



HEARTBEATS

A feature film about choices and the difficulty of making one

Director SAARA CANTELL

Producer Outi Rousu, Pystymetsä Oy (Finland)

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CONTACTS

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TECHNICAL CREDITS

Title **Heartbeats** - original title **Kohtaamisia** - Feature film in 7 episodes with the epilogue - length 81 mins - Dolby Digital 5.0. - screening format 35mm 1:85, Digital Beta 16:9 - Language Finnish - Subtitles English.
Theatrical release in Finland on March 5, 2010. Distribution and sales in Scandinavia by Nordisk Film A/B.
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KEY CREW

Script & director SAARA CANTELL
Producer OUTI ROUSU
Camera MARITA HÄLLFORS
Art design PIRJO ROSSI
Sound PIETARI KOSKINEN
Casting MINNA SORVOJA
Music SID HILLE
Costumes SANJA KANGAS
Make up KATI KOSKELA
Editing PAULIINA PUNKKI

CHARACTERS / CAST:

MARTTA, 78 yr; senior/ANNELI SAULI
EMMI, 26; Martta's granddaughter/JENNI BANERJEE
MAKE, 30; Emmi's boyfriend / SAMPO SARKOLA
NORA, 14; schoolgirl / ROSA SALOMAA
ANU, 39; Noora's mother/JOHANNA AF SCHULTÉN
PETRI, 40; Noora's father / TOMMI RAITOLEHTO

FARDUSA, 24; nurse / MARYANN GUULED
OLGA, 33; Fardusa's colleague / ELENA SPIRINA
ERKKI, 82; patient / YRJÖ PARJANNE
LEILA, 52; Fardusa's colleague / LEENA UOTILA
MERI, 35; physiotherapist / MERI NENONEN
ELIAS, 9; Emmi's son / TITUS RANTALA

SYNOPSIS

MARTTA won't reveal her secret to her relatives. NORA is trying to grow wings. MERI learns to be careful about what she wishes for. OLGA and FARDUSA are looking for a better future far from home, while EMMI loses the chances that have been given to her by always making the wrong choices. And ANU runs into a ghost from her past in the grocery store parking lot. But every one of them comes to notice that a single encounter can change your life. A film about choices and the difficulty of making choices. About women who learn to find their wings.

TREATMENT

PROLOGUE: BROOCH.

In extreme close-up, we see a brooch, with four different coloured stones. Brooch spins around, so that each of the colourful stones fills the picture in turn: bright diamond, red rubin, blue sapphire and green emerald. The green of emerald dissolves with another colour of green and as the picture opens; we see it is a plant.



1ST episode: MARTTA

MARTTA, 78, has visitors in her livingroom, her granddaughter EMMI, 26 and Emmi's boyfriend MAKE, 30. Martta is serving coffee and cookies.

During the conversation we find out that Emmi is (once more) out of work and that Emmi's 9 year old son, one that Martta had hoped to meet, is with his father at that moment.

Emmi's mood changes rapidly, at one moment she is raging to her grandmother, when she asks too many questions, and in next minute Emmi is calm and remembering her childhood.

Make can't seem to stay still; he walks around the apartment, goes to toilet, goes to have a cigarette, at the same time checking all the stuff around the apartment. Through the bedroom mirror Martta sees, how Make is going through drawers of her bedside table, putting some medicine jars into his pocket. Martta doesn't make a comment about this,

Emmi asks about her mother's jewels; shouldn't there be more left that Emmi should inherit. Specifically Emmi asks about jewel we have seen in the introduction, golden brooch.

Martta says that brooch has gone from one generation to another and she doesn't appreciate that Emmi has sold all the jewellery she had got so far. Emmi gets angry: "I haven't sold them, they are in pawnshop, so I was able to buy food for my child!!"

Emmi tells Make that it is time for them to go. Martta tries to soothe the situation down, and then goes and packs rest of the pastries for Emmi to take home to Elias.

On the way out Emmi's mood changes once more; she turns around tears in her eyes, and gives her grandmother a hug, so hard that they both nearly fall. After a little hesitation Martta takes out her wallet and gives Emmi first one, then two 20 euro notes.

After Emmi and Make leaves Martta goes back to living room, and looks at the picture on top of the dresser: it is Emmi's mother. Then Martta opens a drawer and takes out small blue silky bag. Martta takes out something from the bag (we don't see what it is), and looks at it for a while.

