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LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

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One paragraph summary

Taking its cue from Romeo and Juliet, LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER is a tale of lovers from different sides of the tracks. Vida comes from a well heeled London family, whereas Arthur is a bike messenger from a working-class Welsh mining town. Utterly in love, their relationship is nevertheless tested when their wildly different worlds collide. Sensitive, quirky, always uncompromisingly truthful and interspersed with surprising animation, LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER is a touching take on whether love trumps familial bonds.

Oneliner

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER is a tale of lovers from different sides of the tracks. A surprising and touching rom-com on whether love trumps familial bonds.



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

synopsis

Arthur (Johnny Flynn) is the son of poor steel workers from a little village in Wales, and Vida (Lydia Wilson) the daughter of a well-to-do Jewish doctor in London. Arthur and Vida start to cohabit and their love is as passionate as it is sincere. Romantic Arthur surprises impulsive Vida as much as she makes him laugh; a match made in heaven. Both families are pleased with the youngsters liaison. But the families don't mingle or socialize with each other.

The family members all have their specifics. Arthur's half brother Llion (Alex Lanipekun) is the oldest, and of mixed race. Arthur hates him for a reason he cannot remember. His oldest sister Emily (Jessica Gunning) married an alcoholic in denial. But they are happy. His youngest sister Brenda (Remy Beasley) has a job as a cleaning lady. His father George (Robert Blythe) has retired from being a steel factory worker since the death of his oldest son and mostly stares out of the window. Just to keep himself busy he repairs vacuum cleaners

and other small appliances. While Arthur's mother Sara (Sharon Morgan) remains an optimist even when she faces total defeat. Arthur himself works as a bike courier in London but has aspirations are to become a special animator.

Vida's father Levi (Henry Goodman) is a much admired and respected doctor. Her mother Ethel (Juliet Stevenson) a gracious and still beautiful woman works as a divorce lawyer. Their eldest son Adam (Al Weaver) just completed his psychiatrists study (a Jewish doctor afraid of blood) and is about to get married to an OR nurse. Vida's younger sister Helen (Ellie Kendrick) is hyper intelligent and disagrees with everything. Vida studies as a cellist and has every ambition to become successful.

During their attempt to bring the families together, Arthur and Vida stage a (fake) engagement party. It is just short of a total disaster. The games they play are not appreciated. And involuntarily the social difference even creeps between the sheets of Arthur and Vida.

Additionally fate hits. Vida's mother dies, and within 24 hours Arthur's father dies. Vida's mother dies in a strange bed, heart attack, in the arms of a young lover, one of many. Arthur's father dies all alone in the early morning as a result of a – wrongly diagnosed—brain tumour.

The grief separates the young lovers. It turns out to be impossible to support each other, their families have a stronger pull on their allegiances. Heartbroken, angry, longing for each other but far too proud, they separate. It takes some time before the surviving parents find a way to reconnect all of them.

Both families meet a month after the funerals at the memorial which Vida's father graciously offered to share with Arthur's family. It's the first time the families interact –albeit the women with the women and the men with the men. Secrets emerge, not always voluntarily. Arthur's half brother rejoined the army where he left several years ago because of rape charges. Vida's father is full of guilt towards the death of his wife, as he closed his eyes for her philandering. Vida's psychiatrist brother, now graduated, has broken off the engagement and came out of the closet as gay. Her youngest sister has enlisted in the Israeli army and now flies a fighter jet. Arthur's oldest sister still suffers from her husband's drinking problem and still she accepts him the way he is and loves him for better and for worse. She started drinking again herself, it saved the marriage.

But where do Arthur and Vida stand? Their backgrounds are so immensely different, including many of their moral values, but the chemistry is still there. They re-arrange their vows, not during any (fake) party or public celebration, just the two of them alone on their rooftop. They won't give up. They have a shot at happiness if Arthur can still surprise Vida, and she can continue to make him laugh.

No longer are they a match made in heaven, but if they make an effort they can be a match surviving on earth.



Theme Movie

We describe the underlying theme in this film as: **Acceptance.**

Acceptance is not at all obvious nor singular in its definition or expression – and therefore a truly fascinating theme. Each character in our story battles with acceptance in different ways. It is not simply acceptance of others, this is the obvious, but acceptance of ones own failings and idiosyncrasies, which is often harder than accepting others, and acceptance of how one behaves when you lack control and our notion of destiny.

Acceptance is usually combined with forgiveness. Forgiveness is important to us, without the religious connotations, it completes acceptance. But our focus will be more towards acceptance.

This never takes face value in the film, we never talk about it in a direct way, but all the characters represent a specific segment of this theme, specifically the leading characters Arthur and Vida.

Thematic overtones:

The further layers that carry thematic resonances are class difference in the UK, personal demons/saints, subconscious conditioning, nature vs nurture, obligation vs loyalty and loyalty vs love – all played out through the various character arcs and shaping the overall story.

Certainly Arthur and Vida are at the edge of having to decide (subconsciously) whether to become an adult and be their 'own' person, or to get older and be what others (mostly their family) want them to be (and in a way never grow up).



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

director's statement

In this film the visual approach is as important as the story.

The entire film will focus on close-ups: only faces. No matter where the characters are, no matter what they do --inside, outside, in a crowded room or an empty space, sitting, running-- we will see their faces and beyond those faces the suggestion of other people and the environment.

“Faces” of John Cassavetes may come to mind, a picture in which the facial expressions of the leading characters are both subject and arena. The shooting style of several Robert Altman films are an example. “Secrets and Lies” from Mike Leigh offers references because it places authenticity above forced dramatic conflict. And –more contemporary– Linklater’s ‘Before’ trilogy. We not only take our inspiration from films, also literature is referenced in an indirect way such as *Catcher In The Rye*.

Please do not think that the visuals and technique will overrule the emotions and theme of *Love Is Thicker Than Water*. Both will strengthen each other, none will take priority above the other. We want to give the actors freedom within a very defined setting.

I'm interested in humans as animals and as products of society. I'm interested in pursuing characters that allow me to push against my own walls, my own constraints as a human being and to find out where I'm capable of going. I'm interested in people who are unique in their normality.



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

production notes

2014

As so often when making a feature film the stars aligned between coincidence and luck to make LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER happen.

Producer/director Ate de Jong had just finished a microwave budget genre film DEADLY VIRTUES: LOVE. HONOUR. OBEY. featuring three actors, amongst them Matt Barber. Matt was eager to expand his professional life to include producing films. And so a new partnership was born and the search was on for exiting, new projects.

At first the plan was to make a trilogy and continue to make films in the vein of DEADLY VIRTUES. Quite soon the frontrunner plan became a personal story: Ate's experience with his first common-law wife and their respective families, appropriately called DEADLY VIRTUES: INTIMACY.

