

M

SYNOPSIS

Eight year old Marko knows only the world around his shelter, deep inside a vast forest. And the only man he knows of is his paranoid, overprotective Father - a stern man deprived from love and words. All outside is evil. It's only the two of us. You must never leave our magical forest. Marko obeys Father's rules without questioning.

Feeling lonely, Marko finds refuge and answers for everything in his picture book - for the strange "M" mark on his hand as well. Curiosity pushes him over the forbidden limits of the forest. One day, he is found by a mysterious woman. She has a son, a helpless, tender boy with Down Syndrome called Momo. Ana is nice to him, something that Marko never felt before. Their encounter remains a secret. Few days later, Marko sees her wounded, and his father killing her. Marko is in shock, and rage towards Father. Afraid that his father might kill Momo too, Marko escapes with his new friend. But when they are attacked by insane, enraged apparitions, Father comes to the rescue. He is bitten while defending them. Moments before he shoots himself, he tells him that evil ones bit Ana as well. And he saved her from the suffering.

Marko is crushed, but knows what needs to be done. His picture book tells a story of a Leaf Child who seeks it's Fairy. He has no clear idea what a mother figure really or whether Fairies do exist. Yet, he feels there's something missing in his life. The kids engage on a journey to find her. Outside the forest, Marko encounters a world shattered in ruins and entangled in silence. Grotesque hordes of once-people, overtaken by a virus of uncontrollable rage, roam the roads of sorrow. Being pursued by fanatic survivors whose belief is that the world must end, he loses Momo, who sacrifices his life to save him.

Marko's quest and hope to find his Fairy leads him in an abandoned town. Running from the Infected, he encounters a unit of desperate soldiers in retreat. A female lieutenant steps up. She intends to seize his life, being aware that no child has been born normal since the outbreak. The M-mark on his hand makes her decline. A child lost long ago, one of the few immune. Those few are a hope that our world would be rebuilt. As for Marko, he's happy. He believes he found his Fairy.




Marko knows only the world around his shelter, deep inside a vast forest. And the only man he knows of is his paranoid, overprotective Father - a stern man deprived from love and words. *All outside is evil. It's only the two of us. You must never leave our magical forest.*

The Father would do anything to protect the only thing he has left in this world.
But, this obsession has made him forget what love and tenderness
mean to a little child. The gap grows wider.





Curiosity drives Marko deeper in the forest, over the forbidden boundaries.
A strange encounter makes him question his Father's words.
They are not alone?



