

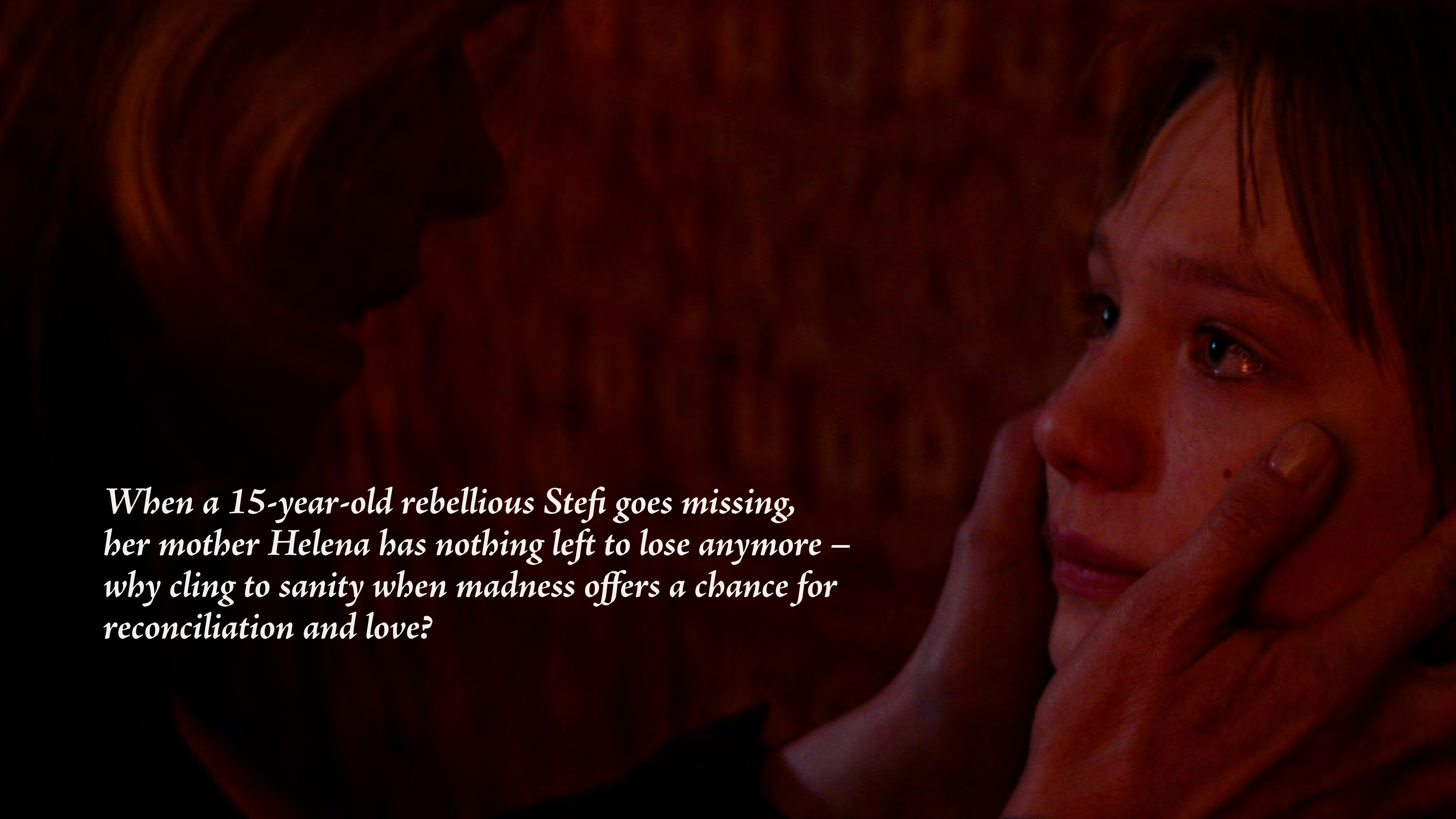
FONNES



Best Script Award
WARSAW FILM FESTIVAL



PÖFF

A young woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking upwards with a contemplative or emotional expression. Her hands are pressed against her cheeks, framing her face. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a moody atmosphere. The background is dark and out of focus.

*When a 15-year-old rebellious Stefi goes missing,
her mother Helena has nothing left to lose anymore –
why cling to sanity when madness offers a chance for
reconciliation and love?*



SYNOPSIS

Helena is a paramedic, a professional caretaker who paradoxically doesn't know how to care for her teenage daughter Stefi when she gets on a dangerous and self-destructive path. As a woman of action rather than talks, Helena prepares an extreme plan to secretly kidnap and lock the girl up, far away from all the bad world. But things don't work out as planned. An unexpected chain of events throw Helena into a state of shock and force her to find an entirely new meaning for her motherly love.