However to link a romantic comedy to a genre thriller seemed like a stretch and might be confusing for future distributors. First thing the producers did was change the title to LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER.

The producers also anticipated getting the budget would be a Herculean task and only actors "between jobs" would be able to play the parts for a low fee. However response to the outline turned out to be quite encouraging and the call for a full fledged script became stronger and stronger.

Ate de Jong was adamant someone else should write the script. Many meetings with writers followed but the search for a screenplay writer didn't deliver the desired result, and to avoid losing more time, Ate wrote a first draft.

Again fate took over and reality found a new face. The first draft script received a more than warm interest.

Matt Barber handed the script to a young, energetic casting director he had befriended Lucy Rands, and Lucy forwarded the script to well established and talented actors.



Jan 2015

Ate de Jong --a director with a multitude of credits to his name-- always envisioned the film should be co-directed by a young and preferably first time director, someone who spoke the film vocabulary of a new generation. Producers spend a vast amount of time to find such a talented new director, looking at a mountain of short films and discussing the project with many aspiring filmmakers.

Early January the producers met with Emily Harris. Emily made several award winning shorts and had a vast on set experience through her work for the V&A (Victoria & Albert Museum) film department. Probably just as important was that Emily felt great affinity to the script and she and Ate immediately were able to work as a team.

Feb 2015

Casting propelled in full swing and the decision to ask Johnny Flynn and Lydia Wilson for the two leads marked a great step forward. Johnny and Lydia had acted together on stage and were friends. They made numerous suggestions for actors to fill in the other parts, helping to create a strong ensemble; thanks to Lydia and Johnny, both Henry Goodman and Juliet Stevenson signed on.

Whenever time permitted the two directors and their two leads rehearsed. Often using unusual improvisation techniques to allow the actors to 'steal' the characters and make them their own. The actors were never told (until way after the shooting) that the story was based on real characters.

March 2015

Financing via Ingenious and Mulholland Pictures was finalized. The budget is in the normal UK indy range. Crew started pre-production and first day of shooting was set for 16th March.

Everything but the beach scene was shot in London including the Port Talbot interiors to minimize losing travel time.



During pre-production Ate de Jong and Emily Harris had shared all the directors responsibilities. Decisions were made as a team. For clarity and efficiency during the shooting this approach was changed, Ate concentrated on the actors, and Emily on the visualization. It turned out to be a lucky choice as it allowed each director more time to concentrate on his/her specific area.

Often indie films are terrorized with very long shooting days. As this team started well prepared we managed to have 'normal' shooting days. Only the one day and night trip to Port Talbot to shoot scenes at the beach near the steel mills was a real challenge as weather and traffic were not ideal (a nice word for horrendous) but an indie film has to accept such circumstances and bend it towards their advantage.

April 2015

Shooting finished on schedule and within budget. Editing started.

June 2015

A first cut was delivered and clocked just over two hours long. Director Emily Harris managed to find animator Nate Milton in New York. He supplied unique animation and thanks to his quality he supplied an even larger part than first anticipated.

The two directors also felt that songs would give the movie an extra dimension. Emily and Ate wanted to use songs, not as background, but as a Greek choir, and give it a presence and an influence towards the story.

Johnny Flynn being a musician himself took on the task as music supervisor and managed to get a soundtrack by enlisting the help of many of his friends in the modern music arena.

Getting the legal paperwork for songs all tied up is a rather time consuming task, but as the film had no release pressure we could afford that time.

Autumn 2015

The final editing was locked by October. However, the directors were not happy with the quality of sound post production. They made the bold decision to start sound design from scratch again and were very lucky to find financier Master Media to step in to finance a full new sound post production on a better and more professional level.

Early 2016

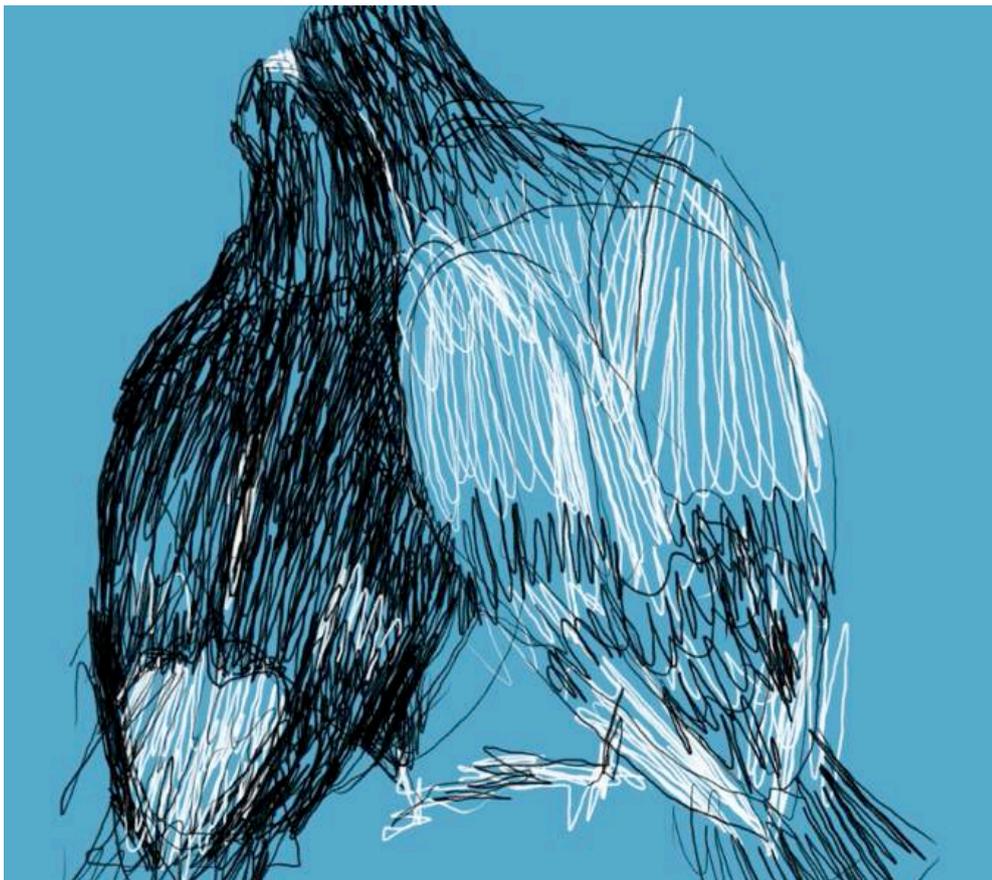
With a new sound design, the animation finished, the songs all cleared, the sound mix started at Warner Bros/DeLaneLea studios early February. Followed by final grading and credits.