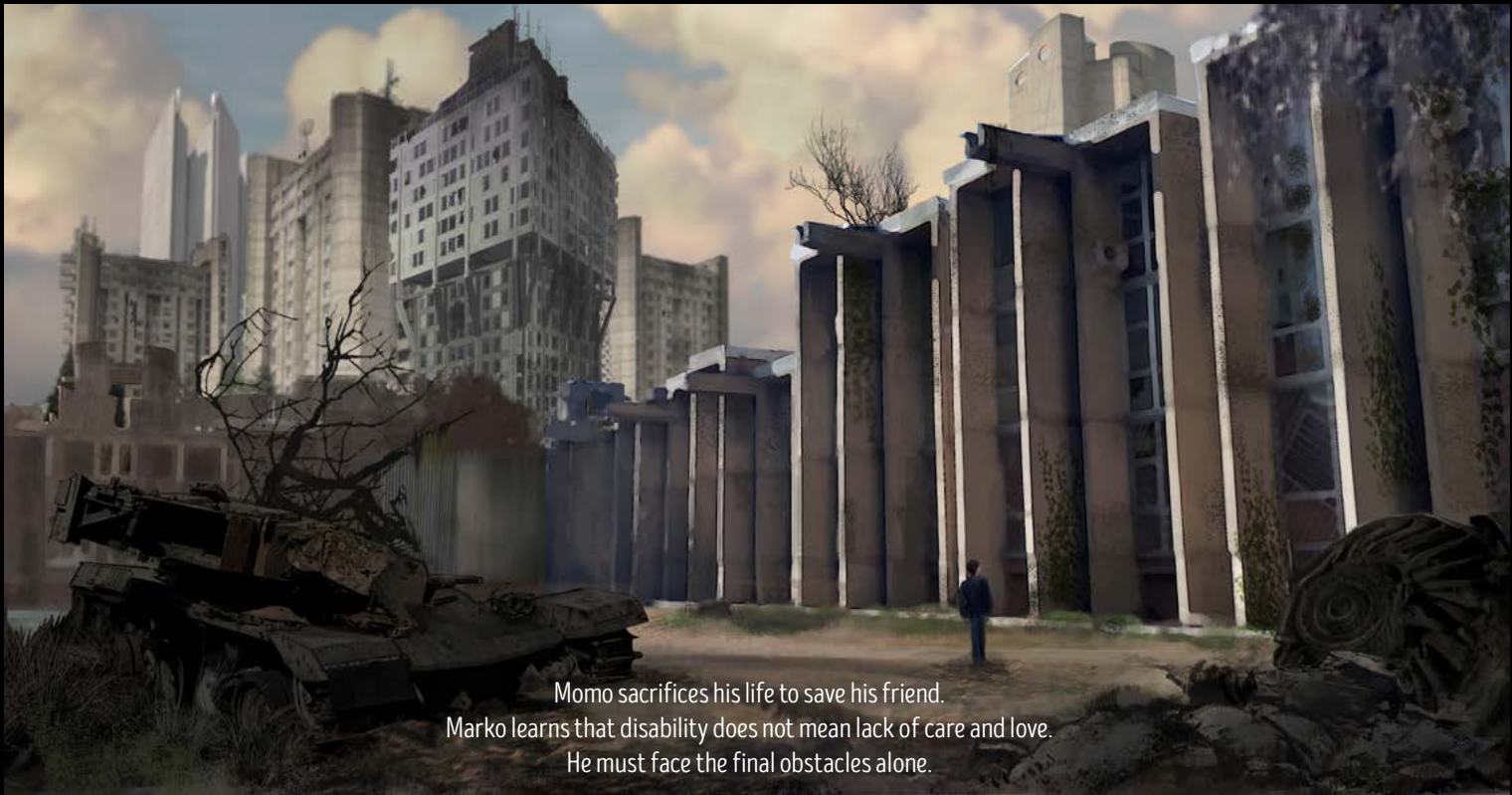
After Father's death, Marko takes his friend, a boy with a Down Syndrome called Momo, out of the magical forest, in search of a Fairy that would love them both.

Upon humiliation and neglect, through hate and contempt,
the virus of rage was born. Science had no answer.
Medicine had no cure. Humanity had it coming.

