



3 KILOGRAMS OF HAPPYNESS



Project for a low budget feature film

Writers

Zornitsa Sophia, Petar Delchev, Viktoria Penkova

Director

Zornitsa Sophia

Based on a true story,

MQ PICTURES 2020 ©



3 KILOGRAMS OF HAPPYNESS

Short Synopsis

Parents decide to help their daughter, who can't conceive - her father sponsors a third invitro fertilization, and her mother gets pregnant with the fetus, despite her husband's protest. Human intervention in this delicate matter swings the world of both families into chaos. Whose child is this and how many mothers the baby has are the easy questions in this puzzle, where love, ethics and morality clash with free will, thus creating or destroying a universe.

Logline

A 52-year-old woman decides to help her daughter and her son-in-law, and gets pregnant with their baby against the will of her husband, thus swirling the lives of all four of them. A true story from Sofia, Bulgaria, 2017.

Genre

Dramedy

Credits

Writers: Zornitsa Sophia, Petar Delchev, Viktoria Penkova

Director: Zornitsa Sophia

Producer: MQ Pictures

Financing in place: NFC Grant for Development, MQ Pictures in-kind

Looking for: EU coproducer/s and Sales





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Treatment

CHAVDAR, 55, is a freshly retired train operator from the Bulgarian State Railways, who celebrates the beginning of a new life with his wife ANASTASIA, 52, in his boat Betty he plans to repair and tune, and the couple intends to cruise the Black sea – from cape Shabla to Sinemorets, and fly the yellow flag as in Love in the Time of Cholera, sleep in a new cabin and love each other.

A ringing phone intercepts the idyllic moment. Their daughter Elizabeth, BETTY, 32, bawls at her mother about the wasted second in vitro attempt, her failed promotion and that she lacks funding for a third operation. The two pensioners leave for Sofia. Chavdar offers the youngsters his boat repair savings, so that a third in vitro is financed.

NIKOLAY, 35, Betty's husband is grateful, but Betty shares the doctors' concern that her chances of conceiving are close to none. Anastasia takes her to another doctor and throws everyone in shock by proposing to bear her daughter's child. Nikolay is sceptical at the idea, Chavdar is strictly opposed and hurt that no one seeks his opinion. Amidst all havoc, Chavdar leaves unannounced and by himself.

Back in Varna Anastasia doesn't succeed in finding her husband and having a word with him, so she moves in with her daughter in Sofia to get ready for the procedure.

She is accommodated in the future kids' room, a present storage space, and relieved from household chores – now Nicolay's responsibility, because Betty is too busy at



the advertising agency she works for. "You are the best mother in the world.", Betty says. "Just take care of yourself, engage in pleasant activities" they tell her, and Anastasia rediscovers life.

She begins with concerts and exhibitions, moves on to cooking classes, pilates, a new haircut, massage, dancing. Imagine, dancing?! Betty is busy with a work project and asks Nikolay, despite his protesting, to chaperone his mother everywhere and keep her from overdosing activities, eating junk and smoking. Thus Nikolay and Anastasia are forced to spend a lot more time together, and initially he objects.

Nikolay is a paparazzi photographer, which pays the mortgage and the bill, but his pictures' focus shifts, initially, to Anastasia's activities and later on to herself. He starts taking snapshots of her at workshops, pilates for pregnant, until one day he joins in a tango milonga as his mother-in-law's partner.

Nikolay takes her to his parents' country house, where he shoots a beautiful photo session of her and begins to dream of having his own exhibition. Betty gives orders left and right who does what and the pair complicitly lay low. The three of them attend the fertilization procedure. Only Nikolay is by Anastasia's side at the first ultrasound.

Slowly but surely, Nikolay falls for Anastasia, and she blooms - maybe due to her activities, or the extra estrogen intake, or the supporting presence of a good and caring man. Or maybe because she's already pregnant. Just as any couple would do, she and Nikolay go shopping for a pram, clothes and toys for the baby.

They go through a crisis of their own, when she learns how the excess two fetuses in her womb will be destroyed. In the meantime Chavdar, as a sign of protest, is painting the sea town red with a couple of university students he has just met.

On the same day Betty gets promoted to a Client Service Director of the agency, she leaves the office a bit early to boast of her success to mother and her husband. She surprises them at the pilates class, but they are nowhere to be found. On her way back to the office she suddenly sees them - in the green area across the street, walking



side by side, not even looking at each other, but holding hands, fingers intertwined.