April 2016

Producers were able to show the film for the first time in a fully finished version. Now the search started for the appropriate sales agent and creating the PR materials such as trailers and poster.

From the very start—even before the shooting period started—there was a strong connection with Jinga Film, so it came as no surprise that Jinga became the sales agent of the movie.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER is now enjoying its launch into the wide world of cinema and will be shown at a diversity of festivals all over the world, followed by releases to the general public.



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Johnny Flynn (Arthur) – Born 1983 in Johannesburg South Africa. He moved to the UK when he was 2 years old.

Johnny is both a musician and an actor. He released several studio albums and plays folk-influenced songs of his own composition. He also composed music for several films, tv series and theatre productions. Johnny's connections with young artists were instrumental in getting the songs for LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER.

Johnny starred in tv series such as *Brotherhood* for Comedy Central and the Channel 4 series *Scrotal Recall*. Theatre audiences could recently admire him in *Hangmen*. He was cast opposite Anne Hathaway in the Hollywood movie *Song One* and also could be seen in the European indy film *Clouds of Sils Maria*.

Johnny received numerous awards amongst them an *Olivier Award* nomination and Screen International's *Stars of Tomorrow*.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Lydia Wilson (Vida) - Born 1984

Lydia is an Anglo-American actress, her father being English, her mother American, working on both sides of the globe.

She studied English at the University of Cambridge and then trained and graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in 2009. During her short career Lydia already achieved many accomplishments. She was nominated for an Olivier award for her role in *Charles III* which later in 2015 transferred from the West-End to Broadway. She co-starred in Richard Curtis' film *About Time*. Recently she played in Paramounts blockbuster *Star Trek Beyond*.

Lydia and Johnny played together in *The Heretic* (2011). In 2014 she was included in the 1000 most influential Londoners.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Juliet Stevenson (Ethel) – Celebrated actress both of stage and screen.

Juliet starred in numerous Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre productions. She gathered five Olivier Award nominations and won one. She also received 3 BAFTA TV Awards for best actress.

Juliet made a deep impression in the movie *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1991) Other film appearances include *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Mona Lisa Smile*, *Being Julia*.

Juliet was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1999.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Henry Goodman (Levi) – born in april 1950 in London East-End.

Henry is a RADA trained actor who has a long and very distinguished career on the British stage whose range is unsurpassed. He was nominated for three Olivier Awards, won two, one for Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, still considered the definitive portrayal of that part in modern theatre.

His screen credits are numerous and include 'Dr List' in *Avengers: Age of Ultron* and *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* Other films include *Notting Hill* and *Taking Woodstock*.

Henry and Juliet Stevenson played together on stage in *Duet for One*.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Jessica Gunning (Emily) – Jessica started her stage career at the National Theatre. On tv she guest-starred in *Doctor Who* and had a recurring role in *Law&Order: UK*. She received much praise for her part in Golden Globe and BAFTA nominated feature *Pride*.



Ellie Kendrick (Helen) – Born 1990 spent time with the National Youth Theatre before she took up a place to study English at the University of Cambridge. In 2009 she made her stage debut as Juliet in Shakespeare's Globe production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Ellie starred in the titular role of Anne Frank in BBC 1's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. And in 2012 she was cast as Meera Reed in HBO's *Game of Thrones*;

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Al Weaver (Adam) – Born in Bolton England in 1981. His first paid theatre role was *Hamlet* at the Old Vic in London. He stars in ITV's *Grantchester*. And he was featured in the movie *Marie Antoinette*.



Remy Beasley (Brenda) – is a starting actress born in Chepstow Wales. She studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. *Love is Thicker than Water* is her first movie part. Remy is also an aspiring comedy writer.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Alex Lanipekun (Llion) – born 1981, he studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) but left early to join the cast of BBC drama *Spooks*.

At 13 Alex joined the National Youth Music Theatre. He also was a member of the awarded Hip-Hop Collective 'ONE'. And later worked as a freelance journalist. After *Spooks* Alex did many tv, theatre and radio productions such as *The Borgias* and Showtime's *Homeland*.

LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

cast biographies



Robert Blythe (George) – Welsh actor born in Port Talbot. Robert worked extensively in repertory theatre in Wales, the UK and travelling the Middle East, India and Europe. He is an associate artist of Clwyd Theatr Cymry with many credits, probably best known for Fagin in *High Hopes* and many parts at the Royal National Theatre.



Sharon Morgan (Sara) – a Welsh actress of stage and screen. Best known for her work within the Welsh film and tv industry and recipient of three BAFTA Cymru awards. Amongst many parts in film, tv and theatre Mary Cooper in *Torchwood*.

Sharon also translates plays into the Welsh language.



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

character breakdown

VIDA BERLINER (24 – 26 yr) *LYDIA WILSON*

A dynamic, energetic woman, passionate about her desires, sensible about life's possibilities. Vida grew up in a well-to-do Jewish family in London. She has not made final choices in her professional life yet; is attracted to becoming a classical musician, or a modern composer.

ARTHUR DAVIES (24 – 26 yr) *JOHNNY FLYNN*

Fearless and leader of the pack amongst his friends, shy and vulnerable when he's just with Vida. Son of a steel factory worker in Wales. He wants to become a manager in the Steel Mills but his real passion lies in making off-beat online vignettes of ordinary people.

LEVI BERLINER (58 – 62 yr) *HENRY GOODMAN*

Father Vida. London physician with lucrative practice. Jewish, observing some traditions but not overly religious. Worked himself up from a penniless nobody to a well respected man. A kind man almost to a default, warm-hearted and generous.

SARA DAVIES (60 – 64 yr) *SHARON MORGAN*

Mother Arthur. Working class woman. Her scope does not reach beyond Wales and her immediate family. Her imagination sometimes does; she could have achieved more in this world, but she's without regrets and takes life as it comes.

GEORGE DAVIES (60 – 64 yr) *ROBERT BLYTHE*

Father Arthur. Worked his entire life in the steel factory. Went on permanent sick leave after death of his oldest son Ron; a loss he never accepted. Became a man of very few words. Just to keep himself busy he started a repair business for household appliances.

ETHEL BERLINER (55 – 59 yr) *JULIET STEVENSON*

Mother Vida. Her jokes can be cruel sometimes. She has the sharpness of a lawyer and the tenderness of a matron. She grew up in high diplomatic circles but is also a second generation Holocaust survivor. Ethel has a secret love life with men half her age.

ADAM BERLINER (27 – 29 yr) *AL WEAVER*

Vida's older brother. Just graduated as psychiatrist. Always cheerful, always sees the funny side of a situation. Laughs all the time. Engaged to an ER nurse, he, however, breaks off the engagement after the death of his mother and comes out of the closet as gay.

