit—and even more notable that it depicts teammates walking onto the field hand in hand, in pairs like they're boarding Noah's Arc, without feeling compelled to address gay panic.



This will rent as well as **HEAVEN IS FOR REAL, MILLION DOLLAR ARM, DRAFT DAY, THE FAULT IN OUR STARS, GOD'S NOT DEAD, CAPTAIN PHILLIPS,** and **42.**



12/16 2 MAGIC IN THE MOONLIGHT

COMEDY

\$11 MILL BO 964 SCREENS PG-13 97 MINUTES

Colin Firth (THE KING'S SPEECH, THE ACCIDENTAL HUSBAND, THE RAILWAY MAN, NANNY MCPHEE, ARTHUR NEWMAN, SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE)
Emma Stone (THE HELP, THE AMAZING SPIDER MAN 2, GANGSTER SQUAD, CRAZY STUPID LOVE, FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS)

There's a scene near the conclusion of Woody Allen's latest trifle that recalls the filmmaker's finest work in its fusion of earnest philosophical inquiry and black, self-effacing comedy. Following the involvement of his beloved aunt in a potentially fatal car accident, renowned magician and die-hard skeptic Stanley Crawford (Firth) tries to invoke God's mercy through prayer in a moment of solitude and desperation. Despite his clear unfamiliarity with the ritual, Stanley summons as much sincerity as he can for his appeal, but throws up his arms in disgust just at the moment when he seems to believe his own words, proceeding to half-jokingly castigate himself for such out-of-character weakness and folly.

In plot and visual vernacular, it's a doppelganger for the proto-screwball romantic comedies of Hollywood's Golden Age, and the result is an easy-to-swallow piece of confectionary cinema. Stanley is in the south of France at the behest of his friend and fellow magician, Howard (Simon McBurney), who has sought his assistance in debunking the psychic claims of Sophie Baker (Stone), a young American woman whose talents (and beauty) allowed her to ingratiate herself into a wealthy American family. That Sophie and Stanley will embark on a sweet-and-sour romance is a given; the meat of the film lies in the series of existential crises Sophie triggers in Stanley as he grows increasingly nonplussed by her extrasensory powers. Long before he falls for Sophie herself, he's seduced by what she represents: the possibility of an unseen spiritual world, a balm for his cantankerous atheism. Considering that as a character Stanley is hardly fleshed out beyond the word "skeptic," these swift changes of heart are a bit baffling to behold, and it's hardly surprising that it's Stanley, not the sprightly Sophie, who resembles the fool of the relationship by film's end.

Ping-ponging between declarations of love for Stanley and a steadfast commitment to marry her wealthy, foppish suitor, Brice (Hamish Linklater), she resembles a plot device more than she does an indecisive, love-struck young woman; her rapid changes of mind and heart are baldly designed to provoke the maximum amount of anxiety out of Stanley. She's an all-surface creation, with Stone's moonish features worshipped by suitor(s) and camera alike. This will do as well as **ENOUGH SAID, BLUE JASMINE, MOONRISE KINGDOM, THE MONUMENTS MEN, THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL,** and **CHEF.**





12/16 1 THE MAZE RUNNER SCI/FI
\$74 MILL BO 3632 SCREENS PG-13

Dylan O'Brien(TV—TEEN WOLF—FILM—INTERNSHIP,
HIGH ROAD, THE FIRST TIME)
Kaya Scodelario (CLASH OF THE TITANS, SPIKE ISLAND,
NOW IS GOOD, SHANK)

The opening of the film immediately establishes our context and the problems inherent therein: a bunch of teenage boys have been sent in the Box (basically a really loud elevator) up to the Glade (a big, walled-in field) to figure out the Maze (a maze). Wiped of their memories, remembering only their first names, the boys create their own self-sufficient society, everyone fulfilling a particular role in the effort to survive out there in the great unknown. Meanwhile, certain boys are designated as Runners, leaving each day into the Maze when the walls open up and studiously mapping the dangerous terrain in the hope of eventually finding a way out. Enter Thomas (O'Brien), the latest boy to emerge from the Box: While he might be the most "green" of the Gladers, he's not content to sit around gardening, blithely following the arbitrary rules of this new society he finds himself in. He's going to find a way out, at whatever cost, breaking any rule necessary in his pursuit of answers.

