

LOCKDOWN MOVIES

May 17, 2020

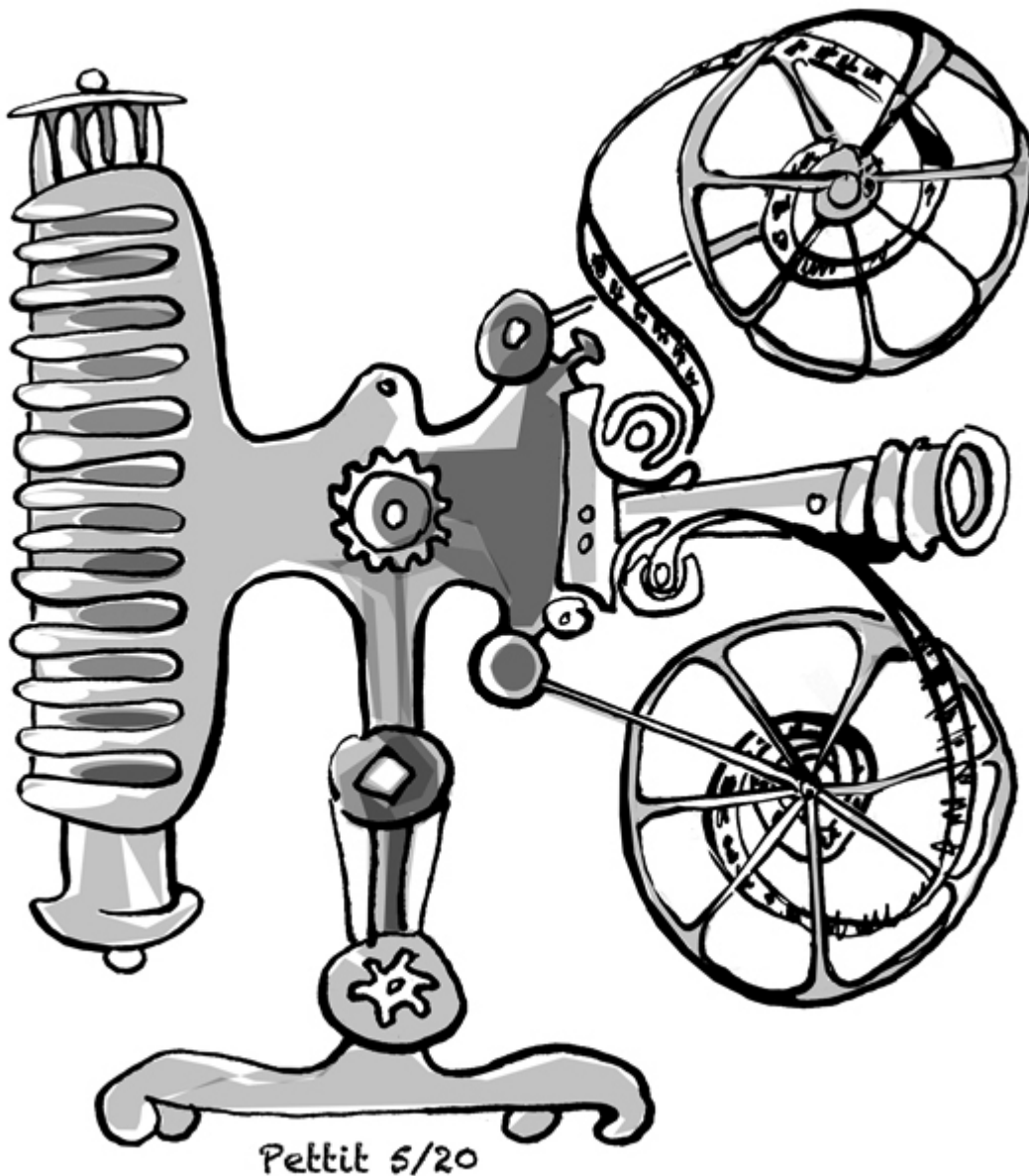


Illustration by Ethan Pettit

By Jennifer Perkin

Almost everybody, whether they're feeling bored and restless, overworked and overwhelmed, or all of the above, is now spending more time at home. With the cinemas closed for the foreseeable future, it's a good time to catch up on movies you've been planning to watch or revisit old favorites.

Maybe you're in a masochistic mood and looking for entertainment that covers catastrophic times. Or perhaps you're looking for escapism and Hollywood magic. Either way, some of these suggestions may help cut down on your Netflix scrolling.

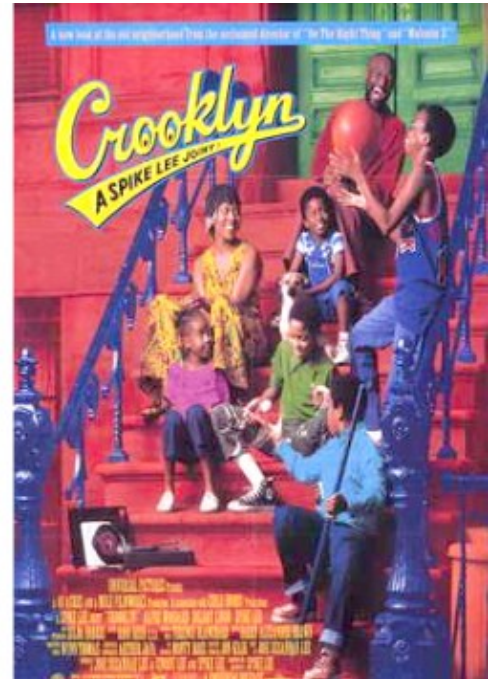
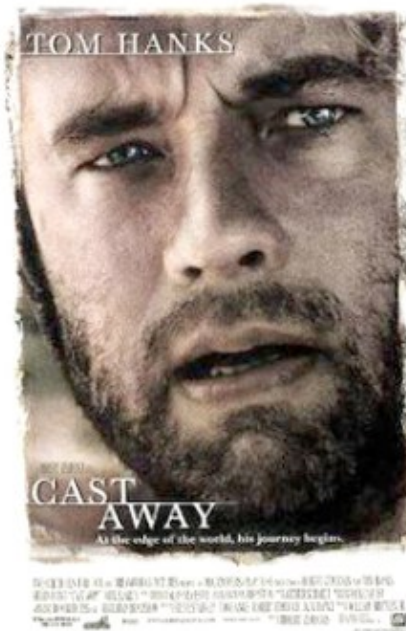
Leaning Into the Moment