LLION DAVIES (28 – 32 yr) *ALEX LANIPEKUN*

Half brother Arthur. Llion is mixed race and does not know his biological father. He lives full of anger and aggression. Thrown out of the army after an (unproven) assault charge. His only love are pigeons. After death of his stepfather George, he rejoins the army.

HELEN BERLINER (19 – 21 yr) *ELLIE KENDRICK*

Younger sister Vida. Hyper intelligent. Always disagrees. Dislikes men as much as she dislikes women but goes along with the family rituals and traditions. After death of her mother she enlists in the Israeli army as a Jet fighter pilot.

EMILY DAVIES (27 – 30 yr) *JESSICA GUNNING*

Oldest sister Arthur. She moved to Ireland with her alcoholic husband. She became an alcoholic herself but kicked the habit. However she's very accepting about her own and other people's flaws. She's full of generosity, kindness and understanding. And starts to drink again without regrets.

BRENDA DAVIES (20 – 23 yr) *REMY BEASLEY*

Arthur's youngest sister. Brenda is a loudmouth to hide her insecurity. She had little education and works as a cleaning lady. She has ambition to start her own nail polish business, but believes others are jealous and won't give her a chance.



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

Profile sketch VIDA

Vida grew up in a well-to-do Jewish family where tradition – and looming shadows from WWII in the background - forms the core of their world. Vida was smart and got good grades in school. But nothing less was expected. All her siblings are 'smart'. She doesn't stand out, except to some degree with her music, though her brother and sister are also good musicians.

It's never been outspoken, but Vida knows her parents don't have the best marriage in the world. She also knows it is particularly her mother who is dissatisfied. And her mother's dissatisfaction is projected on the children, they have to achieve something, have to be ambitious, have to stand out. Playing the cello is perhaps more her mother's ambition than Vida's.

Vida's characteristics

Vida is very honest in an ethical and moral way, but she's not honest about herself. She knows she lives the life others (particularly her parents) want. But she's not a rebel, she doesn't rock the boat. She hides the fact that her own sense of self and personal identity is unexplored through her impulsive behaviour, fun, passion, spontaneity and by pushing others into achieving something.

Vida is a fixer. She has a tendency to solve other people's problems and ignore her own (but it's not as conscious as it may sound now). She can be pushy but is certainly not bitchy.

If anything, she would love to lose the weight of imposed ambition. But as long as her mother dominates the lives of her children she can't shift that burden.

She's attracted to Arthur's seemingly harmonious personality, which she does not have herself, as she hides behind impulses. She tries to make him like her, which is wrong (but she only realises that later)

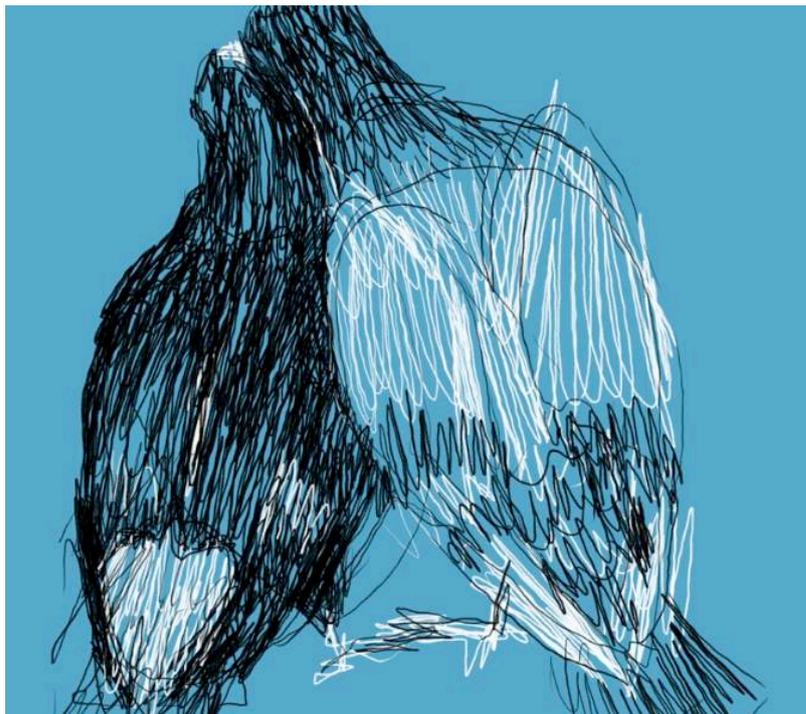
Why does she love Arthur

There is –in the beginning—physical attraction of course. He's a sexy guy. But sexual attraction alone wouldn't do it. She admires his tranquillity. His shyness is adorable. His simplicity (towards material needs) is admirable. His talent is mesmerising, especially as it is coupled with its almost accidental nature and lack of greater ambition or need for recognition.

Dilemma

Arthur may be her vessel to another port, but she wants to navigate herself. She wants him to be a copy of the ideal partner. He refuses to dance to her music.

Does she follow the ambitious path that her parents have designed for her? Or does she accept her own route and not make Arthur into a copy but let him be what he is and accept herself with her own flaws?





LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

Profile sketch ARTHUR

Arthur grew up in a working class Welsh family where the steel mill forms the core of their society.

Arthur was lucky to be smart and get good grades in school. Being smarter than his siblings also isolated him a bit in the family.

It's never been outspoken, but Llion was his mother's favourite, and Ron his father's. This doesn't mean that Arthur feels unloved but it does mean that to some degree he feels not special.

Making the little vignettes is his expression to feel special.

In his youth Llion was harsh and abusive (not sexually) towards their youngest sister Brenda, and Arthur was the only one who stood up for her.

Character Arthur

Arthur does not push himself to the foreground. But that doesn't mean he is in any way a pushover. He has a strong willed character and no need to impose it upon others (which in itself is a sign of a strong character). He can sometimes be stubborn.

He also can be very funny, not as a stand-up comedian for a large audience, but when he's one-on-one with someone he trusts. He's in his way balsy, not afraid, and has no fear of failure. However he has no desire to succeed in the eyes of the world, he has no specific ambition (not until he meets Vida)

When Arthur was young, nothing really mattered, his destination was the steel mill and a pre-destined social life. That prospect squashed his potential ambition.

He can't take compliments well (barely ever received those in his youth); if someone loves you that's the ultimate compliment. So accepting someone's love feels to him as betraying his background and upbringing.

He knows it is smarter to understand than being understood. He learned, in his youth, it doesn't matter to show off your smartness – life is what it is.

His daily behaviour

He tends to go along, not out of capitulation. He's not a show-off, he doesn't need to prove himself. In a way Arthur lives quite a harmonious life and can accept a lot. He can't imagine he can change, nor does he want to, until he meets Vida.