Picture is zooming to close-up till we see only the blue fabric of silky bag; blue colour fills the picture. It dissolves to next picture; poster with blue sea.



2ND episode: NORA

NORA, 14, lies on her bed and listens to music with her iPod. She stretches her legs while deep in her thoughts – we can see that she has a dancer's physique. Woman's voice calls out from the next room; Nora doesn't react other than turning the volume up.

Room door opens. Nora's mother, ANU, 39, steps in. Nora insists that she is not hungry, but Anu won't hear a word about it.

Nora follows her mother to the kitchen reluctantly. Nora looks at third empty plate on a table and asks if they are not going to wait for dad. Mother simply says it is not worth it. Nora doesn't want to eat anything, regardless her mom's efforts. Anu seems tired, Nora sour.



Front door opens and Nora's dad, Petri, 40, appears to the kitchen door. Petri is in a very good mood, from her suit we see he works in the office environment. Nora smiles at her dad, Anu doesn't even look at his direction. Petri goes to bedroom, talking non-stop. Nora follows how her dad changes a clean shirt, at the same time dad is explaining how he can't stay for dinner as they have a late meeting at the office. Anu sneers.

After he is done Petri goes to hug his daughter and makes to leave. Nora shouts: "You forgot your suitcase". He takes it and then leaves.

Nora looks at her mother and complains that nobody wants to visit us because the mother. "You are so boring", she shouts and says that she is not hungry at all and goes back to her room. She doesn't get very far when she hears the first thump and quickly she returns to kitchen.

Anu got up, got a plastic bag and takes plate and drinking glass that was set to Petri and put's them into the bag. Nora watches frozen as her mother goes around the table and puts all the rest of the plates, with food leftovers still in them, to the bag as well. Then Anu raises the bag and hits the table with it, again and again and again. Nora tries to yell:"Mom!" but her mother doesn't seem to hear.

Then Anu stops and it is quiet for a while. Anu sits down and starts to weep; Nora runs to her mother and puts her arms around her, holding her like a little child, comforting.

White feather falls from somewhere; Nora follows its dance through the air. She picks the feather to her hand.

Dissolve from white feather to nurse's white workjacket.



3RD episode: FARDUSA

FARDUSA, 24, has moved to Finland from Somalia as a child. Now she works as a nurse in hospital, in ward for elders. She is feeding a little old man, who is lying in his bed.

In the next bed lies ERKKI, 83, and he is in a foul mood. He is complaining about bad food, bad treatment, using very bad language. He is specifically very upset that he is taking care by blacks and towelheads.

LEILA, 52, Finnish nurse trying to feed Erkki, doesn't comment about his rambling at all, just looks quickly at Fardusa to see how she reacts. Fardusa's colleague and friend, OLGA, 33, arrive to take Fardusa for her coffee break.

Erkki get's all fired up, yelling how a Russian is all that was missing from the picture. After all, Finland fought against Russia in the War!. Olga tells firmly him to watch his mouth. Fardusa leaves the room with Olga, but before leaving adjusts Erkki's pillow to better position.

Fardusa and Olga walk down the aisle towards coffee room. Olga tells Fardusa that she can't let Erkki talk to her like that. Fardusa agrees but also says that Erkki is in a lot of pain.

Women don't get very far, when Leila runs to them; she needs Fardusa back in the room. Olga announces that Fardusa is entitled to her coffee break but Fardusa agrees to go with Leila.



When they enter the room, it is a chaos; Erkki is yelling, swearing and throwing pillows and anything he can grab, across the room. Leila goes to get help, Fardusa tries to go and give Erkki some sedatives, and he only throws medicine across the room as well.

Finally Fardusa goes closer; Erkki grabs her hand and holds thigh. Fardusa starts to sing Somalian lullaby, and slowly Erkki calms down and closes his eyes. Fardusa continues singing.

Leila comes back with janitor, only to see that situation is over. Room is quiet, only sound is Fardusa's singing. Erkki sleeps now peacefully, still holding Fardusa's hand.

Waterglass on a table dissolves to raindrops on a window.



4TH episode: MERI

MERI, 35, is kissing Petri (who we met on 2nd episode) goodbye at her apartment door. They keep on kissing, not noticing ELIAS, 9, sitting outside on the staircase, behind Martta's door.