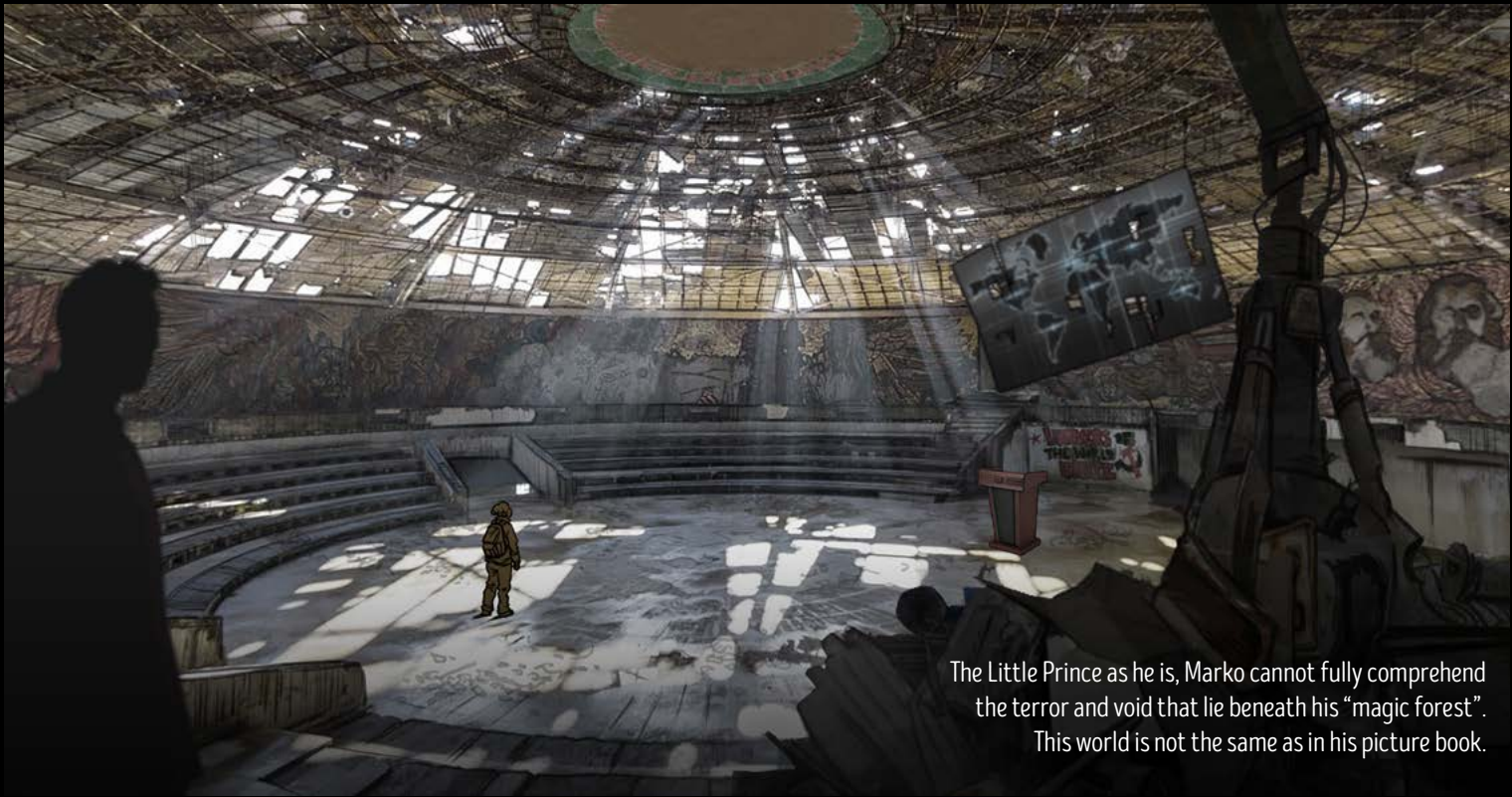


The virus gets to every mother and newborn. The Infected breed.
People do not. For Jon and his deluded group of survivors,
this is a divine sign that humanity must seize to exist.
Marko is only an anomaly, and nothing more.





Momo sacrifices his life to save his friend.
Marko learns that disability does not mean lack of care and love.
He must face the final obstacles alone.



The Little Prince as he is, Marko cannot fully comprehend the terror and void that lie beneath his “magic forest”. This world is not the same as in his picture book.

The Shelter. A place where Marko hopes he will find safety.
But there, the bitter truth is revealed to him.
All is gone. Hope is lost.





Not knowing what a Mother really is, Marko seeks for his Fairy.
He feels there's something missing in his life. A hidden part of the puzzle.

A mark of M lies embedded on the boy's palm. Is it an initial of his name? Or does it mean something else? A child's game of curiosity about the world around him becomes a quest for meaning of his past and future.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Since I was very young, my father used to tell me how we all have impact on the world around us, and that it's our responsibility to make it slightly better, even if maybe, at a time, it would seem as a delusion. Until his last days he persistently claimed I must believe that films should also bare those ideas and thoughts. Today, I comprehend his sadness and confusion of the reality that we live in, and the worry of the bleak outcome that our future may bring.

I was a fan of fantasy novels since my childhood. That was the initial impulse to put this fairy tale of a special little boy and his broken, stern father into a dystopian world.