Why does he love Vida

There is –in the beginning— pure physical attraction of course. She's a sexy woman. But sexual attraction alone wouldn't do it. He admires her energy, her fun, her directness. She's warm hearted and lovable (beneath all the energy). She's sure of herself and that's intoxicating. And she has class.

She also has a touch of mystery – what is her secret? He never experienced meaning anything special to anyone, and she gives him that feeling. She is his ticket out of Wales and the steel mill, a ticket to go beyond 'life is what it is'.

Dilemma

Vida may awaken new, unknown, opportunities in Arthur, but the death of Ron ties him to Wales and pulls him back. He can't betray his family. Specifically after the death of his father, he intuitively knows only he can keep the family together.

Does he sacrifice his own life for the sake of the family? Or does he accept his own route and forgive himself for becoming his own person.

EMILY HARRIS

Co-Director LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

Emily was born and raised in New York.

She has a background in fine art and theatre, receiving a BA honours from the Glasgow School of Art. She formed and ran a successful theatre company in Scotland, before studying filmmaking at the London Film School.

Emily started professionally as a film editor, with several award winning feature documentaries to her name. These include BAFTA nominated 'Tovarisch, I am not Dead', 'Love Arranged', the Bertha BritDoc Award winner 'We the People'.

In 2012 she joined the Victoria and Albert Museum in London as Head of Digital Recording, Theatre and Performance Department. The department has since produced the first ever V&A cinema release of their ground breaking exhibition, 'David Bowie Is'.

Emily continues to produce films for the V&A, often as an integral part of international exhibitions, alongside her work as director/producer/editor with Indivision Films, the independent film company she runs together with her filmpartner/husband Yoni Bentovim. Their films have shown at a multitude of international festivals and won numerous awards. (for more info please visit www.indivisionfilms.com)

fiction credits

2015 Paragraph

2012 What Do We Have in Our Pockets? (short)

2009 Borges and I

2006 Three Towers (short)

2003 Machine (short)



on set LITW with co-director Ate de Jong and actor Johnny Flynn

EXCERPTS from note send by Emily Harris to Ate de Jong after their first meeting

For me a successful film (or cinematic experience) is all about the emotional journey. Full stop.

The films of my youth were not soul defining for me. I grew up around films like Risky Business and Top Gun. And I wasn't one of those lucky kids who had cinefile parents furthermore by the time home movie systems came around in any affordable way I was already at Art School in New York. So I've had to cull the good stuff myself later in life.

Luckily New York had some really cool cinemas playing older films that I could rediscover. I remember as a teenager seeing a double bill of 'Five Easy Pieces' and 'If' which sort of blew my mind, At the time I was also reading a lot of Kierkegaard and was in love with the absurdists like Ionesco, and the Russians such as Gogol. So I think I was looking for something else in cinema that I hadn't found yet.

My first absolute soul-shaking moment in the cinema when all the elements seamlessly converged to an absolute emotional experience was when I sat the entire day and saw Satirjit Ray's Apu Trilogy in one go.

Directors I discovered later and appreciate are Tarkovski, Antonioni, Bresson ... you know, history of cinema 101!

I also enjoy and am deeply influenced by filmmakers such as Aki Kiarosmaki, Roy Andersson, Bela Tarr, some Iranian Cinema such as older Abbas Kiarostami... I could go on but you probably get the idea.

The directors I love now, who I truly think are great are Lukas Moodyson, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, and Andrey Zvyagintsev. And recent films/directors and perhaps more popular ones that I rate very highly are David Fincher (Gone Girl is great), Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (Birdman is fantastic!), Linlater (loved Boyhood) .

When I first read LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER somehow the films/filmmakers that came into my head were Cassavetes - especially Minnie and Moskowitz, Nurse Betty (don't ask me why, it just did!), Sofia Coppola, Lukas Moodyson, some Woody Allen (Husbands and Wives, Annie Hall), , Altman, Silver Linings Playbook and Punch Drunk Love.

We have, I think, a unique opportunity to make a film that both skirts a theme that may appeal to a cinema loving audience, and will have a visual distinctive style. We won't distance ourselves (or the audience) we don't become cold observers, but I do want to offer the viewers an active possibility to choose their own interpretation within the frame – and this means longer takes, more focus on people with less intercutting.

It'll be an exiting journey with hopefully a provocative cinema experience.

ATE DE JONG

Director, writer and producer

Ate de Jong was born in 1953. He studied at the Filmacademy of Amsterdam from 1970 to 1974. He also studied philosophy. From 1976 to 1986 he directed 6 feature films in The Netherlands including *A Flight of Rainbirds*, *Burning Love* and *Shadow of Victory*.

In 1986 Ate de Jong moved to Hollywood. His first directing assignment was an episode of *Miami Vice* (starring Don Johnson, Philip Michael Thomas, James Brown and Chris Rock) He directed two US feature films: *Highway to Hell* (starring Chad Lowe, Kristy Swanson, Gilbert Gottfried and Ben Stiller) and *Drop Dead Fred* (starring Rik Mayall, Phoebe Cates, Carrie Fisher, Marsha Mason and Bridget Fonda). Since 1994 he has been working out of London. Most notably he directed the European co-production *All Men Are Mortal* (starring Stephen Rea, Irene Jacob, Chiara Mastroianni and Marianne Saegebrecht) based on the book of Simone de Beauvoir and the sexy thriller *Fogbound* (starring Luke Perry and Ben Daniels). He produced international pictures *Left Luggage* (Isabella Rossellini and Maximilian Schell) *The Discovery Of Heaven* (Stephen Fry) and *Enigma*, the Mick Jagger produced, Michael Apted directed WWII drama (starring Kate Winslet).

As of 2008 Ate de Jong lives in Amsterdam again. He became Intendant at the Dutch Filmfund and acting director of The Binger Filmlab. From sept 2010 onwards Ate returned to producing and directing, and made 3 features since. The last being UK movie *Love Is Thicker Than Water*, co-directing with Emily Harris, starring Lydia Wilson and Johnny Flynn.