Meri and Martta are neighbours. Finally Meri gently pushes Petri away, telling him to go, otherwise he will be late. As he runs down the stairs Petri shouts that he will call that night. Meri shouts "You forgot your suitcase". Petri returns and they kiss again. Petri leaves.

Now Meri notices Elias, asking what he is doing there. Elias explains that he is waiting for his grandmother to come home. Meri suspects that Martta might have gone to see a doctor; Elias says the he doesn't mind waiting there.

Meri goes back to her apartment but soon goes back out and invites Elias to her apartment to wait. After a hesitation Elias agrees.



Meri notices how hungry Elias is and offers him some breakfast. While Elias is eating, with a great appetite, Meri's phone rings. Meri answers and laughs "oh you missed me already?"

After a phonecall Elias asks if caller was the same man as before, and why don't they live together. Meri says that they are adult's things that Elias's couldn't possibly understand.

Meri tries to ask Elias about his home. We find out that Elias's mom and her boyfriend haven't returned home after a night out, and as there wasn't any food at home, Elias decided to come to see grandmother. Elias

couldn't call dad, because this weekend Elias was supposed to be with mother, and that would have meant more trouble.

Meri is shocked by all this and tries to ask more, but Elias firmly says, that this is children's stuff and adult can't possibly understand it. They both laugh.

Suddenly they hear noise from corridor. Elias announces that it is time for him to go. Emmi (who we met in the 1st episode) is in the corridor shouting Elias' name.

Meri opens the doors and says Elias is with her. Emmi runs to Elias ;how many times she has said that Elias isn't allowed to go with strangers, we should report this to officials, never know about these phedophiles...

Meri get's agitated and says that if someone should report to officials, maybe she should call and say how Emmi left her child alone for a whole night. Now Emmi get's really angry at Meri, accusing her of stealing her child, maybe she even steals husbands, who is she to say how Emmi should raise her child, bet she doesn't have a child of her own...

Argument ends when Elias firmly says to his mother, that everything is okay. Emmi looks at him and asks: "Are you sure it is okay?" Elias:"Yes" Emmi:"If you say so, captain."



Emmi and Elias leave. Meri stays to watch after them, still a bit shaken. Her phone rings. She returns to her apartment, let's the phone ring. After a while she answers the phone, it is Petri. Gently Meri laughs as she talks to Petri, and as she talking she looks at brown beanie in her hand. It is Elias'.

Dissolve from brown beanie to brown coffee package.



5TH episode: ANU

Anu (who we met on 2nd episode) is shopping in supermarket. She is pushing shopping trolley, suddenly stops as she sees a young man between the shelves. It is Make (who we met on 1st episode).

Anu follows Make, peeping between shelves. Anu sees how Make is looking around before taking DVD from the shelf and putting it inside his jacket. Make turns his head and meets Anu's eyes; quickly Anu turns away and heads towards check out.

Make comes to next registrer, all the time staring at Anu, smiling a bit. Anu stares ahead, trying not to notice Make. Make buys some cigarettes, doesn't get caught shoplifting.

Anu pays for her shopping and heads out and to the parking lot. Anu goes to her car, but soon discovers that she has left her keys inside the car, to ignition. She tries every door but they stay locked. Anu picks up her cellphone, when Make suddenly appears next to her and asks if she needs any help. We find out that there is something wrong with car locks and this isn't the first time this happens. Make seems amused. When Anu gets ready to call to the locksmith, Make offers that he can open the car door much cheaper.

Anu hesitates but then accepts the offer. Make gets some wire from his pocket and starts to open car door. We see that he has obviously done this before.

As Make is working Anu tells him that the reason she was staring Make in the supermarket was that he looked very familiar to her. Make smirks; "sorry baby, too many women, I can't possibly remember you all..." Anu laughs. No, the one he thought she had seen is much older than Make, so she knew it could have not really been...

We find out that this man was Anu's high school sweetheart, who had disappeared in a boat to Sweden some 20 years ago - same summer that he and Anu were supposed to get married. They never found the body.

Make is a good listener, if you don't mind his cynical comments here and there. Anu talks how hard it was for her to accept her fiancée's death when there wasn't any evidence. And how she just realised that on some level she has hoped for him to reappear from somewhere. We can see that Make has also experienced loss, though he doesn't talk about it.

Finally Make opens the door and we find out that it has actually been open for a while now. Anu reaches to her wallet and gets 50 euro note out, Make takes that with no hesitation. Anu asks if she could give Make a lift to someplace. Make replies that it is better not to risk it. His 'Good Samaritan' phase might come to an end and Anu's money and car might be in danger. Make smiles as he says that and Anu laughs back at him. Make leaves.

