

Under The Apple Tree (a badtime story)

Written and directed by Erik van Schaaik

Short film • 18 min 25 sec • Stop-motion Animation, Comedy, Horror • Age 9+

Completed September 2015

Logline

A deceased farmer is buried by his hated brother, the vicar. Worms inhabit the corpse, discovering they've full control over it. The dead farmer awakens...

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/126910252>

Official website: <http://www.undertheappletree-movie.com>

Social media: <http://www.facebook.com/undertheappletree.movie>

Technical Details

Language: English

Subtitles: EN, ES, NL, FR

Picture format: Color

Aspect ratio: 1.78 (16x9 VIDEO)

Exhibition format: DCP / .MOV (Quicktime), ProRes, H264

Awards and nominations

- Golden Calf Best Short Film, Netherlands Film Festival 2015, Utrecht
- Festival Favourite, Netherlands Film Festival 2015, Utrecht
- Third prize Animfest Athens 2016
- First prize Animated Fantasy, Dragon Con Independent Short Film Festival Atlanta 2016
- First prize Professional Film, Festival Stop Motion Montréal 2016
- Semi Finalist, Festival Internacional de Cortometrajes de Cine de Horror y Bizarro, Mexico
- First prize Best Animated Short, Atlanta Horror Film Festival 2016
- First prize Best Director, Eerie Horror Film Festival 2016
- First prize Best Short, Eerie Horror Film Festival 2016
- First prize Best Short, New York City Horror Film Festival 2016
- First prize Animation Marathon 2016, Greece
- First prize Best Stop-Animated Short at South African Horrorfest 2016
- Best Horror at U-Horror Fest, Los Angeles, USA 2017
- Best Animated Short, British Animation Film Festival 2017
- Melies d'Argent, Grossmann Fantastic Film and Wine Festival 2017
- Semi Finalist, Highway 61 Film Festival 2017
- Best Horror/Sci-fi Short, Queen City Film Festival, USA 2017
- Best Animated Film, Midwest Horror Fest, USA 2017
- Best Animated Film, Anatomy Crime, Greece 2017

Synopsis (short)

A deceased farmer is buried by his hated brother, the vicar. Worms inhabit the corpse, discovering they've full control over it. The dead farmer awakens...

Synopsis (long)

Two brothers, an apple farmer and a priest, live next to each other as neighbors. Unfortunately, they can't get along very well. The priest is fed up with his peasant brother and his ugly apple orchard, dropping thousands of rotten apples in his neat little graveyard. The farmer is a gawky fellow, drunk on homemade cider, and deeply unhappy. The apple trees are rotten and the apples full of worms. He is bankrupt, desperate and loathed upon by his heartless brother. One stormy night the farmer hangs himself from the branch of one of his apple trees. At that very moment we meet Aber, a homeless worm, desperately seeking for shelter from the rain and thunder. All apples appear to be occupied by worms. Nobody let's him in, not even his brother Crombie. Suddenly Aber discovers the dead farmer, dangling between the branches like a huge apple. Delighted with his new, spacious house Aber crawls inside the corpse. Soon Aber discovers he has full control over the farmer's dead body, just by shouting commands. A movable house, great fun! After some practice Aber yells 'Hands up!' and the hands of the dead farmer shoot up from the grave...

Strolling around the churchyard in his 'mobile home' Aber discovers the priest has cut down all apple trees. He is shocked, and starts searching for his family: The dead farmer comes knocking on the priests door, and horrifyingly funny events unfold.

The secret of zombiedom. Now you know.
Us worms control the brain of the dead.
And when you're old and you have to go,
we are the voice inside your head...

Erik van Schaaik

Writer/director Erik van Schaaik has been fascinated by horror stories from an early age. His love of thunderstorms, fluttering curtains and long dark corridors has brought him to the south of Belgium, where he lived in a castle and started writing 'Under The Apple Tree'. In the vein of Poe, Wilde and Dahl, it's an amusing little horror fable that satirically sketches the similarities between man and worm, resulting in the unification of the two: the walking dead.

Apple Tree is a movie full of contradictions: Bizarre but touching. Story about animals but human drama. Staged as a feature film but dialogue in rhyme. It's all about the inner world, literally and figuratively.

'I enjoy mist, rain, thunderstorms, cold and mud. From a comfortable, warm couch that is, with beer and pretzels. It's a challenge to have your puppets walk through fog or rain, soaking wet and covered in mud. These are all things that are extremely difficult to animate in stop-motion. But this is exactly what we are going to do! Animators will hate me for it, but this is going to be a deliciously dirty, wet movie.' (Erik)

After creating multiple television series for children and three award winning animated short films [Vent](#), [The Phantom Of The Cinema](#) and [Pecker](#), Erik is currently working on the feature length animated film Hieronymus.