Credits as (writer) director (selection):

Love Is Thicker Than Water (UK-2015)

Deadly Virtues: Love. Honour. Obey. (UK-2014)

The Bombardment (2012)

Fogbound (2002) (UK-Holland)

Die Strassen von Berlin (1998) (TV MOW Germany)

Eine Kleine Nachtmerrrie (1996) (TV mini series Holland)

Wenn Ich Night Mehr Lebe (1996) (TV MOW Germany)

All Men are Mortal (1995) (UK-Hol-France)

Todliche Luegen (1993) (TV MOW Germany)

Drop Dead Fred (1991) (USA)

Highway to Hell (1989) (USA)

Miami Vice (1987) (US TV series)

Shadow of Victory (1986)

Burning Love (1983) *A Flight of Rainbirds* (1981)

The Inheritance (1978) *Blindspot* (1977)

Every Day A Holliday (1976)

Credits as (co) producer:

Love Is Thicker Than Water (2015)

Deadly Virtues (2013)

The Blitz (2012)

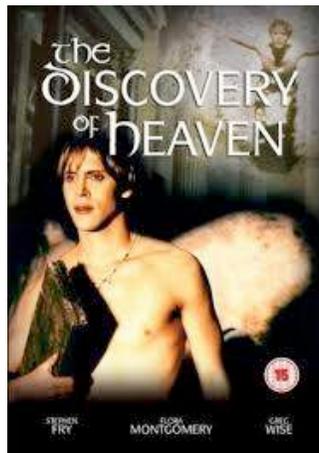
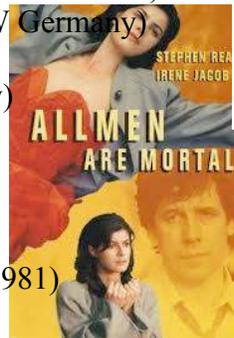
Summer Heat (2008)

Fogbound (2002)

The Discovery Of Heaven (2001)

Enigma (2000)

Left Luggage (1998)



EXCERPTS from note send by Ate de Jong to Emily Harris after their first meeting

I've always felt that we always prefer the films we saw in our formative years. In my case when I went to the film academy at the age of 17 – with no knowledge of film whatsoever—I was blown away by films of Visconti (*The Damned*), Pasolini (*Decamerone*) and Lubitsch (*To Be Or Not To Be*), soon to be followed by the 'young' Americans such as *Easy Rider*, *Midnight Cowboy*, or Mike Nichols *Carnal Knowledge*. Kubrick was up there too, though he wasn't obviously emotional, you felt –at least I did—that his perfection showed that emotion was the prisoner of life as you can see in *Barry Lyndon*.

In those early years The Nouvelle Vague never got me excited –apart from a few early Godard's because they were funny—but of course that wasn't an opinion one could ever voice amidst all my fellow –and older—students. They were all so much smarter and knowledgeable and laughed at my stupidity and ignorance (it's the best thing that ever could happen, but that's only in hindsight)

I suppose what attracts me in films is very simple: it has to show human truth. Human truth lies in behaviour and particularly in surprising behaviour in the face of adversary – people who stand up for their beliefs, or who have no morals at all, or who self-sacrifice their happiness for a bigger goal. The desire to communicate my own truth is nothing more than the desire to communicate my convictions about human behaviour. I believe in acceptance and forgiveness.

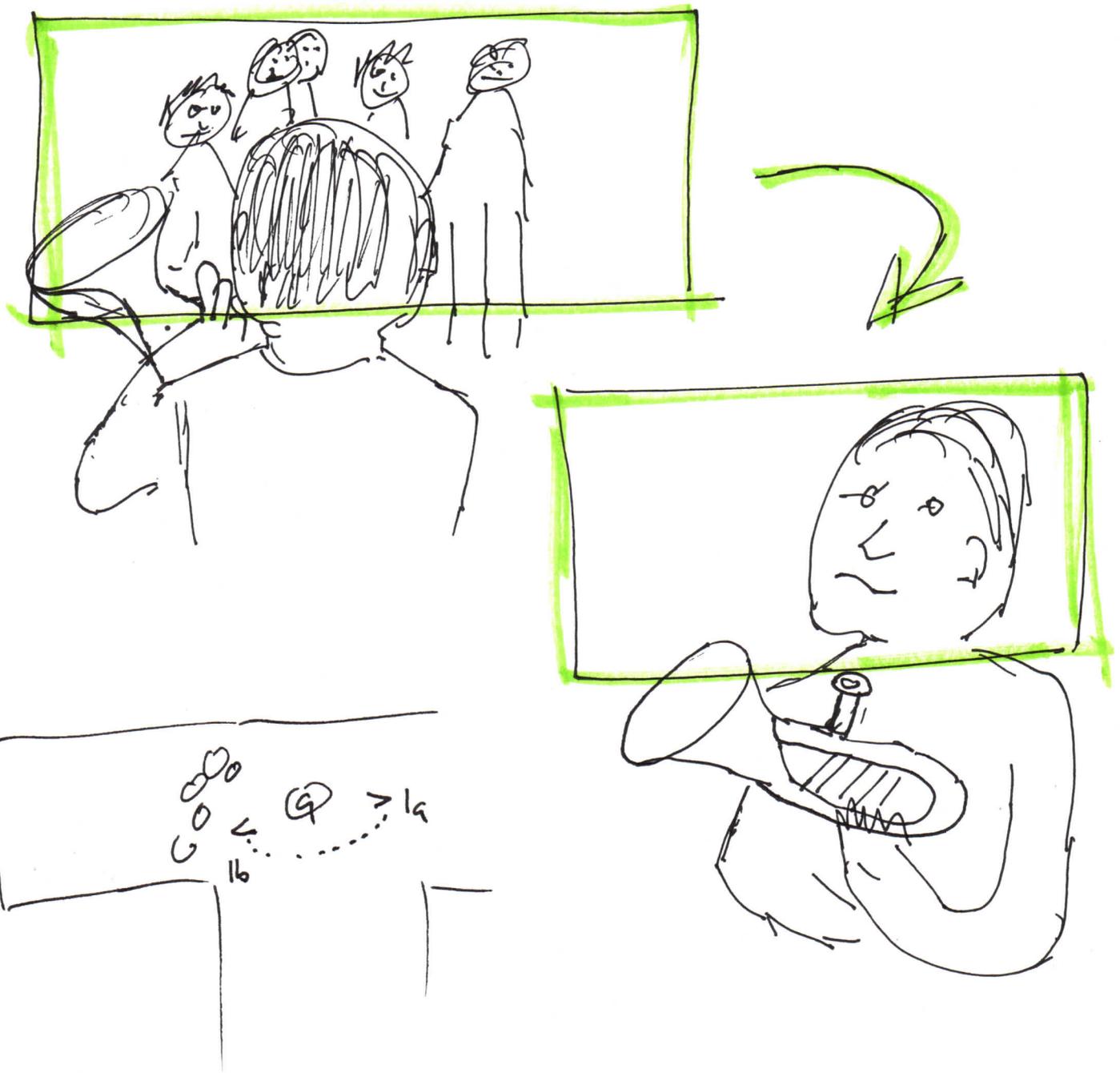
Camera is undeniably linked to cinema. There is –for me—a difference between film and cinema. Film is telling a story where the shots register the action in an efficient way and the story is simply and efficiently conveyed to the audience. Cinema is telling the story where the shots and the way the camera moves (or not moves) reveals unknown secrets to the audience, often subconscious, nothing to do with the characters, nothing to do with the narrative, all to do with reflecting a view of the world.