Anu sits in her car, is about to start the engine, when Make reappears outside his window and knocks on it. Anu opens the car window. For a moment they just stare at each other. Then they both start to smile. Make says that Anu should smile more often, that she doesn't look all that bad then, for a woman at her age. Make winks and leaves. Anu smiles and starts the car.

Dissolve from the metal colour of the car keys – to silver tray.

6TH episode: OLGA

Olga walks on the hospital corridor. She watches the patient room and sees Fardusa (who we met on episode 3) talking with Martta (who we met on episode 1). Martta tries to offer some object to Fardusa, who gently refuses. Fardusa comes to Olga, and they leave for a coffee break.

When they enter to nurses' coffeeroom, we see that Finnish nurse Leila sits there with a group of other Finnish nurses, laughing together. When Olga and Fardusa enter, their talking stops. Olga and Fardusa go and get coffee, but won't stay in a coffeeroom, aware of the sudden silence. Instead they walk outside to balcony, where is a smoking area. (Fardusa follows Olga even she doesn't smoke herself).



When they enter balcony, they can see that one nurse is already out there having a cigarette. It's Meri (who we met on episode 4). Olga asks how Meri is doing. Before Meri has time to answer, her cellphone rings. Meri takes a look who is calling, and decides not to answer. Laughs and says that she is getting tired of this one person calling all the time...

Silence; Olga and Meri smoking. Then Meri says that she never understood the saying: "you better watch out what you wish for, because you might just get it." But now she starts to know what that means. Meri is thinking aloud, maybe it is the fact the grass is greener on the other side...

Olga interrupts saying; "what is that saying.. neighbours goat looks very good from the other side of the fence but when he comes to yours side : what does he do? Shits all over the place!!" Meri burst into laughter saying that Olga is making this up.

Meri leaves to go back to work and Fardusa asks Olga about her child. Olga shows a picture she has on her cellphone: it is a little girl wearing a ballet dress. We find out that 6 year old Natalia lives in St Petersburg with Olga's mother. It's been a while since Olga was able to see her daughter, because she is working 2 jobs to be able to bring Natalia to Finland to live with her. Another six months, maybe a year...

Olga talks about her daughter with high spirit and humour, and then says how cold it is. Fardusa jokes that Olga should have got used to cold by now. Olga says that no one can get used to cold weather. Leila appears on the door and says that Fardusa is needed in room 6. Erkki won't accept anyone else than "towelhead". In spite of Olga refusing, Fardusa leaves to check the situation.



Olga stays outside alone, lights another cigarette. She gets Natalia's picture out once more, looking at it gently. For a moment we see how her strong appearance drops and tears start to come into her eyes. We see how much she misses her daughter.

Balcony door suddenly opens and two Finnish nurses come outside for a cigarette. Olga puts herself together and says in high spirit that it looks like it's time to return back to work. Fast eat slowly, or how the saying does go. Finnish nurses laugh when Olga leaves.

Dissolve from orange colour of burning cigarette to orange flower on a window shelf.

7TH episode: SIGRID'S BROOCH

Nora is standing at the end of hospital corridor, stretching her leg on a window shelf, deep in her thoughts. Fardusa walks past and asks if Nora is waiting for her mother. Nora says yes. Fardusa goes to reception, and comes back in a while with a pastry on a plate. Nora says that she really doesn't eat anything like that usually, but Fardusa won't have anything like that. Fardusa says that if Nora is going to eat like a bird, she should eat her weight every day that is how much little birds eat. Nora smiles at Fardusa and takes the pastry, eating small pieces of it. Door next door opens and Anu, wearing a white doctor's coat, comes out with Martta.

Anu tells Nora that she will be ready in a minute. Martta smiles at Nora as well and notices suitcase on Nora's feet, asking if they are going on a trip. We find out that mother and daughter are travelling that very day, for a holiday in a Sun. We also come to know that Anu and Petri have divorced and Nora now lives part of the time with her dad.

Anu turns to talk to Martta and asks if she is certain of her decision. Martta assures she is. Anu reminds that if the painkillers aren't strong enough, Martta has to come back to see her again. Anu also asks if Martta is sure that her family shouldn't find out. Martta is very firm about that. Anu says smiling that she can't help this, Martta is just too stubborn for her. Then Anu gives Martta a hug. Martta leaves to walk towards elevators.

