

Charlie's Angels, Motherless Brooklyn and Countdown



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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The films opening at South African cinemas, this week, include a *Charlie's Angels* reboot; *Motherless Brooklyn*; *Countdown*; and *Swift*.

Charlie's Angels

Writer-director Elizabeth Banks takes the helm as the next generation of fearless Charlie's Angels take flight.

In Banks' bold vision, Kristen Stewart, Naomi Scott and Ella Balinska are working for the mysterious Charles Townsend, whose security and the investigative agency has expanded internationally. With the world's smartest, bravest, and most highly trained women all over the globe, there are now teams of Angels guided by multiple Bosleys taking on the toughest jobs everywhere.

"There are so few films with multiple female leads out there. I felt like *Charlie's Angels* was a way to tell a story involving more than one female lead – three great, powerful women that have agency over their lives, and are the driving force behind the story," says.

For the actress/co-writer/director/producer and so many women, *Charlie's Angels* was a beacon. "These characters were women who worked in a man's world and had to make their own way. You just hadn't seen women kicking butt in any genre before – it was revolutionary. They really stood for something."

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Motherless Brooklyn

The beating heart of writer-director Edward Norton's meticulously crafted private-eye mystery, *Motherless Brooklyn*, is a highly original and poignant riff on the noir detective. A man driven into the darkest shadows of 1957 New York City by a need to understand a world that has left him a misjudged outcast.

When Lionel (Norton), whose over-charged brain would seem to bar him from the classic detective realms of the smooth and the no-nonsense, attempts to find the killer of the only man who ever cared about him, his boss Frank Minna, he is lured deeper and deeper into the city that made him.

His compulsion to make order from mayhem, to put all things broken back together again, leads him into the very structural framework that holds up modern New York and into the visionary, if venal, realms of the men who drove its mid-century ascent. His search for simple justice becomes an epic odyssey – one that takes him into timeless forces not only of ambition, greed, bigotry and the dark allure of wielding power, but also the countervailing forces of music and emotional connection.

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Countdown

When a young nurse (Elizabeth Lail) downloads an app that claims to predict exactly when a person is going to die, it tells her she only has three days to live. With time ticking away and death closing in, she must find a way to save her life before time runs out.

The concept of *Countdown* was inspired by a simple moment: setting a timer on a smartphone. “One day the idea just popped into my head: What if this timer is ticking down to when I die?” says first-time feature film director Justin Dec, who also wrote the screenplay.

“It’s probably not a normal thought, but something just clicked.”

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Manou the Swift

The little swift Manou grows up believing he’s a seagull. Learning to fly he finds out he never will be. Shocked, he runs away from home. He meets birds of his own species and finds out who he really is. When both seagulls and swifts face a dangerous threat, Manou becomes the hero of the day.

It’s a modern fable about how strangers live together in a privileged society. How do we receive strangers and people who are different from ourselves in our society? Prejudices support the gulf between poor and rich, between locals and strangers. But is strangeness really irreconcilable?

Or are we, concerning good and bad qualities, more similar to each other than we expect to be? This story explores this conflict within the circle of a family, which has to master its own private turbulences on top: friendship, first love, loyalty and growing up.

Only when the protagonists, who are very different, get to know each other beyond all bounds they can live together in peace. Only after that, they can eventually develop trust and respect for each other.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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