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# THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST

**BY  
NICOLETTE  
KREBITZ**

**THE MATCH FACTORY**

# THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST



## SYNOPSIS THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST BY NICOLETTE KREBITZ

A man, a woman, two children: a family. He is a musician. She used to be one until the children came. One day, Marie discovers that not far from where they live, her husband Thomas has set up a second life for himself, a second home with a second family. Marie falls into shock, slowly sinking into her pain by the end of the day. Finally, she is driven by her desperate need for consolation and explanations to seek Thomas at his night concert in an old castle, where there is a masked ball. From then on, she embarks on an emotional journey that will lead her to make an unexpected decision.

Some disasters come quietly, slowly creeping up from behind, hitting without warning, and every attempt to survive them, to explain or understand them is like quick sand. It only leads deeper into despair. This is the story of a woman whose seemingly harmonious world falls apart within seconds, leaving behind sharp-edged shards of a life that was lived in denial, and the question of how strong a wife and mother is supposed to be and how weak she is allowed to be.

THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST is directed by award-winning actress Nicolette Krebitz and is the director's second feature film after JEANS. Nina Hoss and Devid Striesow, two of the top class German actors today, have taken on the task of interpreting this powerful tour de force. THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST is produced by Tom Tykwer (THE PERFUME, RUN LOLA RUN).

## CAST

Marie

**NINA HOSS**

Thomas

**DEVID STRIESOW**

Anna

**FRANZISKA PETRI**

Jonathan

**MARC HOSEMANN**

Mietzi

**MONICA BLEIBTREU**

Helmut

**OTTO SANDER**

**TECHNICAL DATA  
FORMAT**

35 mm / 1:1,85 / Colour

Dolby SRD

**LENGTH**

86 mins

**ORIGINAL LANGUAGE**

German

**SUBTITLES**

English

# DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

The story of a father who has two families and both know nothing of each other is one that I have come across over and over again. Yet, the impact of this situation on the mother was either simply not mentioned, or she was depicted as a silent martyr, forever waiting. I was interested in what happens to a woman who has committed her life as a mother and wife to a man, only to discover that she is not the only one; that she, so to speak, exists in duplicate.

The retrospective scenes in which Marie and Thomas argue and talk on an empty neutral stage are Marie's 'memories'. She describes promises that were made in their marriage, negotiations that had taken place. As is often the case with memories, their faces are transformed when the beliefs of the one remembering change. When the point is about 'what was actually said?', it is not about the question of "we were standing in this piazza in Rome and you said this and that... right or wrong?" Rather it is about: "You did say this and that, but now that I know your secret, I can also remember that you kept your eyes to the ground when you said it." It is about the memories of words that were spoken and feelings that were triggered but they either went unnoticed or were simply repressed, because one did not want to see. The circumstances themselves are irrelevant. The small signs, the body language were what mattered. An empty stage is the best place to reveal them.

## THOMAS & MARIE

I think Thomas is very much occupied with himself, his career, his profession and how others see him. I do actually believe that he had always intended to say something, but "it" became too big with time. Clearly afraid, clearly spineless, but he is also definitely quite hardworking. It was important for us that in the end he too is not allowed to arrive at a state of true happiness. Despite everything, for me he remains a human being and not a monster.

Marie is beautiful, clever, and funny – but it does not matter. She was good at her job and she gave it up. She was lonely and wanted a family. Now she is a lonely woman. She did not pick a man who could "heal" her of her fears and anxieties. She is, as many mothers are, caught up in trying to manage everything. Her personal needs are more often than not left behind. When she finds out about her husband's second life, all the feelings buried inside her begin to catch up with her. They become larger than her. Her behavior is extreme making it easy for us to learn from her and this makes her a hero.

## NINA HOSS

"Marie" walks naked through the end of the film. It was extremely important for me to have an actress who can remain very "human", even when she is naked. Nina possesses the great talent of being able to truly abandon herself, to become totally vulnerable and weak and yet never to lose her dignity, not for a single moment. Only a real woman can do this. There are not so many of them out there and I feel very lucky that she wanted to play the role.





## **NICOLETTE KREBITZ** DIRECTOR AND SCRIPTWRITER

Nicolette Krebitz is in a class of her own. Born in Berlin in 1972, she has been in front of the camera since 1982, when during a casting, to which her sister had actually been invited, she got the main role in a children's movie. Since then, Nicolette Krebitz has performed in various TV productions, in theater, had her own band, and composed together with actresses Jasmin Tabatabai and Katja Riemann the soundtrack to the road movie **BANDITS**. For this film she received in 1995, at the age of 23, her second Adolf Grimme Award, as well as a Golden Record (1998) and the Bavarian Film Award (for Best Music). Since 2001, Nicolette Krebitz has produced and also directed her own films. **THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST** is her second feature film after her directorial debut with **JEANS**.

**FILMOGRAPHY AS A DIRECTOR:** 2007 **THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST** /// 2007 **EPIGENETIK** (short film, in competition at the Kunst Film Biennale 2007) /// 2002 **MON CHERIE** (short film in the 99EuroFilms collection) /// 2001 **JEANS**



# TOM TYKWER PRODUCER

Tom Tykwer founded the production company X Filme Creative Pool with Stefan Arndt, Wolfgang Becker and Dani Levy in 1994. Tykwer became known as a director for his film *RUN LOLA RUN* (1998), which also became an international success for X Filme. In Germany, the film was the biggest hit of the year. The film achieved worldwide spectacular results. Taking in seven million dollars at the box office alone in the USA, it became one of the highest grossing foreign films ever to be screened in US cinemas. Today Tom Tykwer works as a director and a producer. His most elaborate project to date, *THE PERFUME* with Dustin Hoffman, was his second English language film after *HEAVEN*.

