



feeling of entrapment the audience felt was having to wait until the end before leaving the cinema.

This story of a mother (Jodie Foster) and daughter (Kristen Stewart) trapped in a Panic Room – a modern, high-tech equivalent of a bomb shelter – in their New York apartment as three thieves attempt to get the buried treasure in there with them, fails on all counts.

We do not know enough about the trapped characters for them to engage our sympathy, the three villains initially bumble along more like Laurel and Hardy than professional thieves, until the film becomes another film entirely by trying to bludgeon us into paying attention to writer David Koepp's paper-thin plot by spraying blood all over the screen.

The script is thin and the characterisation is superficial; Fincher's direction is full of his leitmotifs seen in his film *Seven* such as nobody ever switches a light on and the action takes place during the monsoon season. His bravura camerawork desperately tries to hold our attention, but cannot triumph over implausibility, a failure to explain essential details of plot and poor characters. **David Smith**

Panic Room (Cert. 15)

by David Fincher. Columbia Tristar.

at May 3

Panic Room attempts to create a claustrophobic sense of menace but I suspect the only