The film itself, though, gamely follows the rules—and much to its credit. A curious blend of our newly acquired taste for dystopia alongside a healthy sprinkling of **LORD OF THE FLIES**, the film offers familiar pleasures without prompting the sense of having already been here before. The writing is slick, the action evenly paced; the characters, despite not remembering anything of their lives before the Glade, are well-drawn and differentiated, their friendships movingly rendered. And the claustrophobia of the Glade becomes pure terror when we enter the Maze, and the monsters who live there (which the boys call Grievors) combine the surreality of Guillermo del Toro with the machine-like Mechs of TV's **FALLING SKIES** to great, nightmarish effect. A large set piece in which the Grievors invade the Glade is harrowingly well-executed, the camera nimbly navigating the chaos of the scene; the film is at its best when its characters are in motion, whether running from the Grievors or navigating the ever-shifting Maze, the world around them revealed as temporary, unstable, always in flux.



But most of all, the film satisfyingly revels in the horror of not-knowing; neither the audience nor its characters know why the boys are there or what exactly they're fighting against, but clues abound in well-paced increments, systematically ushering us toward a conclusion that may not actually be what it seems. Sometimes the real horror stays close to home, and as tensions rise and circumstances at the Glade become increasingly dire, two factions emerge among the boys (and one girl, who arrives soon after Thomas, with a mysterious message) as they decide how to move forward toward ultimate freedom. Teenagers fighting teenagers, willingly or not, is also an important ingredient to this particular breed of films. These are worlds where no one is safe, least of all from each other, and ultimately this is a genre concerned with the notion that the next generation must bear the weight of the mistakes of their forebears. The current generation of cultural consumers has inherited more problems in more disparate spheres than any before, and in dystopic fiction—or, rather, fiction of the future, a future which veers more and more toward dystopia every day—they're made, quite literally, to suffer the effects. The fact that this is now a genre with its own conventions should speak volumes.

This surely will rent as well as **DIVERGENT**, **THE AMAZING SPIDER MAN 2**, **GODZILLA**, **X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST**, **EDGE OF TOMORROW**, **CAPTAIN AMERICA** and **NON-STOP**.



12/16 1 **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES**

FAMILY

\$189 MILL BO 3956 SCREENS PG-13 101 MINUTES

VOICED BY: Megan Fox, Will Arnett, Johnny Knoxville, Tony Shaloub

Not all that long into *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, Jonathan Liebesman's reboot of the early 1990s comics-cartoon phenomenon created by Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman, reporter April O'Neil (Megan Fox) has a conversation with her cameraman-producer, Vernon (Will Arnett), about entertainment. Vernon defends what he calls "froth," the kind of mindless eye-candy "reporting" that April and he do for New York's Channel 6 News (their most popular shtick involves April bouncing on a trampoline). The scene works as the film's calling card, an invitation to not take a movie about genetically modified reptiles who are master martial artists and live with a wise rat-sensei that seriously. And just as Fox's character defies Vernon's reasonable philosophy, so does Liebesman's film continuously and bizarrely strive for a sense of realism that severely dilutes the imaginative core of the universe Laird and Eastman created.

This begins with the photorealistic design of the turtles, sporting lips, nostrils, and more lifelike faces. Truth be told, our heroes end up resembling nothing so much as a gaggle of jacked Shreks with Kevlar shells strapped to their backs. Splinter (voiced by Tony Shalhoub) looks downright unsettling with eight-ball-black eyes and stringy facial hair, which is even more unfortunate given that he's the film's calm moral center, even as he bribes YouTube-obsessed Michelangelo (Noel Fisher) with a "99-cheese" Pizza Hut pie. The designs are a wholly off-putting first step, and Liebesman, working from a script by Josh Appelbaum, Andre Nemec, and Evan Daugherty, doesn't handle the ensuing, uneasy balance between high-stakes, action-flick self-seriousness and pre-adolescent humor very well. Thus, the film never settles on an assured tone.