**FILMOGRAPHY AS A PRODUCER:** 2007 *THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST* /// 2006 *A FRIEND OF MINE* (dir. Sebastian Schipper) /// 2004 *SOUNDLESS* (dir. Mennan Yapo) /// 1999 *GIGANTIC* (dir. Sebastian Schipper)



# BELLA HALBEN CINEMATOGRAPHER

*THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST* is the second film project Bella Halben has worked on with Nicolette Krebitz after *JEANS* (2001). After completing her studies in Advertising Photography, the “light painter” (as she is sometimes referred to by the press) began in 1980 to gather her first experience as a camera assistant in the field of documentary film, and worked as a freelance camera assistant mostly in Advertising. Since 1994, she has been working as a freelance cinematographer and director. In 2006, she received the Adolf Grimme Award in Gold for Cinematography for the film *HIERANKL* (dir. Hans Steinbichler).

**SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:** 2007 *THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST* /// 2005 *WINTER JOURNEY* (dir. Hans Steinbichler) /// 2004 *IN ANOTHER LEAGUE* (dir. Buket Alakus) /// 2003 *THE DEPTH OF SPACE* (dir. Gil Mehmert) /// 2002 *HIERANKL* (dir. Hans Steinbichler) /// 2001 *BAADER* (dir. Christopher Roth) – with Jutta Pohlmann /// 2001 *JEANS* (dir. Nicolette Krebitz) /// 1998 *CANDY* (dir. Christopher Roth)

# CREW

DIRECTOR AND SCRIPTWRITER

**NICOLETTE KREBITZ**

PRODUCER

**TOM TYKWER**

CINEMATOGRAPHER

**BELLA HALBEN**

EDITOR

**SARA SCHILDE**

ART DIRECTOR

**CHRISTEL REHM,  
SYLVESTER KOZIOLEK**

SOUND

**MARTIN MÜLLER**

MUSIC BY

**FETISCH,  
WHITEST BOY ALIVE  
AND OTHERS**

A PRODUCTION OF

**X FILME**

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH

**NDR (DORIS HEINZE)**



## **NINA HOSS** AS MARIE

Nina Hoss's numerous acting awards include the Silver Bear at the 2007 Berlin International Film Festival for **YELLA**, the Best Actress Award at the 2006 Bavarian Film Awards for **THE WHITE MASSAI**, the Adolf Grimme Award in 2005 for **WOLFSBURG** and in 2003 for **TOTER MANN – SOMETHING TO REMIND ME**, and Best Actress at the 1999 Montreal World Film Festival for **THE VOLCANO**. Nina was born in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1975. At age seven, she was already performing in radio plays, and at 14, she was in her first theater production. She studied at Berlin's prestigious Ernst Busch School of Performing Arts (HFS). Her breakthrough performance came in Bernd Eichinger's 1996 TV movie **A GIRL CALLED ROSEMARY**.

**SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:** 2007 **THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST** /// 2007 **YELLA** (dir. Christian Petzold) /// 2006 **ELEMENTARY PARTICLES** aka **ATOMISED** (dir. Oskar Roehler) /// 2005 **THE WHITE MASSAI** (dir. Hermine Huntgeburth) /// 2003 **WOLFSBURG** (dir. Christian Petzold) /// 2002 **EPSTEIN'S NIGHT** (dir. Urs Egger) /// 2002 **NAKED** (dir. Doris Dörrie) /// 1999 **THE VOLCANO** (dir. Ottokar Runze) /// 1996 **A GIRL CALLED ROSEMARY** (dir. Bernd Eichinger) – TV



## **DEVID STRIESOW** AS THOMAS

Born in 1973, Devid studied at Berlin's prestigious Ernst Busch School of Performing Arts (HFS). He was named Best Actor by the German Film Critics Association in 2003 to honor his performance as the bullying older brother Max in **BUNGALOW**, as well as for his role of Ingo, the ambitious mattress salesman, in **DISTANT LIGHTS**. Since 1999, he has regularly performed in theater at the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg and Düsseldorf. In 2004, he won the "Theater Heute" Award and the "Alfred Kerr" Prize for his theater work.

**SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:** 2007 **THE HEART IS A DARK FOREST** /// 2007 **YELLA** (dir. Christian Petzold) /// 2007 **THE COUNTERFEITERS** (dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky) /// 2006 **EDEN** (dir. Michael Hofmann) /// 2006 **THE RED COCKATOO** (dir. Dominik Graf) /// 2004 **DOWNFALL** (dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel) /// 2004 **BEFORE THE FALL** /// 2004 **NAPOLA** (dir. Dennis Gansel) /// 2003 **DISTANT LIGHTS** (dir. Hans-Christian Schmid) /// 2003 **THEY'VE GOT KNUT** (dir. Stefan Krohmer) /// 2002 **BUNGALOW** (dir. Ulrich Köhler) /// 2000 **COLD IS THE EVENING BREEZE** (dir. Rainer Kaufmann)

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