Helena, a strong and efficient woman is an experienced paramedic, who has no trouble handling the practical details of everyday life. Due to her work she's well aware of what happens behind closed doors and under the cover of the night. However, the fact that she has emotionally abandoned her daughter long ago, has gone unnoticed.

This fall, 15-year-old Stefi, clever but lonely, turns every mother's worst nightmare into reality. She cuts her hair, stops going to school, doesn't come home at night, and, encouraged by her new friend Mariann, gets involved with a violent youth gang, where drugs, cruel manipulation and cyberbullying are all part of the mix. Helena spends her days in fear and her nights waiting or desperately searching for Stefi.

Meanwhile, nine-year-old Sander mourns the loss of his closest friend, his sister, and suffers from the lack of attention from his parents. Helena's husband, Kaarel, is caught in the middle—trying with naive stubbornness to hold onto the remnants of trust, while having to swallow increasing disappointment and bitterness.

When Stefi ends up in the hospital because of a severe overdose, Helena comes up with a desperate, even insane plan. She intends to secretly kidnap her daughter and imprison her in the family's old summer house. Visit Stefi every day, cook her warm meals and hope that the shock imprisonment will work.

But things don't go as planned. The unexpected turn of events traps Helena in a delicate space between reality and hopes, forcing her to look in the mirror and completely rethink her motherly love.

WHY THIS FILM?

We live in a time when the mental health of parents and children is under enormous pressure —high expectations, fears, anxiety, relationship issues at home, work, and school. The characters in *Lioness* are, in a way, collective portraits of all of us. A teenager who doesn't fit in at school nor at home, who has no real friends, and who, in the absence of love and approval, becomes an easy pray for manipulators. A friendship that turns out to be a power play and a bullying instead. Violence used to mask emptiness and inner pain. A father who desperately wants to fix everything but lacks the courage to face the core of the issue.

A mother who soothes her loneliness through constant activity and helping others—bandaging bleeding wounds, mending broken bones, and reviving hearts. But when it comes to helping herself and her dearest loved one, she doesn't know how.

We are together, yet alone. We love each other but don't know how to express it in a way that it feels like love to the loved one.

As filmmakers, with *Lioness* we want to deeply shake the audience —to force us to rethink our education system, our mental health support structures, to urge parents to look in the mirror, and to help young people see their parents from a different perspective. We believe that loneliness and anguish need to be fought, and difficult issues don't disappear by ignoring them. Action is required, and we take action by telling stories through film.

The intricate, yet real-life events and characters portrayed in an artistic, even exaggerated way, provide a safe space for everyone to reflect and make changes in their lives—before it's too late.





LIINA TRIŠKINA-VANHATALO

(born 1976) studied humanities at the University of Tallinn and started her film studies in 1998 at the European Film College in Denmark, followed by the Film and Audiovisual School of Catalunya. Her main interest was documentary filmmaking. Since then she has worked on dozens of documentaries, as a director and editor. She has also taught editing at the Baltic Film and Media School. In parallel with documentaries, she started to work as script-continuity for fiction features and on 2016 ended up writing her own first script to reach the screen, the social drama "Take It Or Leave It". The film premiered in October 2018 at Warsaw IFF. It was selected as the Estonian submission for the Academy Awards (Best Foreign Film). „Lioness“ is her second feature.

ALLFILM is an Academy Award and Golden Globe nominated, Tallinn-based production house operating since 1995. We enjoy working on quality features, documentaries, series, and providing full production service for all the above. We work with both – established and new talent and have created a collaborative and supporting environment to match creative ideas with highly professional management. During the years we have had the honour of working with directors such as Christopher Nolan, Zaza Urushadze, Tanel Toom, Marius Holst, Yoon-Ki Lee, Klaus Harö and many more.

Director / screenwriter
LIINA TRIŠKINA-VANHATALO

Producer
IVO FELT

Co-Producers
SEBASTIAN WEYLAND
MANFRED GIESECKE
GUNTIS TEKTERIS
TOOMAS ILI

DOP
ERIK PÕLLUMAA

Editor
MOONIKA RAIDAM

Music
NILS KAČIREK

Cast
KATARIINA UNT
TEELE PIIBEMANN
IVO UUKKIVI

Genre
**PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER /
DRAMA**

Running time
104 MIN

Format
DCP

Domestic premiere
20.09.2024

Screen ratio
2.39:1

Sound format
5.1

Language
ESTONIAN

allfilm

allfilm@allfilm.ee

Allfilm, Heimathafen Film & Media GmbH, Ego Media 2024