Cinema is not easy. When you make 'special' shots, weird angles, they draw attention to themselves, they can be pretentious, and destroy the narrative and distract from the believability of the characters. The aim is to find a great cinematic approach without going overboard – and of course we'll discuss that a lot more. I purposely won't elaborate as I think it's better to not create boundaries upfront. The intriguing quality for us to join forces is to break through those boundaries.

Sc 41 Rooftop

8 Med (bit low up)

Back head George holding/playing tuba
Others face him (we see them around him)
Slow move around George to face him.



Sc 43 Rooftop

1 Medium

foreground kids clapping hands

further down Levi + Ethel dancing

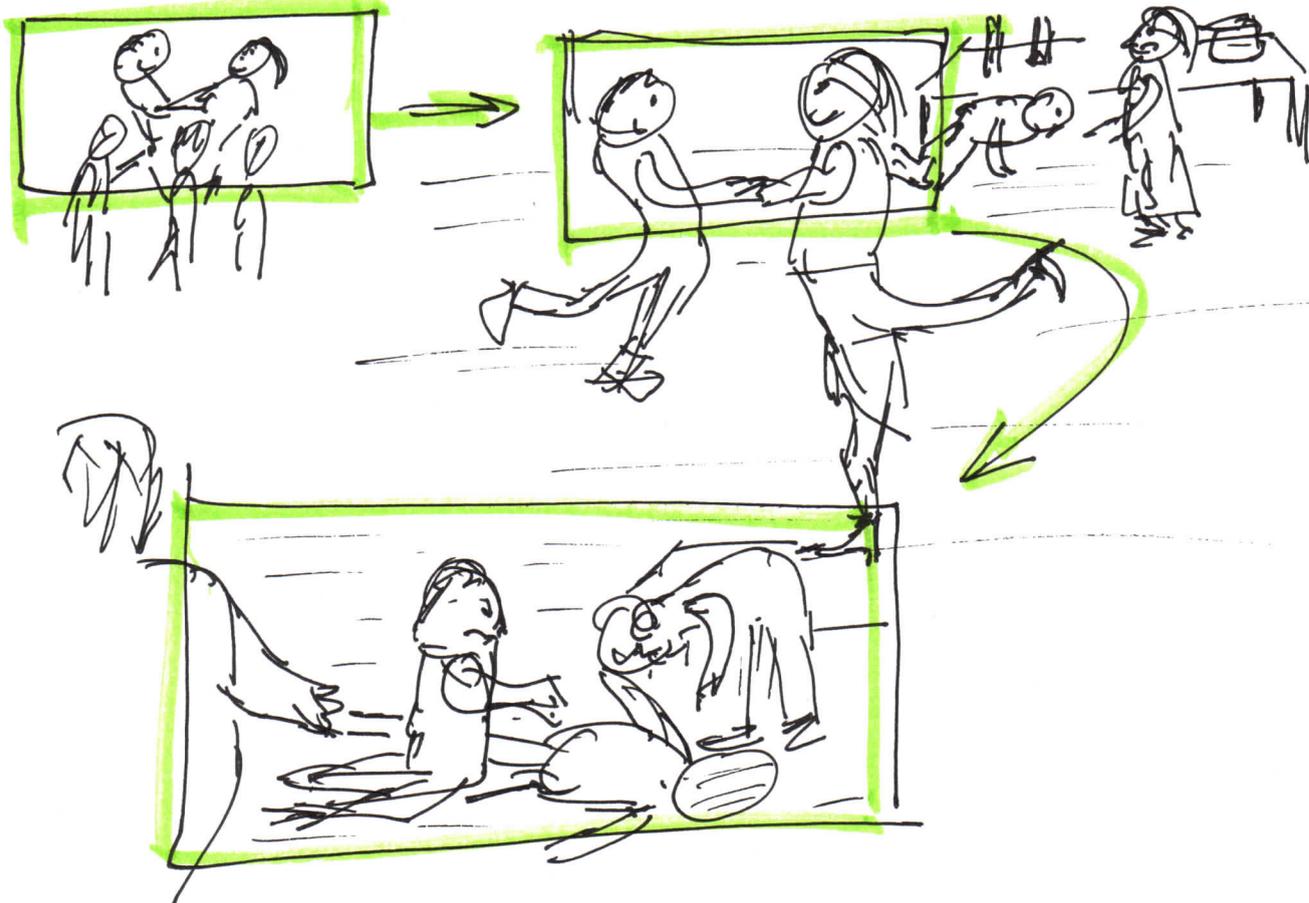
further behind them George + Sara at table

Cam moves towards Levi + Ethel

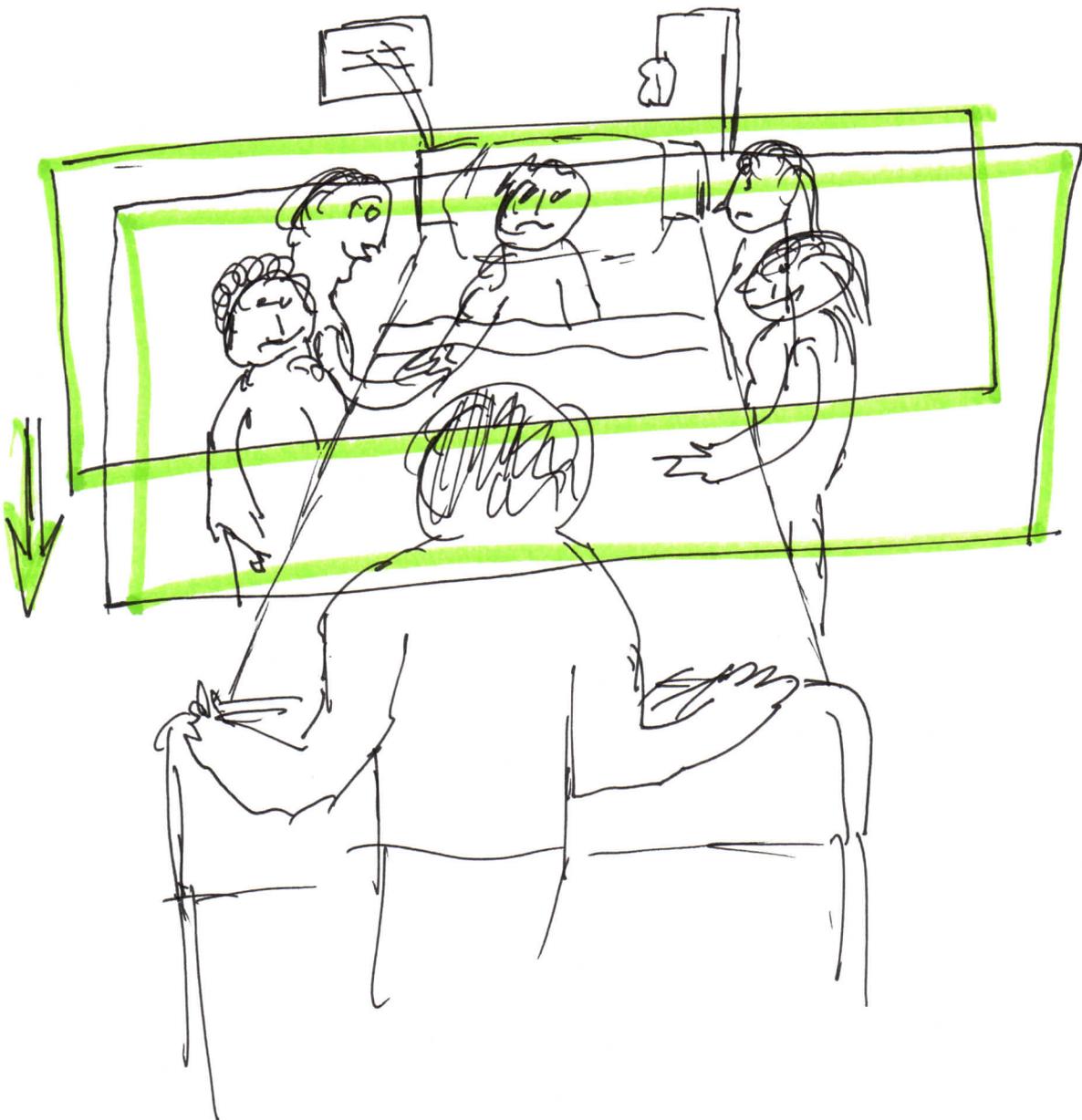
PANS with them.