Betty ducks and hides between the parked cars. She dials her father who picks up high on weed, already cohabiting with the two university students MARY and SUNNY, whose real names are the not so cool Mariyka and Siyka from the small town of Mezdra, and there is a wild party going on as they speak. "Is something burning, Dad?", Betty asks. "The neighbours' tenants are nuts." Betty is wailing that her mom and her husband are having an affair.

Her father refuses to believe and doesn't take sides, but he's deeply hurt suffers unconventionally with his two student-tenants. He keeps calling Anastasia from a landline, not uttering a word. She guesses at the caller's identity replies back with gentle silence.

Anastasia walks in on Betty and Nikolay in the middle of a heated argument. Betty is hysterical, "I don't want this child anymore!" "But I do and I will raise it with your mom", Nikolay replies catching the two women completely offguard. Betty ironically concludes that the baby already has three mothers - biological, surrogate and the one who will do the parenting. Nikolay feverishly proposes to Anastasia an escape, "I'm not asking you to be my wife, only to take care of you and my child". "Our child", he corrects himself. She is shocked, "I only wanted to help you. You do not deserve this child. Go to your wife!"

While Nikolay is trying to calm Betty down, Anastasia disappears. Nikolay tries everything to find her - phone, bus station, airport, railway station, but he searches in vain. Anastasia has gone hitchhiking to Varna.

In her Varna apartment Anastasia discovers remnants from a months' worth of parties and clothes sprawled drying on the furniture. In her bedroom, she walks in on Mary and Sunny sleeping in her bed. She quietly starts packing her belongings in a suitcase, two icons, books, jewelry.

She wakes them up unintentionally, and the girls scream for help. Chavdar appears stark naked to "rescue" the damsels in distress. He sees his wife informing Mary and Syby that she is only the cleaning lady and has come to pick some clothes for the missus.



Sobered up by this comparison between the two young girls and the love of his life, Chavdar kicks the girls out. He comes back to make peace, but finds Anastasia asleep, curled up like a child on their bed. He sits next to her waiting for her to wake up, the doorbell rings.

Nikolay has come. The two men sit down in the kitchen for a man-to-man talk. Chavdar produces a bottle, they drink.

CHAVDAR Do you love her?

NIKOLAY Yes.

CHAVDAR What do you want?

NIKOLAY I thought I wanted a child. It turned out I want your wife. And our child.

CHAVDAR Our, indeed. I paid for it.

NIKOLAY Her...

CHAVDAR Oh, dear... Is it a girl?

Anastasia quietly enters the room. The two men jump up and start cleaning up like schoolboys. She demands the car keys from her husband, kisses Nikolay goodbye and leaves.

She gives birth in a country hospital, all alone. She sends out a Viber message to all three of them: a picture of the baby followed by "Elitsa, 3 kilograms".

She receives three replies: from Betty a picture of the fully furnished and empty children's room; from Nikolay a picture of his photo exhibition poster, the principal model being his wife Betty in their country house; from Chavdar a picture of the boat accosted in front of a mountain cottage with a return address.

Time lapses. A yard, a smoking barbecue, Chavdar is sweating at it. Nikolay pulls a watermelon from the well. Betty and Anastasia are making salad, Betty is pregnant.

A girl of about three years old is running around in the yard, trips and falls, gets back on her feet and shouts "Mommy!", all of them reply back "Yes?".

THE END.



CV of the Director

Zornitsa Sophia is Master of Fine Arts, major in painting, who has presented at 65 exhibitions internationally and, together with the convicts, restored the church and murals in Sofia Male Prison. Her debut feature as writer, director and producer is *MILA FROM MARS*, 2004, with 16 awards, 60 festivals, Bulgarian submission for the Academy Awards and a national box office hit. Following are the documentaries *DEATH AND ALL THE WAY BACK*, 2005 and *MODUS VIVENDI*, 2007, and the feature *FORECAST*, 2009. *VOEVODA*, 2017, is her third feature film as writer, director and producer and first as actress in the leading role, it premiered at Shanghai IFF and Moscow IFF and was a national box office hit. Zornitsa Sophia has directed 44 episodes in 6 prime time TV SERIES, one awarded theater play and an opera which opened the 2019/2020 season at National Opera and Balley. Her films were selected in over 150 festivals, 40 competitions receiving 19 awards. Zornitsa Sophia served as a jury member at Warsaw, Valencia, Plzen film festivals among others, in the Artistic Committee of Bulgarian National Film Center, and leads workshops on filmmaking.



