

The Enchanter

Hong Kong / China / Macau

KWOK Tsz-kin



Genre: Drama
Format: 35mm
Estimated Running Time: 103 min.

Budget:
US\$ 2,480,000 (HK\$ 19,344,000)

Producer:
Teddy CHEN

Writing Credits:
PANG Ho-cheung
LAU Ho-leung
YEUNG Sin-ling
YIM Ka-yee

Production Company:
Sum-Wood Productions Limited

HAF Goal:
Funds

Contact:
Sum-Wood Productions Limited
(Eric TANG)

Address:
8/F, Hay Nien Building, 1 Tai Yip Street,
Kwun Tong, Hong Kong

Tel: +852-27363111

Email: erictang62057670@yahoo.com.hk

INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong has a long tradition of conman and gambling films, running all the way back to the 1970's. But *The Enchanter* is a new twist on this tradition that also comments on the nature of illusions, on magic and on filmmaking itself. Magic is the hardest art in the world because it tells the audience from the beginning that it is fake; the pleasure lies in the audience's desire to be tricked. Nowadays, many people regard being tricked as bad, but to reject this desire is to reject all fantasy. This has led to a rush to embrace materialism at the expense of the intangible satisfactions in life such as happiness and spirituality. *The Enchanter* hopes to pit these two competing human urges against one another.

SYNOPSIS

Jack is a stage magician turned professional gambler working in Sean's gambling den to detect cheaters and card sharps while using sleight of hand to fleece wealthy customers. He once had ambitions to be a professional magician, but none of the Macau casinos would hire him. He finally stumbled across Sean and, without any other direction, that's where he stuck. The only passion he has left in his life is for Sean's wife who suffers from almost total paralysis. Jack is always conjuring up flowers for Sean to give his wife, but no matter how much Sean begs to learn the trick, Jack keeps telling him, "A good magician never reveals his secrets."

One day, a gambler who has lost everything hands Jack and Sean the deed to his house and then kills himself. Jack is wracked with guilt and he heads for the dead man's home on Lantau where he discovers the man's son, Egg, a 20-year-old with the mind of a ten-year-old. Egg's father left his son in the care of the Buddhist temple, but Egg yearns to return home. Jack earns Egg's eternal devotion when he performs a few simple magic tricks to cheer him up. Long ago, Egg's dad told his son that he'd only become smart when the enormous Lantau Buddha disappeared, and ever since then Egg has been obsessed with figuring out a way to pull this off. Jack promises to use his magic to make it happen one day.

Back at the gambling hall, Jack arrogantly exposes a conman working the tables, furious that this predator thought he could work his turf. Without a word, Sean chops off the conman's arm and sends him packing. Then, on his way home, Jack is ambushed by thugs hired by the conman and Sean tells him to go into hiding. And so Jack heads to Lantau Island once more.

Egg has been eagerly awaiting his return, hanging around the grocery store / knitting club of Choi Yee, a girl who suffers from excessive sweating, which forces her to lead an "air conditioned life." But now her air conditioner is broken and she's miserable. Jack arrives, fixes the air conditioner and the three form an odd kind of family. Under their peaceful influence, Jack contacts

Sean and tells him he wants to retire, but soon afterwards Sean is attacked and killed. Swearing to avenge his dead partner, Jack tracks down the one-armed conman, but grants him a last-minute reprieve when the con artist says he can arrange for Jack to challenge an international gambler who has enough money to support Sean's wife.

Jack agrees to the match and triumphs easily. Before he leaves, he gives the one-armed conman a large chunk of his winnings. Deeply moved, the conman calls off a hit he had ordered on Jack but it's too late – while getting off the ferry, Jack is stabbed to death. He makes it to Choi Yee's house just in time to perform one final trick, conjuring up a snowstorm that covers the room, the streets, all of Lantau and, finally, the giant Buddha which disappears at last into the snow. All that remains is a thin trickle of bright red blood, flowing from Jack's dead body. He is finally at peace.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We've all experienced the mysterious power of magic. The first person who saw moving lights and shadows projected on a silver screen thought it was magic; when people first heard voices over the telephone, or music came out of a box called "radio," they thought it was magic.

Life can be simple; and magic is not necessarily always performed by a great magician. If someone can make you happy, make you forget about your worries for a while, make you forget your heartbreak and sorrow, that person is your magician.

DIRECTOR

KWOK Tsz-kin started his film career as an art director, became a scriptwriter and finally an assistant director for Wilson YIP (*Sha Po Lang, Ip Man*). His directorial debut in 2007, *The Pye-Dog*, won multiple awards, including Grand Prize at Japan's Asian Marine Film Festival and Best Supporting Actress at the Hong Kong Film Awards. In 2008, he completed *The Moss*, which participated in Seoul's Chungmuro International Film Festival and Montreal's Fantasia International Film Festival, winning several awards including Best New Director from the Hong Kong Film Directors Guild and Best New Director at the Hong Kong Film Awards. His latest film, *Gallants*, is a

kung-fu comedy tribute to Hong Kong's classic martial arts films of the 70's and 80's, and he recently finished work on *Frozen*, a fantasy romantic comedy.

PRODUCER

Teddy CHEN has been involved in Hong Kong filmmaking for almost two decades. His early career saw him take roles both in front of and behind the camera as an actor, screenwriter, assistant director and producer. CHEN directed his first film in 1991, and soon achieved critical and commercial success with his third film, *Twenty Something*, in 1994, followed by the action thrillers *Downtown Torpedoes* and *Purple Storm*. He directed Jackie CHAN's *The Accidental Spy* and founded Sum-wood Productions in 2005. His most recent film was *Bodyguards & Assassins*.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Veteran filmmaker Teddy CHEN has been working as both a producer and director under his Sum-Wood Productions Ltd banner for several years. In 2005, CHEN founded Sum-Wood Productions and directed Andy LAU's *Wait 'til You're Older* which was Hong Kong's second highest-grossing Chinese language film that year. CHEN is best known for combining artistic and commercial elements with innovative ideas and he views Sum-Wood as a platform for new and future filmmakers across the expanding Asian market.