So, "M" is a coming of age fantasy drama set up in a slightly unconventional frame - a post-apocalyptic, dystopian world of the near future. The narrative threads of the story intertwine between Marko's fantasies and the grim reality that surrounds him. The Little Prince as he is, he cannot fully comprehend the terror that lies beneath his "magic forest". On the other hand, we, the observers, can feel the sorrow and despair that entangles boy's grim reality through the eyes of the Father.

The first part of the film would depict the complicated connection between the grief-torn, paranoid father and the silent child, their solitude and isolation in the distant forest. At first glance, very few details and strange behavior would reveal the true content of the story.

Second narrative angle is the pure hearted friendship between Marko and the boy with Down Syndrome called Momo. My numerous encounters with youngsters from the Special Olympics have shown me how through sincerity and unconditional love, one could overcome every obstacle. And in the context of this story, how they could fight off a virus of rage.

The last part would be the quest for meaning of a little boy in a derelict world. Although at a first glance it may seem that it's a place of horror and gore, I would put it as a testimony of an infinite sorrow. A sad presumption of how we broke our most precious toy. Through careful research I came upon a vision of what our world would looked like if it met with a bitter end. The setting would be in the countless ghost towns scattered throughout the Eastern Block, embraced by oblivion and decay.

The premise of the plot is that the pain of the society outcasts, such as the fugitives scattered throughout the world, could metastasize into a virus of rage which turns all humans into primordial beings deprived of consciousness, driven only by instinct for survival. That is a metaphor of what I fear our world is heading at the moment - through the repression, humiliation, anger, neglect... and the continuous, hidden feeling of guilt that we are closing our eyes while the ones less fortunate are pushed beyond all limits.

“M” is a coming of age fantasy drama, set up in a dangerous, desolated world of the near future. The narrative threads of the story intertwine between Marko’s fantasies and the grim reality that surrounds him.





The LITTLE PRINCE dwells through the lost, post-apocalyptic world.
A GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS walks the grim ROAD of sorrow and despair. Would his BEASTS OF
THE SOUTHERN WILD protect the child from any STALKER that comes across?



VISUAL REFERENCES





STREAM, Pelister Mountain, N. Macedonia



FOREST, Pelister Mountain, N. Macedonia





UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, Skopje, N. Macedonia



REMNANTS OF NATIONAL POST OFFICE, Skopje, N. Macedonia





MONUMENT, Petrova Gora, Croatia



UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, Skopje, N. Macedonia



An aerial photograph of a desolate, abandoned city, likely Chernobyl. The scene is dominated by grey, multi-story apartment blocks and industrial buildings. The ground is cracked and overgrown with sparse, dry vegetation. In the foreground, a large, dark, paved area is visible. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, creating a somber and eerie atmosphere. The text 'FILMING LOCATIONS' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the lower portion of the image.

