

# Love and War, Good vs Evil

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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A young rebellious German officer is sent to protect the Kaiser when the Nazis invade Belgium in the excellent romantic spy thriller *The Exception*; the last Gunslinger has to protect *The Dark Tower* in an eternal battle between good and evil; a family man attempts to pull off an ambitious robbery in the turbocharged heist comedy *Logan Lucky*; a young woman is determined to carve out a successful life on her own in *The Glass Castle*; a group of people find themselves trapped in an elevator in the World Trade Center's North Tower in *9/11*; and three men fight humiliation when they find their pictures on a poster promoting 'nasbandi' vasectomy in the Indian Hindi comedy *The Poster Boys*.

## The Exception

A spy thriller and love story that mines a forgotten pocket of 20th century history to create a gripping and passionate drama.

Set in 1940 as the Nazis invade Belgium and the Netherlands, *The Exception* transports us to the relative peace of the exiled German Kaiser Wilhelm II's post-Imperial court in Holland. The house and grounds at "Doorn" provide the backdrop as both Hitler and Churchill send envoys to the estate – a British spy and a Wehrmacht officer. Events and fate conspire to bring the two envoys closer together than either had intended, and leave them facing choices between duty and desire.

It is based on the novel *The Kaiser's Last Kiss* by Alan Judd and marks British theatre director David Leveaux's directorial debut for the screen. Leveaux is best known for his work on Broadway, having been nominated for a Tony Award five times, including in 2004 for a revival of Tom Stoppard's *Jumpers* and as Best Director (Musical), in 2003 for a revival of *Nine the Musical*.

Kaiser Wilhelm is played by academy award-winner Christopher Plummer (*Beginners*, *The Last Station*) for whom *The Exception* has been a passion project since the novel's publication in 2003. Academy award nominee Janet McTeer (*Albert Nobbs*, *Tideland*) plays his wife, Princess Hermine. Shooting star Lily James (*Cinderella*, *War & Peace*) stars as a young Dutch woman working undercover for the British secret service and Jai Courtney (*Suicide Squad*, *Terminator Genisys*) plays the young German officer sent to protect the Kaiser. Supporting the main cast are British character actor Ben Daniels (*House of Cards*, *Flesh and Bone*) as the Kaiser's aide-de-camp and Eddie Marsan (*Sherlock Holmes*, *Ray Donovan*) who gives a chilling turn as Heinrich Himmler.

"Until I read Alan Judd's compelling novel, I had no idea that the last Kaiser of Germany had lived until 1941. I had just rather lazily assumed he'd 'faded' away sometime after he fled into exile in Holland in the closing weeks of the First World War in 1918. Part of the reason for this was of course that he seemed to be so much of 'another' generation - one shaped in the cultural context of the 19th Century - that it was inconceivable to me that he could have been alive when the conflict that would define our modern world in the 20th Century ignited.

But that was the central dramatic proposition of Judd's story that first attracted me: the collision of 'two Germanys' - two eras, and two radically different myths or ideas of nation, coming into a head on confrontation, and it was also what made it resonate in our own time when such questions of identity are again on the rise.

But of course, a film has to stand on its own feet, not merely lean on its source material for authority. It must justify its own existence. And in addition, I had no interest in making a 'history lesson', "says Leveaux.

## The Dark Tower

There are other worlds than these. Stephen King's *The Dark Tower*, the ambitious and expansive story from one of the world's most celebrated authors, makes its launch to the big screen.

The last Gunslinger, Roland Deschain (Idris Elba), has been locked in an eternal battle with Walter O'Dim, also known as the Man in Black (Matthew McConaughey), determined to prevent him from toppling the Dark Tower, which holds the universe together. With the fate of the worlds at stake, good and evil will collide in the ultimate battle as only Roland can defend the Tower from the Man in Black.



South Africa helps to bring Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* to life

Daniel Dercksen 5 Sep 2017



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It is directed by Danish filmmaker and screenwriter Nikolaj Arcel (best known for his Oscar nominated film *A Royal Affair* (which he wrote and directed) and his screenplay for the original version of *The Girl with The Dragon Tattoo*), from a screenplay by Akiva Goldsman (*A Beautiful Mind*, for which he won an Academy Award), Jeff Pinkner (*Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* and *Venom*), Anders Thomas Jensen (*Flickering Lights*, *The Green Butchers* and *Adam's Apples*) and Nikolaj Arcel, based on the novels by Stephen King (a career spanning 50 years and over 80 books)

It's an epic that has inspired millions of readers – not least of which was a young boy in Denmark whose imagination was sparked by the events in Mid-World – now grown, director Nikolaj Arcel was determined to be the one to bring *The Dark Tower* to the screen.

