



## Box Office: 'Maze Runner' Crushes 'Walk Among the Tombstones' With \$32.5M



Proving that a boy-centric YA film adaptation can click, 20th Century Fox's teen-powered *The Maze Runner* opened to a pleasing \$32.5 million at the North American box office, more than double the \$13.1 million debut of Liam Neeson's R-rated action offering *A Walk Among the Tombstones*.

Shawn Levy's new adult dramedy, *This Is Where I Leave You*, followed at No. 3 with \$11.9 million.

Overseas, *Maze Runner* also dominated, grossing \$37.6 million from 50 markets for a worldwide total of \$81.5 million (the film began rolling out in several territories last weekend). The film, based on James Dashner's novel, has yet to open in 27 markets, including nine of the top 15.

Fox wasted no time in announcing that a sequel, *Maze Runner: Scorch Trials*, will be released Sept. 18, 2015.

And, proving a respite from the downward spiral at the domestic box office, overall revenue for the weekend was up more than 25 percent over of the same weekend last year.

Nabbing an A- CinemaScore, *Maze Runner* cost Fox \$34 million to make and stars Dylan O'Brien (*Teen Wolf*) Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Kaya Scodelario and Will Poulter. The movie owes a big thanks to younger males, a demo that's become difficult to lure to the multiplex. Younger females, devotees of YA, also turned out in force, but their attendance was expected. Overall, females made up 52 percent of ticket buyers, and males, 48 percent. Nearly 65 percent of the audience was under the age of 25.

"It was a perfect storm," said Fox distribution chief Chris Aronson. "We went after teenagers hard and did everything to eventize this film in a play period never tested before. We accomplished the task."

*Maze Runner* follows O'Brien's character as he wakes up with no memory inside the center of a giant maze, an area known as The Glade, surrounded by other teen boys who likewise can't remember anything. Threatening them all are vicious creatures known as Grievers. The boys look for a way out of the maze, but it isn't until a mysterious girl arrives that they have a fighting chance.

Wes Ball directed from an adapted script by Noah Oppenheim.



In terms of comparisons, dystopian YA film adaptation Ender's Game opened to \$27 million in November 2011 after a \$9.8 million Friday. Divergent, also a dystopian story but featuring a female heroine (Shailene Woodley), launched to \$54.6 million in March 2014.

From Cross Creek Pictures, Walk Among the Tombstones earned a B+ CinemaScore and came in behind expectations. It also came in well behind Neeson's other recent action films, including this year's Non-Stop, which debuted to \$28.9 million. However, that film, like Neeson's Taken franchise or Unknown, was rated PG-13, versus an R for Tombstones (insiders also note Tombstones' darker tone).

"We wish the numbers were stronger but, having said that, we'll see where it goes in the coming weeks," said Universal distribution president Nikki Rocco.

The movie, costing a reported \$23 million to make and playing in 2,712 locations, is based on Lawrence Block's best-selling mystery novels and stars Neeson as ex-New York City cop Matt Scudder, who now works as an unlicensed private investigator and is hired by a drug dealer to find the dealer's kidnapped wife.

Females made up 51 percent of the audience, whereas prerelease tracking had showed that older males were most keen on seeing Tombstones (77 percent of ticket buyers were over the age of 25).

Universal is distributing Tombstones in the U.S., while Entertainment One has Canada. Older males, as expected, are most interested in seeing the film, but their wives or girlfriends could have convinced them to see This Is Where I Leave You instead.

This Is Where I Leave You is a marked departure for Levy, who generally sticks to big commercial fare. The dramedy, playing in 2,868 theaters, cost \$20 million to make but certainly doesn't lack star power, boasting a cast led by Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Adam Driver, Rose Byrne and Jane Fonda. It earned a B+ CinemaScore.

From Warner Bros. and based on Jonathan Tropper's novel, This Is Where I Leave You follows four siblings who reunite at their family home to sit shivah for their father (Tropper wrote the adapted screenplay). The movie made its world premiere earlier this month at the Toronto Film Festival.

"Shawn put together a great cast, and the movie was made for a modest price," said Dan Fellman, head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros.

This Is Where I Leave You was up 28 percent on Saturday, reflecting a strong turnout among older females, who made up 63 percent of the audience, while 86 percent of ticket buyers were over the age of 25. It did especially well on the East Coast, Chicago and Toronto.

Several other Toronto titles debuted this weekend, albeit in more limited runs, including Kevin Smith's Tusk, which A24 rolled out in roughly 600 theaters. The film fell outside the top 10, earning a disappointing \$886,144.

Among holdovers, Screen Gems' Idris Elba thriller No Good Deed fell to No. 4 in its second weekend, dipping 58 percent to \$10.2 million for a pleasing domestic total of \$40 million.

Alcon Entertainment's family offering Dolphin Tale 2 rounded out the top five, falling 43 percent to \$9 million for a domestic total of \$27.1 million.

Guardians of the Galaxy continued to make news in its eighth outing as it passed up fellow Marvel Studios' title Iron Man 2, grossing \$5.2 million domestically and \$10.4 million internationally for a worldwide total of \$632.2 million. Iron Man 2 took in \$624 million globally.

Here are the estimated top 10 films for the weekend of Sept. 19-21 at the domestic box office:

Title, Weeks in Release/Theater Count, Studio, Weekend Total, Percentage Change, Cume

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1. The Maze Runner, 1/3,604, Fox, \$32.5 million
2. A Walk Among the Tombstones, 1/2,712, Universal/Cross Creek, \$13.2 million
3. This Is Where I Leave You, 1/2,868, Warner Bros., \$11.9 million
4. No Good Deed, 2/2,175, Sony/Scream Gems, \$24.5 million, -58%, \$40 million
5. Dolphin Tale 2, 2/3,656, Warner Bros./Alcon, \$9 million, -43%, \$27.1 million
6. Guardians of the Galaxy, 8/2,846, Disney/Marvel, \$5.2 million, -35%, \$313.7 million
7. Let's Be Cops, 6/2,312, 20th Century Fox, \$2.7 million, -37%, \$77.2 million
8. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, 6/2,348, Paramount, \$2.7 million, -45%, \$185 million
9. The Drop, 1/1,192, Fox Searchlight, \$4.2 million, -50%, \$7.7 million
10. If I Stay, 5/2,371, Warner Bros./New Line/MGM, \$1.8 million, -53%, \$47.7 million

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