

# From reading to watching



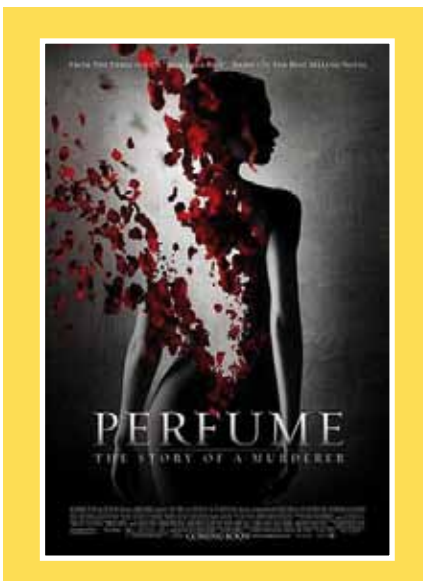
Compiled by CHEREZAAN BASADIEN  
**Audiovisual Selector**

All great things start by putting pen to paper and that is just what the following DVDs are about. They all started out as books. I must confess I didn't read any of the books but watching the DVDs I can just imagine how intriguing the books had to be. These are just a few DVDs from Central Collection as it would be impossible to write about all the books that we have in stock that were made into movies or DVDs.

## Perfume

Based on **Perfume** by Patrick Suskind

**Perfume** is one of the most original stories I've seen in a long time. Jean-Baptiste



Grenouille was born in the foulest, most putrid, horrible-smelling place on earth – a disgusting fish market in the slums of France. There's something unique about him: he is gifted with a godly sense of smell. Not only can Grenouille recognize fleeting smells from miles away, he can break down any scent into its smallest and most delicate components. His mother is hanged shortly after his birth and he grows up in an abusive orphanage until he's old enough to work as a slave of sorts for a leathermaker. He makes a delivery to Paris, and gets bombarded by gorgeous scents – the likes of which he's never experienced before.

Grenouille doesn't talk much and is pretty much a creep, so when he sneaks up on a young attractive girl and starts sniffing her, she's understandably freaked out. In an attempt to keep her quiet, Grenouille kills the girl, and is devastated when her euphoric scent dissipates into the air forever. For the first time in his life, Grenouille has a purpose, but in actuality, it's more of an obsession: he wants to learn how to preserve scent.

He soon finds himself employed by the Italian perfume artist Guiseppe Baldini. Grenouille and Baldini strike a deal – in exchange for Grenouille teaching Baldini to make the best-smelling perfumes in the world, Baldini teaches Grenouille how to preserve scents. The film does an excellent job of turning the scent of women into a metaphor for that woman's soul. It's nearly impossible to like – let alone relate to – Grenouille. He's a selfish, unflinching murderer, and all his acts are carried out for narcissistic ends; he is very detached and comes across as being alien. **Perfume**

is an unconventional and clever way to tell an incredibly interesting story, and one that I know I won't soon forget because it's not often that you see a story of a freakish murderer presented with such depth.

## Casino Royale

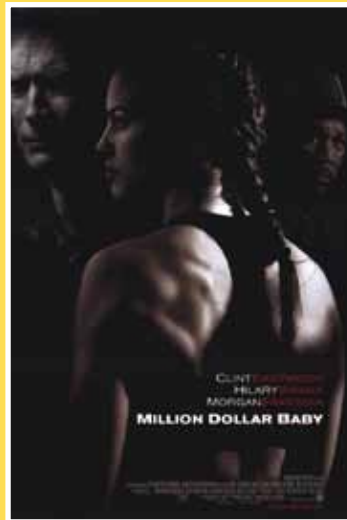
Based on Ian Fleming's Bond novel

This movie takes viewers back to James Bond's beginnings, when M16 elevates him to the extra-special rank of 007. But he is clearly a maverick that M16 is worried about, especially its head, M, who is perturbed when she returns home one night to find that Bond has broken into her apartment.

The two agree an uneasy truce when M dispatches Bond on his first mission: to bring down a suspect known as Le Chiffre, a renegade banker who now works for the world's terrorists as a broker and organiser of large scale disasters. Believing Le Chiffre is planning to bring down several aircraft in order to profit on the stockmarket, Bond's journey takes him to Africa, the Bahamas, North America, Venice and a centrepiece poker game held at the Casino Royale in Montenegro.