Erik collaborates closely with his wife Anita van Dalen, co-producer and marketing director for Under The Apple Tree.

www.erikvanschaaik.com

Pedri Animation

A studio specializing in Stop motion animation. Founders Peter Mansfelt and Paul Mathot, together with freelance specialists, work to create high quality productions and to educate new talent.

For more than a decade Pedri Animation has been delivering high quality animation for commercials, children series, leaders, corporate productions and short films, broadcasted worldwide. Two well-known examples are the children series 'Miffy and Friends' and 'Animal Shelf.'

www.pedri-animation.com

Beast Animation

Beast Animation is an animation / production company specialized in stop motion animation. They are responsible for the (co) productions of all types of animations, series and commercials, entirely or partially carried out in stop motion.

www.beastanimation.be

Racoon

Under The Apple Tree features the song 'Fun We Had' from the famous Dutch band Racoon.

Racoon is well known for hits such as Love You More (2005), No Mercy (2011) and Oceaan (2012). The music and lyrics - reminiscing about all the fun we had with people that already passed away - fit beautifully with the story and provides the movie with an upbeat but melancholic ending.

Score composer Miguel Boelens is also saxophone player in Racoon.

Funders

This movie is supported by

Netherlands Film Fund

Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF)

Productiefonds Oost Nederland

In addition crowdfunding from [Cinecrowd](#) supported Under The Apple Tree generously.

Cast & Credits

writer, director, editor - Erik van Schaaik

producers - Peter Mansfelt, Paul Mathot

executive producers - Thomas Hietbrink, Anita van Dalen, Koen Vermaanen

co-producers - Anita van Dalen, Ben Tesseur, Steven De Beul

associate producers - Dorothé van Dalen, Henry Wichert, Harro Presser

voices - Tim Gunther, Claire King

Dutch crew

director of photography, set and prop supervisor - Peter Mansfelt
production design - Erik van Schaaik
lead animator - Sergio Lara Jimenez
animator - Erik van Schaaik
puppet supervisor - John Craney
armature designer - Paul Mathot
armature builder - Annelous van der Wal
wardrobe - Anneloes van Holten
moulds and casts - Xander Forterie, Henry Brummelman
set and puppet painter - Willeke Smid
setbuilder - Henry Brummelman, Sebastian Doerman, Anna Schroots
puppet maintenance, set dresser, grip - Peter Mansfelt, John Craney, Anneloes van Holten
studiomanager - Thomas Hietbrink
light consultant - Marc de Meijer
trainees - Iris Frankhuizen, Wendy Wever, Naomi Martopawiro

Belgian crew

director of photography - Steven Frederickx
animator - Rosanne Janssens, Maarten Van Rooy
lead animator - Steven De Beul
studiomanager - Dorien Schetz
puppet maintenance, set dresser, grip - Anna Heuinck

compositing, grading, visual effects - Gatze Zonneveld / RocknRoll Animation

music - Miguel Boelens
lapsteel and trombone - Joost Buis
additional piano - Philipp Rüttgers
choir - Lavalu, Sanderijn Crombach, Miguel Boelens, Erik van Schaaik

sound design, surround mix - Rinus Aarts / Speakerfood Music & Sound
Foley sound - Erik van Schaaik, Rinus Aarts
surround mastering - Jeroen Nadorp / Bob Kommer Studio's

DCP mastering - Haghefilm-Digitaal

Poster - Erik Vos / het Lab

Press

One of the most well-crafted stop-motion films we've seen. Deeply funny.
(Skwigly Animation Magazine)

A film worth freezing for.
(Anchorage International Film Festival, Alaska, USA)

Imagine the Gruffalo with Zombies.
(Grimm Up North)

Quality storytelling, originality and personality of characters, great animation performance.
(Festival Stop Motion Montréal)

The excellently told story is peppered with morbid humor, its archaic English voice-overs entirely in rhyme.
(Netherlands Film Festival)

Griezelig, geestig en met grote liefde voor het horrorgenre gemaakt.
(Trouw)

A brilliant stop-animated short giving a new spin on the zombie theme.
(South African Horrorfest)

18 minutes of macabre delight, this short should be every child's first horror experience
(The Ink And Code)

The attention to detail throughout the film is exquisite, it's beautifully crafted and the story is brilliant and ingenious (...) I would love to see Under The Apple Tree developed into a feature film.
(Atomic Age Renegades)

Very well realised and original film
(London X4 Seasonal Short Film Festival)

It's an animation horror masterpiece
(Anatomy Crime Horror Film Festival)

Flawless stop-motion, great art-work and a twisted sense of humour embedded in horror's history
(Weird Wednesday 0711, Stuttgart)

We LOVED your film! OUTSTANDING
(Midwest Horror Fest)

An absolute stop-motion delight with fantastic storytelling.
Dark and delightful.
The stop-motion here is incredible
Fantastic!
(Vimeo)