



## Dark Heart of Man • Yinleng Zhi Nan

**Feature 35mm 90min.**

**Budget**

US\$800,000  
(HK\$6,240,000)

**Producers**

William KWOK Wai Lun  
Robert SPARKS  
Stella SZE Kit Ling

**Production Company**

FilmSARS Ltd.

**HAF Goal**

Funds

### ■ Introduction ■

One man's struggle with his own bestial and rational nature drives this exotic, sexually charged film noir, set within the dark, mysterious jungles of a tropical paradise. A sexual-psychological drama narrated from the man's perspective, his love triangle with two women is the guilt that triggers his dual personae. As the ghost-like consciousness detachedly observes the carnal, animalistic sexual affair between his wife and a virile, masculine lifeguard, the disappearance of his former mistress threatens to unravel his deepest, darkest secret...

### ■ Director ■

William KWOK Wai Lun was born in 1969 in Hong Kong. He studied Theater Design at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts before studying filmmaking at the School of Visual Art in New York.

In 1997, he made his first feature, *In the Dumps*, which won the Silver Award at the Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Award. It was also invited to the 3rd Pusan IFF and was chosen for the main competition of the Amien's Film Festival, France in 1998. His second feature, *and so and so* (2000), was likewise selected for several international film festivals.

His latest, *Darkness Bride* (2004), is his 3rd feature film, and it was invited to the 54th Berlin Forum, as well as the 8th Pusan IFF, the Seattle Film Festival and many other festivals. He has self-produced all of his features.

### ■ Producers ■

William KWOK Wai Lun (see above)

Robert SPARKS is a writer/producer currently in development on several feature film and television projects, including projects with: producer Michael Hackett of the Warner Brothers-based Gambit Pictures, director Ernest Dickerson and acclaimed Hong Kong actor Simon Yam, producer Matt Carroll

from Tim Allen's Disney-based Boxing Cat Productions, as well as several projects with the MGM-based producer Arthur Sarkissian. Robert Sparks handles all film & television projects under his company Sparks Motion Pictures.

Sparks was previously head of production for Arthur Sarkissian Productions in 2001 and 2002. Arthur Sarkissian Productions was one of the top five companies in Hollywood in 2001 scoring the fourth highest grossing film of the year with *Rush Hour 2*. Among his duties was tracking all projects through their various stages of development, packaging projects and seeking out new material.

Sparks has also worked with John Mauldin from Steven Spielberg's technology team and served as the entertainment recruiter for the I-Connect Initiative project, which was based on the Universal Studios lot. While still working for Promotional Services at Paramount Pictures, he earned the title of Employee of the Year in 1993.

Stella SZE Kit Ling was born in Macau, and graduated from the Hong Kong Baptist University in 1978, with a major in Communications. She then attended the Southern Illinois University, graduating with a major in Film and Television in 1980. In 1994, she was invited by China's prestigious Beijing Film Institute to participate in a three-month workshop. Between 1981 and 2004, she was a director-cum-producer at the General Program Division of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK, a publicly-funded broadcaster) where she produced and directed numerous awardwinning documentaries and drama series. She has been working with local and overseas talents in producing independent films since 1997. In 1999, she became the chairperson of Hong Kong Film Culture Centre. She has been running her own media company since she left RTHK.

### ■ Production Company ■

FilmSARS was established in 2003. It produced the independent film *Darkness Bride* in that same year.

## ■ Synopsis ■

We first encounter the husband and wife during her birthday dinner. As always, he takes her out to their favorite restaurant. Yet, despite the façade of normality in their relationship, an unbridgeable chasm is gradually pulling them apart, rendering their love cold and forgotten.

Then, she arrives – Ms M. Though his wife does not know it, her husband has been having an affair with Ms M for the last two years. Yet despite this dark secret, the two of them get along like old friends.

As the night draws to a close, the couple decides to head home. With his wife sleeping, he drives along the pitch-black roads. Suddenly, a bright light appears on the horizon. It gradually overwhelms him, blinding his vision. He lets himself go, swallowed by the enveloping white that soon gives way to utter darkness...

Half a year later, we find the wife, now known as Man Fung, living alone amidst the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong. Disillusioned by it all, she leaves her job and moves to an exotic island paradise far, far from the city in an attempt to piece back her fractured life. One hazy day on the tropical beach, Man Fung encounters a lean, masculine lifeguard. Though she pretends not to pay much attention to him, she notices his natural confidence and his playful attitude toward children. This ignites a spark of interest that has long been dormant.

Meanwhile, Ms M is contacted by a friend on the same island, who informs her that the man she seeks is there. The last response that Ms M received from him is a note that simply says, “I’ve left, don’t look for me”. But instead of obeying it, she now sets off for this remote locale as well. On arrival, she searches and finds the lifeguard, but is surprised when he does not recognize her at all. Troubled and pained by this rejection, she begins to devise ways to revive his memory of her.

One morning, the lifeguard returns to his place, only to walk pass Man Fung’s apartment. She is awake. Their eyes meet, and good mornings are uttered. Soon, such daily greetings develop into a heated and passionate sexual affair. But on the first night of their carnal act together, an apparition discovers itself within the very same room. It is then revealed that this is the husband, who must have perished in that car accident six months ago. Now in spirit form, he could only watch impotently as the couple roughly grasp upon one another’s naked bodies.

That very same night, Man Fung begins to dream. For the first

time in months, she finds her husband in her reverie, bidding her to forget him. She then recalls their arguments, his insistence on her career, his reluctance to have a child with her... though all she wanted was to be an ordinary housewife and a mother. When she wakes up, she finds the lifeguard lying next to her, also awake. He nonchalantly asks her why she likes him. She replies: “I like you because you’re simply stupid.”

The focus then shifts back to Ms M, whose efforts to revive the lifeguard’s memory have borne no results. Resorting to her final tactic, she leaves an SMS for him, threatening to kill herself if he does not respond. Unbeknownst to her, the lifeguard is engaged in heavy, breathless sex with Man Fung. He does not reply...The island’s small community would soon be abuzz with the disappearance of Ms M.

## ■ Director’s Statement ■

Great is the suffering of a man who chooses to abandon himself. Nevertheless, once removed from his conscience and reasoning, he is also the most content. For him without ego will cease to doubt, to worry, or to dwell upon the complexities that otherwise plague his existence.

The lifeguard embodies exactly these qualities – a pure id machine driven only by his instincts and primitive desires. And arguably, he is precisely the ideal version of manhood that women find most attractive.

The concept of “one person, two personae” was borne out of such conceit. In reality, most of us share characteristics that lie between these two extremes. But in exploring one husband’s mid-life crisis, his inability to face his own infidelities traps him within the prison of emotional failures. Too cowardly to decide between either women, he ultimately chooses to hide, unconsciously detaching himself from his physical form. Thus, he has unwittingly created two personalities, with each unaware of the other’s existence.

Within the narrative, the audience, as well as the man himself, is not aware of this duality until the very end, when it is unravelled by an inspector investigating Ms. M’s vanishing. For the unnamed protagonist, this realisation causes unbearable pain, as if a great force is sucking him into a cold, ever-expanding black hole. This plot twist then sets up the surprising finale, in which the female becomes an accomplice to the crimes wrought by the suffering of man....

This story is dedicated to all the men who lead perfectly happy lives.

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