

Escape Room, Cold Pursuit and Destroyer

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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The films entering the South African box office this week include *The Kid Who Would Be King*, *Escape Room*, *Cold Pursuit*, *Destroyer* and *The Bookshop*.

The Kid Who Would Be King

Old-school magic meets the modern world. Alex (Louis Ashbourne Serkis) thinks he's just another nobody until he stumbles upon the mythical Sword in the Stone, Excalibur. Now, he must unite his friends and enemies into a band of knights and, together with the legendary (Patrick Stewart) to fight *the* wicked Morgana (Rebecca Ferguson). With the future at stake, Alex must become the great leader he never dreamed he could be.

The seed has been growing in the mind of writer-director Joe Cornish since he was a child, beginning in 1982 when he saw John Boorman's *Excalibur* and Steven Spielberg's *ET*. Both films had a big impact on the young Cornish, inspiring the beginnings of his idea for a film about an ordinary boy who discovers The Sword in the Stone.

Escape Room

You find yourself in a room – no windows, only one door and it's locked. The madman who's locked you in has set up a series of fiendishly clever and difficult puzzles that, when solved in the correct order, will lead to the key and your salvation. And to add to the difficulty, he's set a ticking clock, with one hour to complete the puzzles and escape or face the consequences.

What sounds like a horror movie is one of the fastest-growing entertainments in the world: the escape room phenomenon.

Armed with only your wits – and the variety of strengths of the people in the room with you – players have been cracking codes, deciphering enigmas, and unlocking hidden caches as quickly as they can. Each room has a secret plot, with players piecing it together as a fun, team-building experience. Since the dawn of the concept in 2010, escape rooms have popped up all over the world at an amazing rate by satisfying human nature's hunger for fun and escape from reality.

Directed by Adam Robitel. Screenplay by Bragi Schut and Maria Melnik from a story by Schut.

Cold Pursuit

Director Hans Petter Moland and Liam Neeson team up for a dramatic thriller that mixes icy revenge and dark humour.

This twisted revenge story swirls around Neeson's Nels Coxman, a snowplough driver in the Colorado ski resort of Kehoe. Just named Citizen of the Year for his services in keeping the roads open to the remote town, Coxman's life swiftly spirals into amateur retribution and an escalating pile of corpses when his son (played by Micheál Richardson) is mistakenly killed by local gangsters over a stash of missing drugs.

All he knows about killing people is what he read in a crime novel, but Coxman sets off with a sawn-off hunting rifle and, unwittingly, begins a chain of events that will include a snowbound turf war, kidnapping, two rival crime lords and a host of hoodlums.

It is based on the original Norwegian film, *In Order of Disappearance*, with screenwriter and novelist Frank Baldwin as writer.

The Bookshop

Emily Mortimer plays a free-spirited widow, who puts grief behind her and risks everything to open up a bookshop – the first such shop in the sleepy seaside town of Hardborough, England. But this mini social revolution soon brings her fierce enemies: she invites the hostility of the town's less prosperous shopkeepers and also crosses Mrs Gamart (Patricia Clarkson), Harborough's vengeful, embittered alpha female who is a wannabe doyenne of the local arts scene.

Written and directed by Isabel Coixet, based on the novel of the same name by Penelope Fitzgerald.

Destroyer

A gritty, riveting and narratively complex crime thriller the receipt of an ink-marked bill in the office mail propels veteran LAPD detective Erin Bell (Nicole Kidman) on a perilous journey to find the murderer and gang leader, Silas (Toby Kebbell), and perhaps to finally make peace with her tortured past.

Haunted by guilt and loss, when an old nemesis, played by Kebbell resurfaces, she becomes hell bent on finding him. As she hones in on Silas, the demons of her compromised past emerge, and Bell must come to terms with her own culpability in what happened before she can entertain any hope of redemption.

Directed by Karyn Kusama from a tense, emotionally compelling screenplay by writer/producers Phil Hay and Matt Manfredi.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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