FILMING LOCATIONS



FOREST, Pelister Mountain, N. Macedonia



FOREST, Pelister Mountain, N. Macedonia





UNIVERSITY DORM, Skopje, N. Macedonia



UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, Skopje, N. Macedonia





ABANDONED HIGHWAY, RAILWAY STATION, N. Macedonia



REMNANTS OF NATIONAL POST OFFICE, Skopje, N. Macedonia





LOCATIONS, N. Macedonia





LOCATIONS, N. Macedonia/Bulgaria

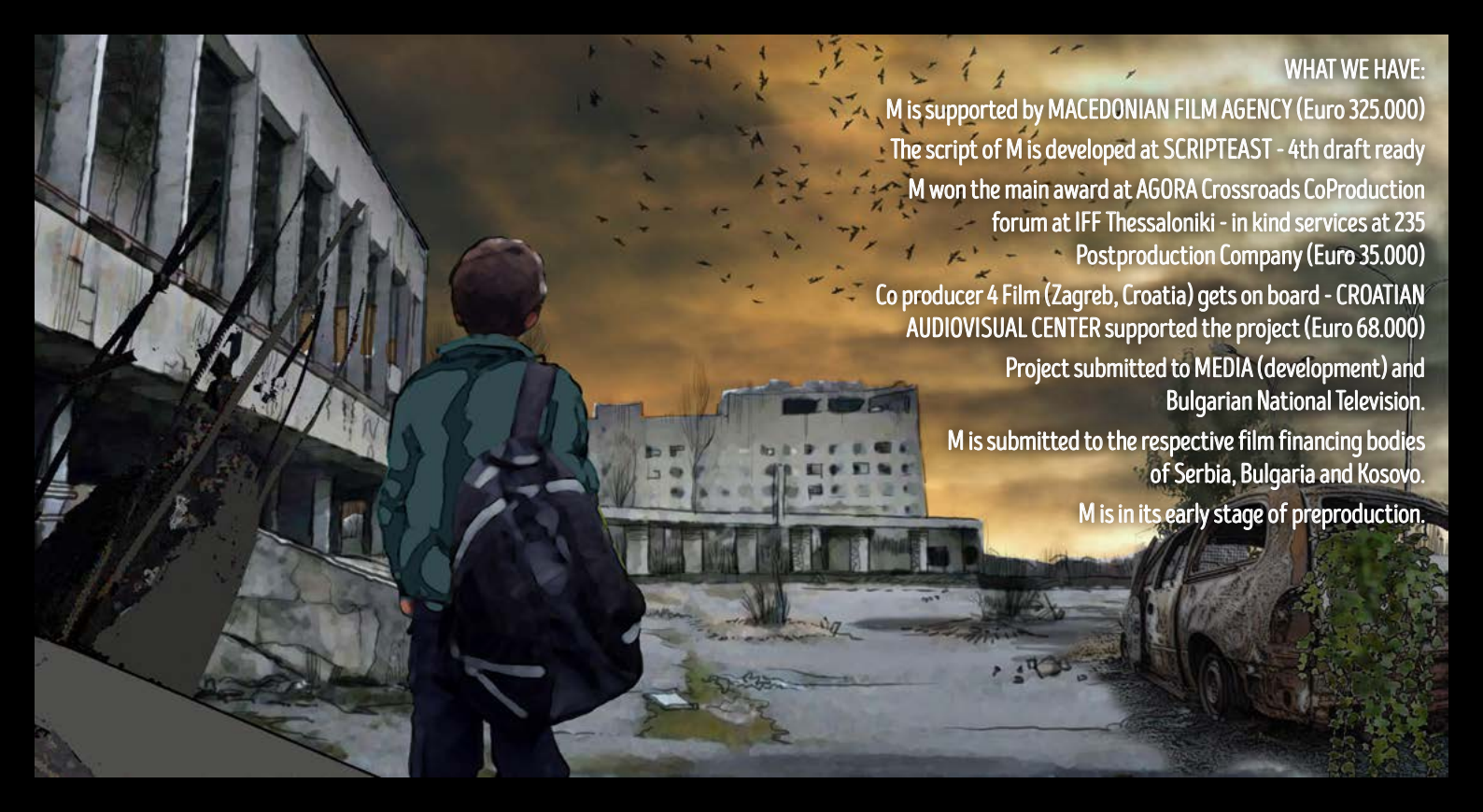


PRODUCER'S NOTE OF INTENTION

I always had affinity towards films and books told from child's point of view. I'm easily drawn to the story led by innocence of such characters, and a certain atmosphere which puts me on borderline of hope and complete despair. When such character is set in fantastic dystopian environment and decorated with "special" ornament, our empathy toward him intensifies and grows.

I know Vardan for some years now. The same as I, he still believes that films can change the world or at least they can initiate the change. We developed his debut film AMOK together while I was a Line Producer on his filming. His aesthetics is highly cineastic though his storytelling style is very clear and pragmatical, in many cases direct. Visually, he is highly literate. Since he is a fan of fantasy novels and SF films I am sure this pre-knowledge will be crucial in creating and shaping the unique world of M; a world which is not demanding in a manner of a extremely high Hollywood film budget, but rather carefully depicted from the leftovers of a modern world's society as we all know it. I am very happy and motivated to help him creating it.

M is planned as a co-production between three countries and support of Eurimages.