Anu asks Nora if she wants to wait in Anu's room, she still has some paperwork to finish before they can go. Nora says that she will rather wait in the corridor.



After Anu returns to her room, Nora notices some feathers on her sleeve. She then notices Martta who has sat down close to her on a bench; Martta is looking at something in her hand. Martta invites Nora to have a closer look; Nora goes and sits next to Martta. We see that object in Martta's hand.

Gently Martta shows Nora the golden brooch with four colourful stones. Martta tells Nora that brooch is called Sigfrid's Brooch and used to belong to her mother's grandmother, who had gotten that from her mother-in-law. Martta puts the brooch on Nora's hand, and explains that every stone represents different aspects of life: green emerald earth, blue sapphire air, red rubin fire and clear diamond water.

Nora is fascinated by the brooch and shyly asks that does it mean that all the elements should be together, so life would be in harmony. Martta smiles and says that she doesn't believe there is a any bigger meaning to that. That harmony can be found in little moments. Single, rare moments that can be over before you even noticed they were there.

Nora gets more excited and continues to analyze a bit more: could it be that earth means roots and air is where person is aiming to go and...Martta interrupts gently: yes, yes, this can all be true. Or on the other hand, they've might just have picked up beautiful stones, with no deeper meaning.

Anu comes out and calls Nora. Martta takes the brooch, wishes them lovely trip and to enjoy themselves.

Then Martta gets up and continues walking slowly toward elevators. She is deep in her thoughts. Then she comes to the elevators but she doesn't go in, but stays to wait at the corridor. At last Fardusa comes by and stops to talk to Martta. Martta asks if Fardusa has made her decision yet. Fardusa replies that gift is just too expensive, there is no way she could accept it. We find out that Martta wants to give her brooch to Fardusa. Martta wants brooch to end up with someone who can appreciate it and to whom it can bring good luck. And also to someone who will keep it safe.



Finally Fardusa accepts to gift, but she says that she will just borrow it. Martta can have it back as soon as he wants or needs it. Martta seems very relieved. They hug and then Martta leaves and steps into an elevator. Fardusa stays in corridor, looking a beautiful golden brooch in her hand.

Dissolve gold colour of the brooch to golden colour of sunlight.



EPILOGUE (On the background plays a title song "Too Little Time", performer Marjo Leinonen IS RECALLED AS Janis Joplin of Finland)

Meri stands by her window, wearing a T-shirt, drinking a coffee, looking at the morning sun through the window. She closes her eyes and let's sun warm her face. Then she turns and walks to her bed. In the bed is a sleeping man, whose face we can't see. From his hair we can tell that it is not Petri, but has a wedding ring in his finger. Meri gets under the doona next to a man.

Olga, dressed in a cleaner's uniform, sweeps the floor of a supermarket. It is early in the morning, store is not open yet. We can see that it is the same store

where Anu and Make met (in episode 5). Olga looks tired and takes a little break, looking somewhere in a distance, deep in her thoughts.

Elias and **Martta** are sitting in Martta's living room, doing a huge puzzle that covers the whole coffee table. Martta smiles as she watches how her great-grandson tries to find the right pieces for the puzzle.

A messy unit, full of noisy and suspicious looking people. Bear cans, bottles everywhere. **Emmi** dancing in the middle, her eyes closed, she is smiling happily and high on something. **Make** sits next to a big bearded guy; they have just shared a joke and laugh so hard that nearly fall from the couch.





Fardusa's home is full of different aged African women dressed in beautiful, colourful dresses and head scarfs. Fardusa is wearing a green dress and Sigrid's Brooch. Various foods are served on a low table on the floor.

Doorbell rings and Olga arrives. She is also wearing a beautiful summer dress, with make-up on. Olga smiles and gives Fardusa flowers. Fardusa takes her to living room and introduces to the other women.

Big mirror in a hotel room in a holiday apartment. From the mirror we can see **Nora**, wearing a colourful summer dress, with huge wings on her back. As the camera turns 180 degrees, we can see Nora standing in front of the mirror, wearing the same dress, but without the wings. Nora steps out through the sliding doors that lead to terrace with swimming pool. **Anu** jumps out of the pool, is laughing as she shakes water from her hair, wrapping towel around her. Mother and daughter are both laughing.

Waterdrops in a sun look like little diamonds.

-End-

