

# Jodie Foster makes a few wrongs right



BRAVE ONE: Jodie Foster.

**Movie**  
*The Brave One*  
 Cinemas nationwide  
 Directed by Neil Jordan  
 Reviewed by Eleanor McKay

Jodie Foster is one of those actors who seems to embody any character she plays – whether it be an FBI agent, battered rape victim or child prostitute.

*The Brave One* is the latest in a long line of tough-but-lonely women Foster has portrayed, and despite its flaws, the film is a thought-provoking look at revenge.

Foster plays Erica Bain, a

radio host who takes justice into her own hands after her beloved fiancé (Naveen Andrews from *Lost*) is beaten to death in a random and shocking act of violence.

Terrence Howard plays the police detective on her trail and Nicky Katt has a small but scene-stealing role as Howard's partner, providing much-needed comic relief.

With a tagline like 'How many wrongs make it right?' – it's clear the film is about retribution.

It is set in New York – an apt setting for any modern discussion of living in fear.

9/11 is never directly mentioned but is definitely part of the atmosphere of the film.

This is Erica's 9/11, an event that will forever change the way she looks at the world and this is

where the film works best.

*The Brave One* cleverly and accurately depicts the claustrophobia and fear Erica feels after her attack.

It hits just the right note – never overdramatising her feeling of hopelessness.

But then things start to go astray.

After Erica goes to the police station to check on her case and is made to wait, we next see her buying an illegal gun which is shockingly easy to get.

Erica's motivation to turn into a gun-toting, modern day Annie Oakley is never fully explained and feels a bit false.

It's Howard and Foster's portrayals as tortured souls who have lost the ones they love that truly ground the film.

While the situation they are in is unbelievable, their chemistry is engaging to watch.

In lesser hands this film would have been a Charles Bronson-style vigilante movie, but is instead a fairly smart look at how fear can turn someone's life upside down.

The ending is not only implausible but a cop-out – letting everyone involved off the hook.

There's a lot to admire about the film that's obviously trying to say something without preaching or ramming the message down the audience's throat.

It's unfortunately let down by the fundamentally far-fetched situations it places its characters in, but the acting of Foster and Howard saves *The Brave One*, making it a compelling watch.

# A feast of Kiwi stories for a pittance

**Book**  
*The Six Pack Two*  
 Bookstores nationwide  
 By various authors  
 Reviewed by Rebekah Lyell

You know you're onto a good thing when bookworms devour the first printing of a new book in less than a month.

Then again, it could have something to do with the price – a petite \$6.

But the quality of *The Six Pack Two* has nothing to do with the small amount of money you have to shell out.

The Pack is part of New Zealand Book Month's quest to get more Kiwi writing out to New

Zealanders.

Five stories were chosen by judges including author Dame Fiona Kidman, *20/20* presenter Miriama Kamo, journalist Finlay Macdonald, retiring director of Auckland University Press Elizabeth Caffin and Joan Mackenzie, book manager for Whitcoulls.

The sixth – *In the back of a VW* by Faith Oxenbridge – was chosen by the public in an online poll and it's easy to see why.

Oxenbridge perfectly captures the awkwardness of high school – brimming with the insecurity, jealousy and idealism that lurks in the back of young minds.

It follows seventh-former Rima who must deal with boys "thrusting their beery tongues into her mouth" while others

"stupidly sway in the middle of the room to *Dark Side of the Moon* trying to pretend they are having a good time".

What Kiwi can't relate to that at some level?

Another personal favourite – *Note left on a window* by Tracey Slaughter – is rough, honest and raw while exploring the influence of grief.

The Pack's common thread is relationships – seen through the eyes of children, young adults and narrators and laid bare for all.

Love is seen at its best and worst through depictions of sweaty-handed, teeth-gnashing infancy, sly and devious cheating couples or lovers grasping at the last strands of hope.