A person with a backpack is seen from behind, walking through a desolate, post-apocalyptic city. The buildings are dilapidated and overgrown with nature. The sky is filled with a large flock of birds flying. The overall atmosphere is one of survival and exploration.

WHAT WE HAVE:

M is supported by MACEDONIAN FILM AGENCY (Euro 325.000)

The script of M is developed at SCRIPTEAST - 4th draft ready

M won the main award at AGORA Crossroads CoProduction
forum at IFF Thessaloniki - in kind services at 235
Postproduction Company (Euro 35.000)

Co producer 4 Film (Zagreb, Croatia) gets on board - CROATIAN
AUDIOVISUAL CENTER supported the project (Euro 68.000)

Project submitted to MEDIA (development) and
Bulgarian National Television.

M is submitted to the respective film financing bodies
of Serbia, Bulgaria and Kosovo.

M is in its early stage of preproduction.



VARDAN TOZIJA

Curriculum Vitae

Born on 10.03.1981, in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. Graduated at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, Film and TV directing. Also attended law studies and political science studies at the State University of Cyril and Methodius. Speaks English, Serbian and Croatian.

Director and Screenwriter:

- "AMOK" - feature film (2016)
- "THERE IS A MAN WITH A STRANGE HABIT OF HITTING ME WITH AN UMBRELLA" - short feature film (2012)
- "THE WHISTLER" - short feature film, part from a feature film omnibus "SKOPJE REMIXED" (2011)
- "THE DECISION" - short feature educational film (2010)
- "O N E" - short feature film (2009)
- "KOKINO OBSERVATORY" - middle length documentary (2009)
- "EXCEPTION" - short feature film (2008)
- "HOME...?" - middle-length documentary (2006)
- "NORTHERN FLIGHT" - short feature film (2005)
- "BOBBY" - short creative documentary (2004)
- "Waiting for GODOT" - short feature film (international omnibus feature) (2003)

Director:

- "In Treatment", HBO franchise feature series, 37 episodes (2017); "Insider", feature TV show, 8 episodes (2017); "PET +", 6 episodes of a feature children TV show (2016); "PRESPAV", 16 episodes of a feature TV sitcom (2016); "EXPLORE MACEDONIA", 9 short commercial documentaries, (2013); "MACEDONIAN HISTORY", 10 middle length documentaries (2011); "RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT" - TV documentary of the Exodus of the Aegean Macedonians (2004)

Screenwriter and 1st AD:

- "LIBERATION OF SKOPJE", feature film (2016)
- "PUNK IS NOT DEAD" - feature film (2010)
- "SWITCH" - short feature film, part of omnibus project of feature film "SOME OTHER STORIES" ("Neke druge price") (2009)
- "INSANITY" - screenplay for middle-length feature film (2008)



DARKO POPOV

filmography & biography

Born in Skopje on 01.01.1979. Speaks English, Serbian and Croatian.

Graduated producer (Faculty of Drama Arts in Skopje).

An EAVE 2011 Graduate. Owner of Focus Pocus Films.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Producer & Co producer:

MY LAKE - feature film (to premiere in 2019)

VERA - short film (to premiere in 2019)

LEECHES - feature film, 2019

THEATER OF SCUPI - documentary, 2019

YEAR OF THE MONKEY - feature film, 2018

PEPI & MUTO - short film, 2015

THE CAVE - short film, 2014

TO THE TOP - documentary, 2014

STATE OF SHOCK - feature film, 2011

PUNK'S NOT DEAD - feature film, 2011

DECISION - educational short film, 2010

Line Producer & Production Manager:

AMOK - feature film, 2016

PETAR POP ARSOV - TV documentary, 2014

CHURCHILL AND MACEDONIA - TV documentary, 2014

CIVIL WAR IN GREECE - TV documentary, 2014

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON DESPUTE... - TV series
(4 episodes), 2014

THE SKOPJE - omnibus, 2009

NORMAL (Angel's Gone) - feature film, 2008

EAST WEST EAST - feature film, 2008

AT HOME - documentary film, 2007

REMEMBRANCE - documentary film, 2004



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