Baby Groot, serial killers and classic ballet

By Daniel Dercksen

A massive rogue lion strikes fear in the *Beast*, an ordinary man triumphs over life's many challenges in *Laal Singh Chaddha*, everyone's favourite little tree explores his glory days growing up in *I Am Groot*, the Bolshoi Ballet's *Swan Lake* explores the legend of the enigmatic swan-woman, an FBI agent confronts serial killer Ted Bundy in *No Man Of God*.

Beast

In the pulse-pounding new thriller *Beast*, a widowed husband (Idris Elba), his two teenage daughters and a wildlife biologist (Sharlto Copley) find themselves hunted by a massive rogue lion in a game reserve, intent on proving that the savannah has but one apex predator. What begins as a journey of healing jolts into a fearsome fight for survival when the lion, a survivor of blood-thirsty poachers, now sees all humans as the enemy.

Throughout the film, it's clear that this lion is only attacking because humans attacked it first. For all its high-stakes emotion and action-packed thrills, *Beast* also, by design, reminds us how important it is to respect and protect our world's wild creatures and places. The film's rogue lion represents what happens when we don't, and nature strikes back.

The film was shot in South Africa, in real environments to anchor the film in reality and make the terror feel almost unbearably real.

The film is directed by Icelandic filmmaker Baltasar Kormákur from a screenplay by Ryan Engle.

In cinemas from 12 August.

Read more here.

Laal Singh Chaddha

Based on both the *Forrest Gump* screenplay by Eric Roth and Winston Groom's original novel, *Laal Singh Chaddha* is a life-affirming story chronicling the extraordinary life of an ordinary man who changes the world through simple kindness, who wants nothing but to bring happiness to the people he loves, and through that modest mission alters the course of Indian history.

With a childhood marked by a unique bond between Laal and his single mother, tempered with strong values, the story follows Laal's journey of love, innocence and destiny as he triumphs over life's many challenges. As he wins the hearts of those he meets along the way, he reminds us that everyone, even the most unlikely of people, has a story.

Shot in over 100 locations around India, the film brings together Aamir Khan, one of the biggest stars in Indian cinema, and Kareena Kapoor Khan to deliver audiences heart, humour and optimism.

"I looked at *Laal Singh Chaddha* like a cover song of a genuinely loved classic," says director Advait Chandan. "I felt that *Forrest Gump* was a universal story, which we could bring an Indian flavour to. *Forrest Gump* is a quintessentially

American film – it's in the houses they live in, the clothes they wear, and the historic references. I felt like there was an opportunity to bring an Indian flavour to the story and keep the same soul."

In cinemas from 12 August.

Read more [here](#).

Swan Lake

The legend of the enigmatic swan-woman set to Tchaikovsky's masterpiece of a score is ballet's most beloved production in the classical canon. The Bolshoi Ballet's *Swan Lake* exemplifies the dramatic tension and heart-stopping beauty of motion with prima ballerina Olga Smirnova leading the cast, as sensational as the black swan as she is poignant as the white swan.

Lured to the banks of a mysterious lake by his alter-ego, the Evil Genius, Prince Siegfried encounters the most beautiful swan Odette and swears his love to her. At the castle, prospective brides try to entertain the distracted Prince, but it is the ravishing swan Odile who threatens the promise Siegfried made to Odette

Cast: Olga Smirnova (Odette/Odile), Jacopo Tissi (Prince Siegfried), Egor Gerashchenko (the Evil Genius), Alexei Putinsev (the Fool) and the Bolshoi Corps de Ballet. Choreography Yuri Grigorovich

From August 13 at Cinema Nouveau

Read more [here](#).

No Man Of God

A compelling drama that tells of the complicated relationship that formed between the FBI analyst Bill Hagmaier (Elijah Wood) and serial killer Ted Bundy (Luke Kirby) during Bundy's final years on death row.

Based on actual transcripts of interviews between FBI analyst Bill Hagmaier and the incarcerated Ted Bundy, the film was directed by Amber Sealey and written by C. Robert Cargill, under the pseudonym of Kit Lesser.

From August 15 on Showmax

I Am Groot

It's often said that the best things come in small packages, and Marvel Studios' *I Am Groot* is further proof of the old adage. The collection of five original shorts stars everyone's favourite little tree, Baby Groot, from the *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise, who takes centre stage in his very own collection of shorts that explore his glory days growing up—and getting into trouble—among the stars.

There's no guarding the galaxy against this mischievous toddler! So get ready as Baby Groot takes centre stage in his very own collection of shorts, exploring his glory days growing up—and getting into trouble—among the stars. *I Am Groot* features five original shorts featuring several new and unusual characters, stars everyone's favourite little tree, Baby Groot, voiced by Vin Diesel who voices Groot in the *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise.

Now on Disney+

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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

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