Whether it's a strawberry

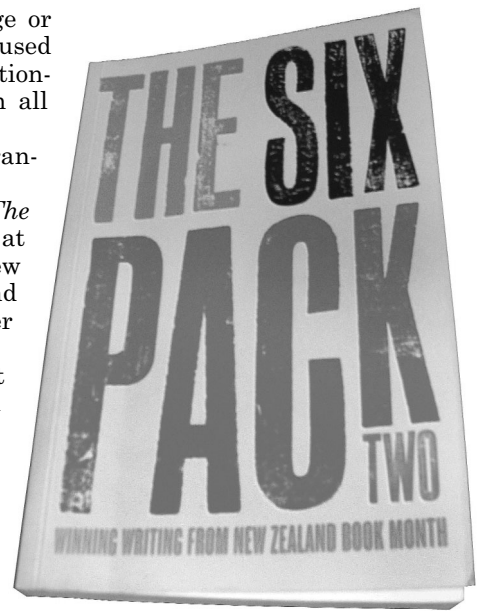
eraser that ruins a marriage or hilarious one-upmanship caused by food parcel abuse, relationships are put to the test in all manner of situations.

There is something guaranteed to appeal to all.

Last year's equivalent, *The Six Pack*, spent 14 weeks at the top of the Booksellers New Zealand Bestsellers List and has just returned at number five.

The newest edition sits at number one and the fresh mix of new and established writers means everyone should add it to the pile of books on the bedside table.

Grab them both and nibble away one story a night or have a feast and devour them whole in one sitting.



## What's on

### cinema

**The Devil Dared Me To**  
 Cinemas nationwide  
 Opens October 11

This stunt-fuelled action comedy follows Randy, a Kiwi kid who grew up on a sheep farm, as he pursues his dream. Following in the footsteps of his late father, he aims to become New Zealand's greatest daredevil stuntman. Made by the team who created *Back of the Y*.

**Atonement**  
 Cinemas nationwide  
 Opens October 18

In the summer of 1935 Briony, a budding 13-year-old writer, sees two sexually-charged encounters between her older sister and housekeeper's son. Later, when a houseguest is sexually assaulted she makes an accusation which she will regret for the rest of her life. Adapted from an Ian McEwan novel and starring Keira Knightley and James McAvoy.

### theatre

**The Cut**  
 Silo Theatre  
 October 10 - November 3

Two *Outrageous Fortune* stars take the stage in this chilling theatrical parable. Civil servant Paul administers a violent and clinical procedure known as The Cut. He has kept his secret hidden from his family for years but longs to reveal the truth. Tickets from Ticketmaster.



PASSIONATE: It takes eight to tango in Corporacion Tango's new show.

**Corporacion Tango**  
 Skycity Theatre  
 October 21 - 22

Eight dancers will mesmerise you from the stage in a passionate and synchronised performance. Based on heaven, earth and hell the dancers aim to show how these represent emotional states of the human soul. Tickets from Ticketek. Half-price tickets will be available for students one hour before each show.

### events

**Armageddon Expo**  
 Aotea Centre  
 October 20 - 22

An extravaganza of pulp culture, the Armageddon Expo will feature interactive gaming, card trading, movie screenings and a costume and skit contest to allow anyone to become their favourite superhero or sci-fi creature. Celebrity guests include actors from *Star Trek*, *Babylon 5*, *Stargate* and *Harry Potter*. Tickets from Ticketek or at the door.

**Topp Twins Recovery Tour**  
 Bruce Mason Centre  
 October 26 - 27

New Zealand's favourite twins are sure to cause hilarity in their new show featuring the best of 25 years of musical comedy. They will also introduce the Bowling Ladies - Mavis and Lorna - who are best of friends after meeting at the crematorium when their husbands died. Tickets from Ticketmaster.

### exhibitions

**Loli-Pop**  
 Auckland Museum  
 September 15 - November 18

An exhibition exploring the Japanese Gothic Lolita phenomenon that has influenced fashion and culture in downtown Auckland.

**Hei konei mai - We'll meet again**  
 Auckland Art Gallery  
 Until November 4

A range of historical and contemporary pieces showcasing Kiwi people, places and stories are on display in this final exhibition in the Grey and Mackelvie galleries before they are redeveloped.

**Nuclear Free: Protest Photography**  
 Auckland Museum  
 November 9 - January 28, 2008

The anti-nuclear protests of the 80s which influenced government policy and went on to define the nation are depicted in this display of photography by Gil Hanly.