For Arcel, the way King weaves together the personal and the larger-than-life elements of the story is why it's connected to so many readers. "It's as small as a 14-year-old boy, who has visions, who thinks he's crazy, and it's as big as a hero fighting a great villain and trying to save the entire universe. It expands from the very intimate to the very epic."

## Logan Lucky

In the turbocharged heist comedy *Logan Lucky* from academy award-winning director Steven Soderbergh, West Virginia family man Jimmy Logan (Channing Tatum) leads his one-armed brother Clyde (Adam Driver) and hairdresser sister Mellie (Riley Keough) in an elaborate scheme to rob North Carolina's Charlotte Motor Speedway. To help them break into the track's underground cash-handling system, Jimmy recruits volatile demolition expert Joe Bang (Daniel Craig). Further complicating the already risky plan, a scheduling mix-up forces the thieves to execute the job during the Coca-Cola 600, the track's most popular NASCAR event of the year. As they attempt to pull off the ambitious robbery, the down-on-their-luck Logans face a final hurdle when a relentless FBI agent (Hilary Swank) begins investigating the case. Also starring Seth MacFarlane, Katie Holmes, Katherine Waterston, Dwight Yoakam, Sebastian Stan, Brian Gleeson and Jack Quaid.

A different kind of heist film featuring the kind of blue-collar workers not often seen on the big screen, *Logan Lucky* succeeds as a wry, witty popcorn action comedy burnished by Soderbergh's uniquely skewed directorial flourishes.

"I'm hoping audiences enjoy *Logan Lucky* as something that's pure entertainment and fun, but at the same time is not disposable. I think there's enough percolating under the surface of this film to have it resonate beyond the two hours you spend watching it. A lot of times, you'll see a Hollywood picture that's like sheer gossamer; it disappears from your brain as soon as it's over. I feel like *Logan Lucky* is rooted enough in the real world that it won't just disappear," says Soderbergh.

Soderbergh says he also looks forward to test-driving a wide-release business model uncompromised by interference from the major studios. “With Logan Lucky, I feel like the planets have kind of lined up for me to put out a movie in the way I’ve always fantasised I could”.

## **The Glass Castle**

Chronicling the adventures of an eccentric, resilient and tight-knit family, The Glass Castle is a remarkable story of unconditional love. Oscar winner Brie Larson brings Jeannette Walls’s best-selling memoir to life as a young woman who, influenced by the joyfully wild nature of her deeply dysfunctional father (Woody Harrelson), found the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms. Written and directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, the film is based on Jeannette Walls’ 2005 memoir of the same name. With Brie Larson, Woody Harrelson and Naomi Watts.

Cretton notes that he did not attempt to create a perfect facsimile of the Walls’s lives or of her book, but rather present their story as a mirror of American family life.

“This is storytelling, not the documentary truth, but hopefully, by adding new dimensions to Jeannette’s story, we are creating something fresh that can be enjoyed and embraced by a whole new group of people. Jeannette’s book touched so many people, and we definitely wanted to make The Glass Castle for everyone who loves the book, but we also wanted to make this movie for the Walls family. In a sense, we set out to create a moving picture photo album of their memories. I hope it’s an honest portrait, a moving portrait and ultimately a portrait of how complicated, yet simple and powerful, love is,” says Cretton.

## **9/11**

In 9/11 a group of five people find themselves trapped in an elevator in the World Trade Center’s North Tower on 9/11. They work together, never giving up hope, to try to escape before the unthinkable happens.

Directed by Martin Guigui from a script he co-wrote with Steven Golebiowski. Starring Charlie Sheen, Whoopi Goldberg, Luis Guzman, Wood Harris and Olga Fonda.

## The Poster Boys

In this Indian Hindi comedy, the world turns upside down for three men, Vinay Sharma (Bobby Deol), Arjun Singh (Shreyas Talpade) and Jaagavar Chaudhary (Sunny Deol), when they find their pictures on a poster promoting 'nasbandi' vasectomy. And then, starts their journey of getting humiliated by their families and society; rebelling against the system which landed them in this confusing mess in the first place.

The film is co-produced and directed by Shreyas Talpade making his directorial debut. The film is an official remake of the 2014 Marathi hit *Poshter Boyz* which Shreyas had produced and acted in. It is inspired by a real-life incident about three porters who found their pictures on a vasectomy poster.

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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