

The Apple Tree

PRODUCTION NOTES:

Writer/Director:	Frances Edmond
Producer:	Jane Sherning Warren
Production Company:	<i>Falling Sparrow Films</i>
Country of Production:	New Zealand
Date of Completion:	July 2016
Shooting Format	Canon 5D Mk111
Screening Format	DCP
Duration	14.30
Genre	Drama

LOGLINE:

An unexpected encounter propels a grieving mother into confronting the past.

ONE LINER:

When a grieving mother's estranged sister knocks on her door, she is forced to confront the truth about her beloved son.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

A grieving mother's estranged sister arrives unexpectedly on her doorstep. Blaming her sister for revealing the secret of the boy's birth, thus driving him to his death, she slams the door in her face. However, the boy himself is a shadowy presence who plays his part in bringing a reconciliation between the sisters.

SYNOPSIS:

A grieving mother can't escape the past and is locked in grief for the loss of her son. When her estranged sister arrives unexpectedly on her doorstep, she slams the door in her face. However, her sister's arrival takes them both back to the time of the boy's tragic death in a car accident and the fateful events that led to it. Another shadowy presence is at work too and it is time for change. While the mother blames her sister for revealing the secret of the boy's birth and thus driving him to his death, the boy himself, from beyond the grave, plays a part in bringing the two sisters together. And the sister's revelation of what really happened brings an emotional reconciliation between them, as well as peace for the spirit of the boy.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

The Apple Tree is a contemporary fable, a short, dramatic film addressing issues of adoption, family secrets and their consequences. It is a story of healing broken relationships with the aid of an element of magic.

The Apple Tree is about the destructive power of family secrets and that the consequences of not telling the truth can be disastrous. When Darren realises the truth about his birth, he is devastated by the lies he has been told and takes to his car with tragic consequences. Beth, unable to face the reality of having not told him herself, blames Lesley for telling him. In fact, neither of them has told Darren the truth. I have used the idea that a 'force for change' can be seen as a physical manifestation of a psychological process: ie Darren, although dead, is present in the film as a part of Beth and Lesley, always in their minds. He represents their desire for connection, for forgiveness, the need for family, love and redemption. Once that goal is achieved between the sisters, he can be released in their minds to become a precious memory rather than a source of terrible grief and loss. I have also used images – the apple tree, the apple itself – as metaphor for the idea of death and regeneration.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY:

Frances trained as an actor at Toi Whakaari/New Zealand Drama School. After a successful fifteen-year acting career, Frances branched out into writing. *The Apple Tree* is Frances' 5th short film although her first as Director. Her first short as a screenwriter, *The Beach*, was selected for competition at Cannes while her most recent short as a screenwriter, *Eeling*, was based on an award-winning screenplay. Frances has a number of feature films in development. Currently, a new edition of her mother, poet Lauris Edmond's works, edited by Frances and a colleague, is about to be published. Frances works across disciplines being involved in film, literature and theatre.

CREDITS:

Writer/Director	Frances Edmond
Producer	Jane Sherning Warren
Co-Producer	Frances Edmond
Executive Producer	Christina Milligan
Director of Photography	Simon Raby
Editor	Roger Grant
Sound Designer	John McKay
Composer	John Gibson

Cast:

Beth	Catherine Downes
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Lesley
Darren
Neighbour

Darien Takle
Oscar Wilson
Bruce Phillips

Crew:

Writer/Director
Producer:
Director of Photography
Sound Recordist
Sound Designer
Editor
Composer
Musicians

Frances Edmond
Jane Sherning Warren
Simon Raby
Denby Strange
John McKay
Roger Grant
John Gibson
John Gibson – Piano
Matt Tui – Cello

Production Manager
1st Assistant Director
Art Department
Hair/Makeup
Wardrobe
Camera Assistant/Data
Lighting Assistant
Stills

Ramon de Trincheria
Tony Forster
Rick Cave
Celeste Strewé
Rachel Elspeth-Elder
Megan Potter
Andrew Rothville
Lane Worrall

Mastering
Digital Colourist
Editing

RPM Pictures
Peter Barrett
Conbrio Media Ltd

The Apple Tree is an independently funded short film, written specifically for the cast and shot on Waiheke Island where the Writer/Director and key cast live.

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Dr Tess Edmond
The Kraus Whanau
The Todd Trust

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