

Wolwedans In Die Skemer

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From its alluring title to its mutation from popular radio serial in the 1970s to television series and now film (and also novel), Leon van Nierop's *Wolwedans In Die Skemer* is melodrama in action.



It's clear from the dramatic opening sequence, shrouded in a surrealistic and mystical fantasy world, where a mysterious figure clothed as Red Riding Hood, a prowling wolf, and a soundtrack featuring suspenseful music and howling wolves lead us into Hazyview, that this is absolutely no regular local film.

Stylistically reminiscent of Neil Jordan's *Company Of Wolves* and Catherine Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood*, *Wolwedans* is no fantasy; director Jozua Malherbe's visualisation of Van Nierop's creation is a strange blend of romance, mystery and drama that almost feels like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The "ultimate" *Wolwedans* experience

Van Nierop's firm presence as screenwriter and "auteur" casts an officious shadow over the film, preventing it from taking on a life of its own in its new incarnation, setting it firmly in the mould and history it was created in, giving fans the "ultimate" *Wolwedans* experience. This is, after all, *Wolwedans* on the big screen, where everything is magnified 10 times.

Wolwedans is one of those films that hinges on so many secrets, twists and surprising revelations, that it would definitely spoil your fun if you know too much about what happens. Simply view *Wolwedans* through the eyes of Daneel (Rolanda Marais), who suffers amnesia after an accident en route to her receptionist job at a hotel, and you will slowly unravel the mystery during an overdramatic trip where nothing is what it seems.



A demented killer on the rampage

Add murder, a demented killer on the rampage, good old-fashioned revenge, sibling rivalry, family feuds, and a romantic

love triangle to the mixture, and you have tons of intrigue.

It would have been interesting if these revelations were revealed in a less obvious manner, but it still provides ample mystery for those longing to explore a world where deadly secrets erupt.

Wolwedans is a well-crafted film that takes us back to an era of nostalgic filmmaking, produced by The Film Factory, which gave us the teenage rom-com Bakgat, but this is no teenage romance, rather a mature love story in which stirring passion and past romantic liaisons cause lots of friction. Especially when a sexy tour guide (Dawid Louw) and his arch-rival (Jacques Bessenger), a pretentious game ranger, fist fight and scuffle over the hand of a damsel in distress.

Rolanda Marais delivers a fine performance as the young woman who becomes trapped in a spider's web, well supported by Lelia Etsebeth (currently seen in My Vrou Se Man Se Vrou) and Desire Gardner as the warring sisters.

Stripping scene

All eyes will be on hunky Dawid Louw, who is well known for his role in the television series Villa Rosa and makes his film debut. He will definitely garner new admirers after they view his stripping scene. Gerard Rudolf is also great as the humorous Lieutenant, with Karen Wessels as his right-hand woman who is adamant to catch the "wolf".

It is refreshing to see a local film that breaks away from the constraints of political agendas and gives us a biting family drama that we can enjoy, without being bombarded by serious issues. You can sit back and escape into Wolwedans In Die Skemer without having to work too hard to make sense of it all. It's fun viewing that delivers what it promises, although it takes itself way too seriously.

Wolwedans is not restricted to Afrikaans viewers only, and with its English subtitles, it will introduce a new audience to a story that has been with us for 40 years.

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za
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