Director's Notes

Surrogacy through in vitro fertilization – IVF, is undoubtedly a hot topic. My focus is in the storm whirled by this “intervention in God’s deeds” and its impact on the human relationships. I investigate how this choice of free will resonates in all the four characters, constructing a new universe of unwritten laws.

Through dramedy as our genre, I will touch the cotroversial topics - dramatical for the characters and sometimes absurd when the bigger picture applies. I will use an intuitive and subjective storytelling as cinematic narrative and will bring contrast though music and sound.

I see the potential in this story in provoking ethical, emotional even spiritual questions revealing characters who could overcome all obstacles simply though acceptance.



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PRODUCER PROFILE

Zornitsa Sophia and her team has produced and released theatrically, on DVD and TV three feature films as international co-productions and one documentary and currently develop few feature film projects and one series. Her films attended over 130 festivals, received awards like Heart of Sarajevo, Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Ecumenical Jury Award at Mannheim-Heidelberg, 5 awards at Golden Rose Bulgarian FF and were selected in A category festivals like Shanghai, Moscow, Cairo, Mar del Plata, Goa. Her ability to fundraise includes different sources like Bulgarian National Film Center, international and State Funds through the co-production partners, MEDIA, TV presales, private sponsorships and crowd-funding. Each title she releases theatrically is supported by a tailor-made communication strategy, designed and mostly executed by the company's own creative team and label Plan B Distribution.

COMPANY PROFILE & ACTIVITIES

MQ Pictures aims to nurture bold creative visions and produce high quality features, documentaries and series on subjects that matter. In every aspect of our work we aim to develop long term collaborations as to have continuity in our artistic vision and endeavors. Our small independent branch for theatrical distribution aims to marry the release on each title with an adequate communication strategy.

TRACK RECORD:

- MOTHER, feature film, in pre-production
- THREE KILOS OF HAPPINESS, feature film, in development
- VOEVODA, 2017, feature film, Bulgarian-Croatian coproduction, "Golden Eye" Cinematography Award, official selections: Shanghai IFF, Moscow IFF, Raindance IFF, Cinequest IFF, Pula IFF, Golden Rose FF, Sofia IFF
- FORECAST, 2008, feature film, Academica Award at Golden Rose FF, official selections: Mannheim-Heidelberg IFF, Cairo IFF, Goa IFF, Triest IFF, Strassbourg IFF, Thessaloniki IFF, Manaki Brothers IFF;
- MODUS VIVENDI, 2006, documentary, Sofia Film Festival Competition,
- MILA FROM MARS, 2004, feature film, Bulgarian-Bosnia-Herzegovina coproduction, 16 awards including: Heart of Sarajevo for Best Film, Extra Special Jury Award awarded by Mike Lee for "Actors Ensemble" at Sarajevo IFF, Reiner-Werner Fassbinder Award for "best unconventionally-narrated film" and Ecumenical Jury Award at Mannheim-Heidelberg IFF, Golden Rose for Best Film, Best Actress, Best new Director, Best Debut and Journalist Award, 20 nominations and over 60 festivals among others: Mar Del Plata IFF, Goa IFF, Pusan IFF, Haifa IFF, Sao Paulo IFF, New Films/New Directors, Palm Springs IFF, Warsaw IFF, Triest IFF, Wiesbaden IFF, Goteborg IFF, Reykjavik IFF, Thessaloniki IFF, Kerala IFF, Pune IFF and was Bulgarian submission for the Academy Awards.



PROJECT STATUS

- The project won subsidy for development at BNFC, winter 2019, 10,000 euro in total.
- Selection at Sofia Meetings, march, delayed for July 2020, because of pandemia
- Project won Villa Kult prize at Sofia Meetings, which is a residency for director/producer at Berlinale 2021
- Casting is made, one of the actresses, who will play Betty is the main cast in the film MOTHER.
- Location scout is made, half of the production will move to a poor and picturesque fisherman village on the Black sea coast. This gives more “flesh” to the sea-side part and the lifestyle of the family of Chavdar and Anastasia, in contrast with the washed out modern lifestyle of the younger couple of Betty and Nikolay.
- A contract is made with a Turkish coproducer, providing post-production in-kind services for up to 30,000 Euro.
- The project applies at BNFC for “realisation of a low budget film”, results expected Nov 2020.
- We are looking for one more EU coproducer for up to 80k and a pre-sale deal and/or World Sales.