The action is scarce but largely serviceable, the final fight between the turtles and Shredder constituting the film's one thrilling highlight. Elsewhere, Liebesman tepidly uses the same whirling, in-the-moment handcam fight imagery that's become the status quo in mainstream action flicks. Stripped of the more objectionable elements of Bay's oeuvre, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* renders itself totally unremarkable in its busy plainness, devoid of anything resembling character or creativity, with the notable exception of Fichtner's reliable liveliness. For all the haranguing about family and brotherhood that the film preaches, primarily through the character of Raphael (Alan Ritchson), the emotional and historical binds that he shares with Michelangelo, Donatello, and Leonardo are never successfully conveyed, unless Raph's histrionic purge toward the end can be counted. Indeed, for a film about a family of independent, confident outsiders, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* only leaves one with the dim afterglow of forced normalcy, of a film so overworked to ensure mass-market appeal that it loses the charming oddness and loose goofiness that has allowed these characters, and their "frothy" appeal, to endure.

This will rent as well as **FROZEN, THE LEGO MOVIE, EPIC, PLANES, MUPPETS MOST WANTED, THE NUT JOB,** and **THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY.**



12/16 2 THE SKELETON TWINS DRAMEDY
\$5 MILL BO 561 SCREENS R 93 MINUTES

Bill Hader (TV—SNL, BOB'S BURGERS, THE MINDY PROJECT---FILM---THE TO DO LIST, HER, 22 JUMP STREET)

Kristen Wiig (ANCHORMAN 2, HER, GIRL MOST LIKELY, THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY)

Luke Wilson (BLADES OF GLORY, 3:10 TO YUMA, ANCHORMAN, LEGALLY BLONDE, SOUL SURVIVORS, BOTTLE ROCKET)

It was inevitable that *this movie*, with its two beloved *SNL* alums headlining as an acerbic brother-sister duo, would be marketed as a comedy: This is a film about two inherently funny characters whose relationship is predicated on making each other laugh, and it features plenty of solid gags as a result. But for estranged twins Milo (Hader) and Maggie (Wiig), humor is first and foremost a defense mechanism, a smokescreen, a plea for attention, and *The Skeleton Twins* is ultimately most interested in what its jokes are implying or obscuring about the jokesters themselves. In spirit, plot, and even setting, the film's closest cinematic cousin is *You Can Count on Me*: Both films follow a wounded not-quite-young man as he returns to his hometown in upstate New York, crashes with his ostensibly more put-together sister, who has her own fair share of problems, and in his attempts to heal drudges up buried secrets and unspoken vexations. If that doesn't sound like a comedy, that's because it most certainly isn't. This is a film that opens with two botched suicide attempts and only gets darker from there; every chuckle that follows is tinged with morbidity.



Milo has spent the last 10 years in Los Angeles, trying and failing to make a living as an actor, while Maggie has remained in their hometown, marrying good ol' boy Lance (Wilson) in a clearly deluded effort to "grow up," as she brashly puts it to her brother. Both are depressed enough to contemplate suicide, and when Milo is hospitalized following a nearly successful attempt, Maggie obviously empathizes with his situation and volunteers to rehabilitate him in their childhood home. What follows is a slow reveal of the childhood traumas that triggered the pair's initial schism, prompted in part by Milo's reconnection with an old flame, closeted bookstore-owner Rich (Ty Burrell). One of *the film's* greatest strengths is how it handles Milo's homosexuality, or rather, how it doesn't handle it at all. Though his sexual history—with Rich and others—is fraught for many reasons, it's not at all because Milo has any hang-ups about his own gayness; the most he ever comments on it is in asides about his excitement about being "a creepy gay uncle." Hader, for his part, couldn't be further from the Stefon register in his acting, as this is a sensitive, enormously detailed performance that grows richer and richer with each revelation about Milo's past.