one point in background George falls down
but no focus on it, Cam follows Ethel + Levi
still dancing

then pan (after scream) to George on ground
others run in (or pan to orange? on floor left peeled)



- 1 Medium wide high
George in bed, two sides others close
one side Sara + Lior, other Emily + Brendz
just top of Arthur at end of bed.
DIP down back of Arthur covers George
but family on side remains.





LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

credits lead cast & crew

LEAD CAST

LYDIA WILSON -- Vida Berliner
JOHNNY FLYNN -- Arthur Davies
HENRY GOODMAN -- Levi Berliner
JULIET STEVENSON -- Ethel Berliner
AL WEAVER -- Adam Berliner
ALEX LANIPEKUN -- Llion Davies
JESSICA GUNNING -- Emily Davies
ELLIE KENDRICK -- Helen Berliner
SHARON MORGAN -- Sara Davies
ROBERT BLYTHE -- George Davies
REMY BEASLEY -- Brenda Davies

CREW

directors -- EMILY HARRIS & ATE DE JONG
writer -- ATE DE JONG
casting -- LUCY RANDS
dop -- ZORAN VELJKOVIC
grading -- VICTOR RIVA
production designer -- CHARLOTTE PEARSON
wardrobe -- SAM PERRY
sound design -- ROB PRYNNE
rerecording mixer -- MARKUS MOLL
animation -- NATE MILTON
editor -- ANTONIO RIBEIRO
additional music composer -- FONS MERKIES
music supervisor -- JOHNNY FLYNN
line producer -- LARA DORÉE
co-executive producers -- KATYA GILLER, ELLIOT GROVE
executive producer -- JENNIFER DARLING
executive producers -- ANDREA SCARSO, MAX BENITZ
co-producer -- EMILY HARRIS
UK producers -- MATT BARBER & MIKE DICKMAN
producer -- ATE DE JONG



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

EPK interviews

Please note; original interviews contain much more material and can be re-edited if longer segments are required.

*Below follows a list of **edited** clips.*

PROMO REEL

Length 3'43"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/132922618>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRJZAiaallo&list=PLFFk8DMcTIRWXhvgSOQZejCagPen1-6g4>

SONG CLIP MARIKA HACKMAN – CINNAMON

Length 1'49"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/170688178>

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/TCQ4spUkSRI>

EPK interview

Directors Emily Harris & Ate de Jong

Length 4'59"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/134355657>

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MSVAmr8P20>

EPK interview

Director Emily Harris

Length 2'57"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/137430627>

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/DsmFx4TONnA>

EPK interview
Director Ate de Jong
Length 4'05"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/137430626>
YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/BghZuFryAto>

EPK interview
Actor Johnny Flynn (Arthur Davies)
Length 4'42"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/133236866>
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXVtk-kCcMU>

EPK interview
Actor Lydia Wilson (Vida Berliner)
Length 4'21"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/133243477>
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIU44IQxpdY>

EPK interview
Actor Al Weaver (Adam Berliner)
Length 4'39"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/137028826>
YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/heUGvXRIAcU>

EPK interview
Actor Ellie Kendrick (Helen Berliner)
Length 4'44"
Link: <https://vimeo.com/135880397>
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oJ0krcAjIs>

EPK interview
Actor Jessica Gunning (Emily Davies)
Length 3'29"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/135880396>
YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8646FOwgv_c

EPK interview
Actor Alex Lanipekun (Llion Davies)
Length 4'14"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/134999488>
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ44lfRuqJQ>

EPK interview
Actor Remy Beasley (Brenda Davies)
Length 4'49"
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/133294721>
YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQenUwVys9E>

EPK interview

Actor Juliet Stevenson (Ethel Berliner)

Length 3'27"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/133234176>

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HN2YNvyMD3M>

EPK interview

Actor Henry Goodman (Levi Berliner)

Length 2'42"

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/132922617>

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZC53KNy3bc>



LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER

Songs

NICK MULVEY	Fever to the Form
NICK MULVEY	Don't wanna go home
MARIKA HACKMAN	Cinnamon
MARIKA HACKMAN	Itchy Teeth
LAURA MARLING	Night Terror
JOHNNY FLYNN	Hello, Hello
ISH MARQUEZ	Gin is not my friend
ISAAC GRACIE	Last Words
SWEET BAABOO	Let's go swimming wild
HOLLY HOLDEN	To Lose
HOLLY HOLDEN	El Impulso
HOLLY HOLDEN	Mellow Drama
LULU & LAMPSHADES	Something new
LULU & LAMPSHADES	Demons
LULU & LAMPSHADES	Cups (When I'm Gone)



In a desert of bloated and boring action movies here comes a joyful, funny, rich, rewarding and utterly compelling picture that reminds you what great cinema can do. It can make a family infinitely more cinematic and exciting than a squadron of flying superheroes. LOVE IS THICKER THAN WATER gives us the treat of acting that is beautifully on point and a cast of characters that live with you for long after the lights come up. Matchless film-making and story-telling.

And I mean it! It's wonderful Ate – congratulations

xxx

Stephen Fry