There are the obvious films that are straight up about viruses and pandemics, in a world that looks much like our own. *Outbreak* (1995) and *Contagion* (2011) are the two big ones that have experienced a huge surge in popularity since the arrival of COVID-19. Another illness film is based on a real viral outbreak that took place in Kerala, India, in 2018. *Virus* (2019) depicts the swift action taken by local authorities and medical staff, who managed to track the virus, quarantine 200 people, and contain the outbreak after it had claimed 18 victims. On the other end of the “realism” scale is the blockbuster *World War Z*, from 2013, starring Brad Pitt. It may not be a particularly subtle film, but clocking in at over two hours, it will certainly kill some time.

There is also the broad category of dystopian futures. Both *Children of Men* (2006) and *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), helmed by visionary directors Alfonso Cuarón and Terry Gilliam respectively, envision worlds that went wrong for many reasons, just one component of which is a virus. *I Am Legend* (2007), based on the book of the same name, is also about a post-virus world; other adaptations of that book are *The Last Man on Earth* (1964) and *The Omega Man* (1971). You could watch all three as a movie marathon, or you could skip them and go straight to the book, which is an excellent read. *Blindness* (2008) is another adaptation of a much better book and focuses on a world where the population faces a mysterious epidemic that causes most people to go blind. *On the Beach* (1959), though based on the aftermath of a nuclear war rather than an epidemic, might feel somewhat relevant; however—fair warning—it is at the very dark and depressing end of the spectrum.

“ONE OF MY ABSOLUTELY FAVORITE FEEL-GOOD FILMS THAT IS ALSO UNDER-SEEN IS THE SWEDISH FILM *WE ARE THE BEST!* (2013).”

Although zombie films are slightly off-tangent, they often resonate with themes of quarantining, contagion, and societal upheaval. Some of the more popular zombie classics viewers are revisiting at this time include *Dawn of the Dead* (1978 and 2004) and *28 Days Later* (2003), but I'd personally skew toward more light-hearted zombie entertainment such as *Zombieland* (2009) and *Shaun of the Dead* (2004).



Isolating solo? Maybe find relatable content with a stranded Tom Hanks in *Cast Away* (2000), Brie Larson in the claustrophobic film *Room* (2015), or with Sam Rockwell as a lonely astronaut in the underrated *Moon* (2009).

Escaping from Reality

COVID-19 saturation is real, and there comes a point where you want to switch off from the world. Judging by online chat, lots of people are using all this extra screen time to rewatch classic drama series like *The Wire*, *Sopranos*, and *Six Feet Under*, or to switch their brain off entirely and laugh to re-runs of *Seinfeld* and *The Office*. Going even further back, I've personally found that now is a great time to revisit *Twin Peaks*. Yes, it can be dark in parts, but it's surreal enough to be so far removed from our times that it's really pure escapism.

There is, of course, also plenty of new content to gorge on, including *The Last Dance*,

Ozark, *Killing Eve*, and of course, *Tiger King*, which everyone was talking about a few weeks ago.

FEELING NOSTALGIC FOR THE CITY JUST OUT OF REACH BEYOND YOUR DOORSTEP? REVISIT SPIKE LEE GEMS LIKE *SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT* (1984), *CROOK- LYN* (1994), OR *DO THE RIGHT THING* (1989).

Sometimes the abundance of choice can feel overwhelming. Personally, I find watching films made in the 80s is not unlike eating comfort food, whether it's your first or fiftieth time seeing them. *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* or really any John Hughes film is ideal for this purpose, as are most comedies from the era starring Eddie Murphy or Dan Ackroyd, including *The Blues Brothers*, *Coming to America*, or *Ghostbusters*. Also see *Karate Kid*, *Princess Bride*, and *Back to the Future*. The 80s really was prime time for popcorn movies.

Looking for something heartwarming without being too cheesy? *Amelie* (2001) is a perennial delight, *Hunt For the Wilderpeople* (2016) is simply adorable, and just about any Wes Anderson and most Tim Burton films will sweep you up in whimsy for a couple of hours. One of my absolutely favorite feel-good films that is also under-seen is the Swedish film *We Are the Best!* (2013).

Perhaps it's time to watch that cult classic you never got around to? Try *Harold and Maude* (1971), *Clerks* (1994), *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) or *Withnail and I* (1987).

Feeling nostalgic for New York, the city just out of reach beyond your doorstep? It might be the time to revisit Spike Lee gems like *She's Gotta Have It* (1984), *Crooklyn* (1994) or *Do the Right Thing* (1989), an old-time classic like *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), a newer classic like *Manhattan* (1979) or the oddball and highly rewatchable *Birdman* (2014).

Hope you enjoy some of these recommendations. Stay safe.■