Though Hader is the standout, Wiig matches him in calibrating a character whose early idiosyncrasies make more sense as the plot unfolds, and it's to her credit that Maggie resembles more of a train wreck than Milo by the film's conclusion.

This will certainly rent as well as **THE FAULT IN OUR STARS, FADING GIGOLO, HER, ENOUGH SAID, THE BOOK THIEF, THE SPECTACULAR NOW, WHAT MAIZIE KNEW,** and **THE TO DO LIST.**



12/16 2 THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU

COMEDY

\$31 MILL BO 2057 SCREENS R 103 MINUTES

Tina Fey (TV—30 ROCK—FILM—MEAN GIRLS, BABY MAMA, DATE NIGHT, THE INVENTION OF LYING, BEER LEAGUE)

Jason Bateman (TV—ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT—FILM—JUNO, HORRIBLE BOSSES, IDENTITY THEFT, THE SWITCH, COUPLES RETREAT, UP IN THE AIR)

Jane Fonda (ON GOLDEN POND, 9-5, KLUTE, THE ELECTRIC HORSEMAN, CALIFORNIA SUITE, COMING HOME, THE CHINA SYNDROME)

After walking in on his wife having sex with his boss, Judd Altman gets the call that his father has died. Talk about having a bad day. Although their father was an Atheist, he was a Jewish Atheist, so when their Gentile mother tells her children that their father's dying wish was for his family to mourn him traditionally by sitting Shiva, they all reluctantly agree. During this week of togetherness family secrets are revealed, old wounds are revisited, fights are fought, and moments of silliness and hilarity ensue. It's certainly not an original storyline but the script is fairly witty and intelligent, and the cast terrific.

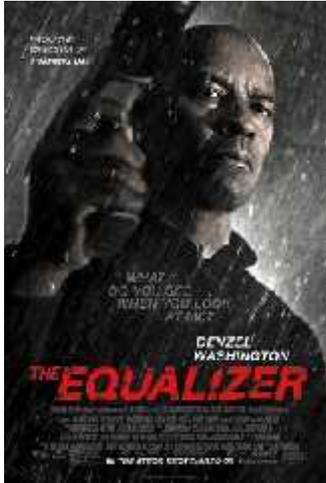
Jason Bateman and Jane Fonda share a great mother/son bond in a few scenes together. In honor of the 25th anniversary of her best-selling book – a guide to raising children in which she wrote in intimate detail about embarrassing moments experienced by her children – Hillary Altman has gotten a boob job. Fonda hilariously wears huge prosthetic breasts that always seem to be spilling out of her bathrobe.

The film, although essentially a comedy, does try for several dramatic moments. Nothing that gets too heavy, just a little tugging on the heartstrings. It's being billed as an ensemble piece, which it is to an extent, but Jason Bateman is the true star of the picture. The story begins with his character, Judd, and he has the most screen time. For the most part we even see his siblings (Tina Fey, Adam Driver, and Corey Stall) through their interactions with Judd. And, while each of the other family members has their own sub-plot, this is really about Judd's emotionally cathartic journey.

The scenes featuring the entire cast are some of the movie's funniest however, including one where the entire family -and all their guests- overhear a couple having sex upstairs through a baby monitor. And the little boy being potty trained who carries his plastic toilet everywhere he goes and takes a dump anywhere he feels like it, is worth a few laughs. It's quite funny, but only manages to be somewhat poignant, and that's provided you have a fairly high tolerance for schmaltz. Despite its flaws, *the movie* is still an enjoyable time at the movies.



