

Table Manners, Recce, and A Simple Favor

By  Daniel Derksen

28 Sep 2018

This week sees the release of two South African films: the mind-blowing *The Recce* tells the story of survival across the treacherous war-torn African landscape during the Border War, and the charming *Table Manners* depicts the true reality of current multicultural neighbourhoods and friendships - with the only divide being between the rich and the not-so-rich.

International releases include the animated *Smallfoot* deals with friendship, courage, and the joy of discovery; *A Simple Favor* is a stylish thriller filled with twists and betrayals, secrets and revelations, love and loyalty, murder and revenge; and in the comedy *Night School* a group of misfits are forced to attend adult classes.

The Recce

Cinema audiences are waiting in anticipation for the release of what promises to be this year's biggest war drama. Writer-director Ferdinand Johannes Van Zyl believes that the film will provide a cinematic experience that is beyond the genre, a tale of survival, love, duty, and sacrifice. This is also one of the first films in decades to explore issues regarding not only the Border War but also the pain and suffering families had to endure during and after the conflict that lasted almost 20 years.



Q&A with Johannes Ferdinand about film *The Recce*

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It tells the story of how the South African Defence Force declared young Recce Henk Viljoen (stunning performance by Greg Krik) dead behind enemy lines and how it's up to him alone to use everything he's learnt and knows to make it back to his family. Add to this the fact that the enemy is hot on his trail, it's clear that this is no ordinary story of survival across the treacherous war-torn African landscape.

Table Manners

In South African filmmaker Leli Maki's drama-comedy a wife and mother finds solace and hope in cooking, learning that all she needs is life's three courses – family, food, and love. Megan (Diaan Lawrenson) loses everything when her husband, Lloyd (Neels Van Jaarsveld), gets arrested for tax fraud and has to rebuild herself by rediscovering her love for cooking and the flavours of life. With the help of her best friend Lindiwe (Renate Stuurman), she learns that the path back home begins with realising that she is enough and all she needs is her family, food, and love. Life's three courses made easy.



Nkuli Sibeko on writing *Table Manners* and the art of cooking

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“The challenge with *Table Manners* was to channel Megan's emotions through her relationship with the food; visually representing, for example, the sensation of her anger through burnt chocolate, which was a bit of a challenge for the team. But we met it head on and with gusto. We're very proud of our film and audiences are going to love it,” enthuses director Leli Maki Esq.

Smallfoot

An animated adventure for all ages, with an all-star cast and original music, this animated film turns a myth upside down when a bright young yeti finds something he thought didn't exist—a *human*. News of this 'smallfoot' throws the simple yeti community into an uproar over what else might be out there in the big world beyond their snowy village, in an all-new story about friendship, courage, and the joy of discovery.

It was directed by Karey Kirkpatrick, Annie award-winning director of *Over the Hedge* and Annie nominee for the screenplays for *Chicken Run* and *James and the Giant Peach*. The screenplay was written by Kirkpatrick and Clare Sera, screen story by John Requa and Glenn Ficarra and Kirkpatrick, based on the book *Yeti Tracks*, by Sergio Pablos. It features the voices of Channing Tatum, James Corden, Zendaya, Common, LeBron James, Gina Rodriguez.

A Simple Favor

A stylish post-modern suburban noir, directed by Paul Feig, centres around Stephanie Smothers (Anna Kendrick), a mommy vlogger who seeks to uncover the truth behind her best friend Emily Nelson's (Blake Lively) sudden disappearance from their small town. Stephanie is joined by Emily's husband Sean (Henry Golding) in this stylish thriller filled with twists and betrayals, secrets and revelations, love and loyalty, murder and revenge.

The film is based upon the novel by Darcey Bell, with a screenplay adaptation by Jessica Sharzer, who spent four seasons as a writer-producer on the acclaimed FX series *American Horror Story*.

Night School

Star Kevin Hart and producer Will Packer, who partnered for the hit *Ride Along* and *Think Like a Man* series, bring their

signature style to *Night School*. The comedy from director Malcolm D. Lee that co-stars Lee and Packer's *Girls Trip* breakout star Tiffany Haddish follows a group of misfits who are forced to attend adult classes in the longshot chance they'll pass the GED exam.

In *Night School*, we meet Teddy Walker (Hart), a successful salesman who - after losing his job when he accidentally destroys his workplace - is forced to attend night school at his former almost-alma mater Piedmont High School to get his GED. If he passes, Teddy will once again be gainfully employed and continue to impress—although quite deceptively—his successful girlfriend, Lisa (Megalyne Echikunwoke).

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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