A Bond movie needs a baddie and Le Chiffre is more than up to the mark: a ruthless killer, he is also an asthmatic, with a scar that crosses his eye and makes him cry tears of blood. Le Chiffre and Bond's scenes are full of real tension, whether they are politely facing each other across the cardtable or battling each other in a truly eye-watering (not to mention nude) torture sequence.

Equally impressive is the main Bond girl Vesper Lynd, an uptight accountant who is sent to monitor Bond as he spends vast amounts of taxpayers' money on poker.



Their mutual disapproval inevitably turns to romance, and then love, and there is a real tenderness and believability about the scenes they share.

The new Bond is three-dimensional, cunning, elegant, mysterious, charming, funny, vulnerable and tough as hell. His sly, barely perceptible smile suggests that he relishes revenge and takes pleasure in his violence. Bond is fast, mean, and vulnerable enough to appeal to a new generation.

Asked whether he wants his martini shaken or stirred, Bond looks annoyed: 'Do I look like I give a damn?' It made me think: what happened to Bond's trademark line: 'shaken not stirred?'

### Million dollar baby

Based on **Rope burns** by FX Toole

This DVD tells the story of an aging boxing trainer and a girl who thinks she can be a boxer. It is narrated by a former boxer who is the trainer's best friend. But it's not a boxing movie. It is a movie about a boxer in the sense that it follows Maggie's career that contains several scenes of boxing fights.

The aging trainer, Frankie, runs a seedy gym in Los Angeles and reads poetry in his free time. In the wake of a painful estrangement from his daughter, Frankie has been unwilling to get close to anyone.

The narrator is Scrap, a former contender who was managed by Frankie into a title bout. He has lost an eye but can still see what matters. He lives in a room at the gym and is Frankie's partner.

Maggie is from southwest Missouri, she sees life as a constant struggle, and has gotten herself far on raw talent, unshakable focus and a tremendous force of will. But

more than anything, she wants someone to believe in her.

The last thing Frankie needs is that kind of responsibility, let alone that kind of risk, but won over by Maggie's sheer determination, he begrudgingly agrees to take her on as a pupil. In turns exasperating and inspiring each other, the two discover that they share a common spirit that transcends the pain and loss of their pasts, and they find in each other a sense of family they lost long ago.

Maggie wins from the beginning, but that's not the point; **Million dollar baby** is about a woman determined to make something of herself, and a man who doesn't want to do anything for her, yet finally does everything.

### Harry Potter and the goblet of fire

Based on **Harry Potter and the goblet of fire** by JK Rowling

This is the fourth Harry Potter film about the fourth book. The movie dispenses with a lot of the youth and innocence seen in the first three films, and looks at the characters having a better understanding of the dangers they face now, made all the more complicated by the dramas of adolescence.

Harry is plagued by bad dreams in which Voldemort appears to be preparing a comeback. Harry finds himself attending the Quidditch World Cup with Ron and his family shortly before the start of his fourth year at Hogwarts. The enthusiasm at the event is shattered when Voldemort's army invade it, culminating in the appearance of Voldemort's symbol in the sky. While this is a minor cause of concern, Hogwarts takes some extra steps to protect themselves, as they hold a Triwizard Tournament, which

plays host to the best 17-year-old (or older) from Hogwarts in a competition with two other schools. Harry's name is magically thrown into the competition and, not being of age, the decisions on whether to include him in the tournament, along with any personal investment in his entering, are questioned. The decision is made to allow him to compete in the tournament, next to Hogwarts' entry Cedric Diggory.

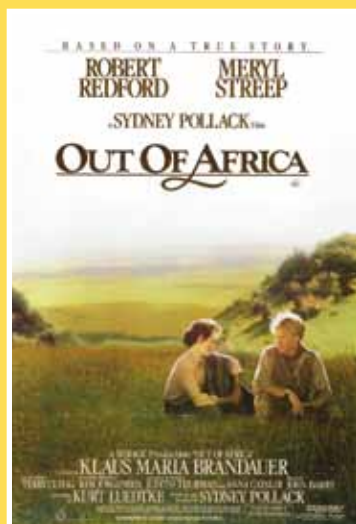
Along with the competition are the normal trappings that teens tend to face, particularly interacting with the other sex. A winter ball makes Harry, Ron and Hermione look at each other differently, both in overt and obvious manners that seem to be more than just friendly glances.

But pulsing in the background is the ever-felt presence of evil on the rise. Conspirators have finally manipulated events to re-open the world to Voldemort – an unseen villain, responsible for the deaths of Harry's parents and the scar across his forehead, and Eye Moody, who has one leg and a disconcerting clockwork eye that bobs around like a marble in water. The spectacularly colourful Quidditch World Cup ends in fire as Voldemort's henchmen, the Death Eaters, announce their return. Voldemort appears for the first time.