This film will rent as well as **MEET THE FOCKERS, BLENDED, BEGIN AGAIN, CHEF, MOM'S NIGHT OUT, ANCHOR MAN 2, and HANGOVER.**



12/23 1 **THE EQUALIZER** ACTION
\$65 MILL BO 2893 SCREENS R 132 MINUTES

Denzel Washington (UNSTOPPABLE, SAFE HOUSE, THE BONE COLLECTOR, TRAINING DAY, PHILADELPHIA)
Chloe Grace (IF I STAY, CARRIE, KICK ASS 2, MOVIE 43, HUGO)

Melissa Leo (OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN, OBLIVION, FLIGHT, WELCOME TO THE RILEY'S, THE FIGHTER)

The film begins with a slow buildup. Our man of intrigue, Robert McCall (Washington) appears a restful, avuncular sort toiling away at a Home Depot (rebranded Home Mart) where his easy manner makes him everybody's BFF. At home, he's a bit OCD—everything's extra neat and in place and his routines are run by stopwatch timing. He also doesn't sleep much, so he hits an all-night diner where he reads his way through the 100 greatest novels. (In an odd surreality, he brings his own tea and cake and never orders.) It's there that he meets Teri (Chloe Grace Moretz), a young street walker waiting for Johns to come by and pick her up. The whole set up—the dinner, McCall's tacit observations and Moretz's post pubescent sexuality into the dark slicked night.

But McCall is no Bickle. He's got skills and a plan. After Teri gets beaten to a pulp for giving it back to an abusive trick, Robert pays her Russian pimps a visit in the swank eatery they run their operation out of. It's in the backroom that much scene chewing goes on between the unassuming Robert and five heavily armed strongmen. When the talking stops, only Robert walks out. It's here that Moretz pretty much exits the film (she's still laid up in the hospital), and we realize that Robert is very skilled at killing. But the Russians aren't done. They've got the cops in their back-pocket, and the pissed-off capo over in the motherland sends his very best over to Boston to exact revenge. The imported muscle who goes by the cuddly, non-Russian name of Teddy (played with aplomb by Marton Csokas, who looks like Kevin Spacey if in a bout of 'roid rage) has no patience for non-answers and is aptly described by one knowing participant as "a sociopath with a business card."

In short, Teddy's an admirable adversary for Robert, but while Teddy gets his A-game together, Robert dithers about with other miscellaneous good deeds like helping a corpulent co-worker (Johnny Skourtis) get in shape for his security guard exam and shaking down the cops shaking down local mom-and-pop shops. Pretty pat stuff, but Fuqua and his cameraman Mauro Fiore (*Avatar* and *Training Day*) make Boston hum with gritty capturing not only the city and also the current plot however, is redacted reduces Robert to little more costume. Nice additions Leo and Bill Pullman as the government agency and during the grimly brutal



darkness and foreboding, rampant criminal past of the sweeping gentrification. The dossier thin and ultimately than a superhero sans a come in the form of Melissa Robert's former handlers for the spatial use of Home Mart finale.

This one will rent as well as **EDGE OF TOMORROW, BRICK MANSIONS, DIVERGENT, NEIGHBORS, SABOTAGE, LONE SURVIVOR, and NON-STOP.**



12/23 3 THE TRIP TO ITALY COMEDY
\$3 MILL BO 241 SCREENS N/R 108 MINUTES

Steve Coogan (RUBY SPARKS, PHILOMENA, ALAN PARTRIDGE, WHAT MAIZIE KNEW)
Rob Brydon (THE TRIP, UNDERDOGS, DAWN OF THE DEAD, 24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE)

It seems like the best of all worlds: getting to travel, professionally, staying at some of the most scenic and inviting destinations along the Italian Riviera. Better still, you get to sample gourmet cuisine every step of the way, from entrees rich in Mediterranean tradition to piles of freshly caught and prepared seafood. The weather is magnificent, the populace beyond friendly, and the views awe-inspiring.

The only problem? You're saddled with someone as a traveling companion who's a rival at best, a friend in frustrating terms only, and since you're pushing 50, that so-called "midlife crisis" has turned into nothing more than mere angry aging.

Thus we find British comedians and actors Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon in **THE TRIP TO ITALY**, following in the footsteps of the famed poets Byron and Shelley (among others) and taking yet another of their TV series edited down to a feature film excursions, again directed (and compiled) by Michael Winterbottom. Playing fictionalized versions of themselves, it's like the Seth Rogen/James Franco comedy *This is the End* filtered through a decidedly British sensibility.