### Out of Africa

Based loosely on the memoir by Karen Blixen, **Out of Africa**

**Out of Africa** is both a love letter to a lost Africa and a paean to one woman's luxurious indulgence of her quest for independence and adventure. Karen arrives in Kenya in 1913 to marry Baron Bror Blixen. Though they had been good friends back home in



Denmark, it is a marriage of convenience for both: he has the title, and she has the money. Karen intends to use her money to start a dairy, but he decides to start a coffee plantation instead. Her husband seems to offer little support: he shows little interest in keeping the plantation in working order, choosing instead to go on safari whenever he wants.

East Africa is a frontier world to the Europeans settling there – all are eager for the excitement of the exotic, alien country yet all are lonely for home. (An Englishman Karen meets on her arrival wonders if she travelled through London, and might she have a newspaper; Karen herself brings all her treasures with her: china, a cuckoo clock, books.)

But it's also a world far enough removed from proper society that a woman can break free of the constraints placed upon her by her gender; to such an extent that Karen seems modern. When the Great War breaks out, Bror rides off with a provisional army to hold the Germans at bay, leaving Karen to run the plantation – and she runs it well – on her own. When he sends a request for supplies, she sets off on a harrowing journey to bring them to the men herself, saying in the end that 'it was fun'. She fights a lion with a bullwhip and shoots another dead with one shot. She has an affair with the free-spirited big-game hunter Denys Finch Hatton.

During and after the war, though, the outside world begins its inevitable encroachment. Telephone wires and automobiles make their first appearances, and tourists begin to flood in to such an extent that Denys finds himself in a hurry to see untamed Africa – and to show it to

Karen – before it disappears.

It's the story of Karen's encounters and struggles in a foreign land, whether it is with Denys, the local Kikuyu tribe, deadly diseases or roaming wildlife. It is a retrospective tale of one woman's travels and changing desires.

### Pride and prejudice

Based on **Pride and prejudice** by Jane Austen

This is the story of Elizabeth Bennet, one of five sisters, who are all unmarried and who have all been raised by their mother with one purpose in life – finding a husband. However, Lizzie, the second eldest, can think of 100 reasons not to marry. When Mrs Bennet hears the exciting news that a wealthy bachelor and his circle of sophisticated friends are to take up summer residence in a nearby mansion, the Bennets are abuzz with the hope that potential suitors will be in full supply. Obliging, the newcomer, Mr Charles Bingley, is immediately taken with the eldest, Jane. When Lizzie, however, meets up with the darkly handsome and snobbish Mr Darcy, what seems like a match made in heaven quickly becomes divided – Mr Darcy reluctantly finds he's falling in love with a woman beneath his class. Can each overcome their own pride and prejudice?

### The last king of Scotland

Based on **The last King of Scotland** by Giles Foden

Dr Nicholas Garrigan, a newly graduated young Scot, volunteers for medical mission work in Uganda, just as General Idi Amin Dada comes to power. Like many in 1970s Uganda, when Garrigan meets the new President, he is at first beguiled by the

charismatic 'president for life'. Idi Amin is enraptured with all things Scottish and likes Nick's attitude, and Garrigan agrees to be his personal physician. The position gets Garrigan his own house and a Mercedes convertible, and Amin soon considers him his closest advisor. The high life is great, but Nick has difficulty ignoring the political end of things – the British consider the new president a dangerous man, and after some incidents with opposition rebels, Amin's new security chief Masanga begins a campaign of slaughter. Told that he will not be allowed to leave, Garrigan begins an affair with Kay Amin, the dictator's second, out-of-favour wife. With his passport seized and Amin behaving more paranoid every day, Garrigan wonders if he'll get out alive.

Garrigan survives a couple of ambushes and sees how Amin's cohorts deal with captured rebels. When Garrigan raises doubts about another minister, Amin has the man tortured and killed for no real reason. The paranoid Amin suddenly decides to expel all Asians from Uganda, targeting the Indian nationals that comprise most of the merchant class.

When the atrocities become personal, Garrigan decides to try to kill Amin – something earlier asked of him by a British operative – only to see his attempt backfire. This happens at the Entebbe airport during the Israeli hostage crisis. With the frightened passengers waiting just a few steps away in the airport terminal, Amin's butchers begin to torture Garrigan in the duty-free store.