For the most part, we are merely watching two men marvel at each other's talent, trying (unsuccessfully) to one up each other. On the other hand, just beneath the surface, are two disenchanting egotists who are, perhaps, a single professional or personal set back away from spiraling horribly out of control.

In the original *Trip*, Coogan was the whining Lothario, riding high on some Hollywood success and taking his opportunities to trade on his fame. Brydon, on the other hand, was a somewhat lesser known celeb trying to prove he was/is his pal's able equal.

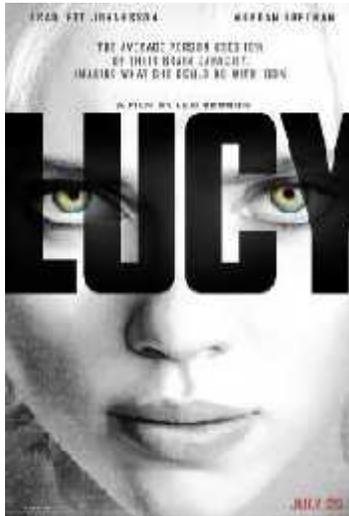
Now, the tables are turned. Coogan has calmed down, trying to wrestle with a career lag and the responsibilities of being a former deadbeat dad to his struggling teenage son. Brydon, a new dad, has seen his fortunes turn. He's even up for a roll in Michael Mann's new "techno thriller". This sets up a rivalry that will play out among gorgeous scenery, obscene food porn (and we aren't talking the prices here), and a sideways *Sideways* approach to male malaise.

Yes, the duo break out their patented impressions, this time expanding on the names we've seen before. There's a hilarious moment early on when the pair prey upon Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises*, offering up an even more emotional Michael Caine, a speech impaired Christian Bale, and at least three different versions of Tom Hardy's Bane. Along the way, Al Pacino, Anthony Hopkins, and other well known (mostly British) actors are paraded out, the back and forth between the men replacing any real insightful small talk.

Indeed, like a comic who can't converse without throwing in a punchline at every turn, Brydon and Coogan seem to break out the voice battle whenever they are getting to close to a personal truth or revelation.

This will rent as well as **BEGIN AGAIN, PALO ALTO, THE RAILWAY MAN, FADING GIGOLO, THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL, QUARTET, and PHILOMENA.**





12/23 1 LUCY SCI/FI/THRILLER

\$127 MILL BO 3478 SCREENS R 89 MINUTES

Scarlett Johansson (CHEF, DON JON, CAPTAIN AMERICA, HER, IN GOOD COMPANY, THE HORSE WHISPERER, THE PRESTIGE)

Morgan Freeman (THE BUCKET LIST, GONE BABY GONE, MILLION DOLLAR BABY, THE SUM OF ALL FEARS, KISS THE GIRLS)

A young student living in Taiwan, Lucy (Scarlett Johansson), becomes a drug mule against her will at the hands of a crime lord (Choi Min-sik). Surgeons insert a packet of synthetic drugs into Lucy's abdomen that bursts while she's travelling to Europe. As a result, she begins acquiring increasingly powerful mental talents and physical abilities.

Writer and director Luc Besson is back in *The Fifth Element* form messing around with ideas about human brain capacity, executed in dialogue that sounds like a Wikipedia entry, amidst hectic car chases and hallway gun battles. Any deconstruction of the plot results in Besson screaming back, "BECAUSE SCIENCE!"

Lucy is elevated to a God-like status with each percentage of brain power she unlocks, that's contrasted against the chaos caused by the villains still in cave-man mode. Besson wildly unleashes his special brand of Euro crazy and the sillier *Lucy* gets, the better it gets, not many action films confidently go bonkers like *Lucy*.



Lucy is science-fiction lunacy and it's great to be back in the madhouse with Besson as he flips cars and minds. This will make this rent as well as **X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST, CAPTAIN AMERICA, DIVERGENT, BLENDED, NEIGHBORS, TRANSCENDENCE, THE MONUMENTS MEN, LONE SURVIVOR, and FAST AND FURIOUS 6.**