

BE WITH ME

Singapore 2005

90 mins

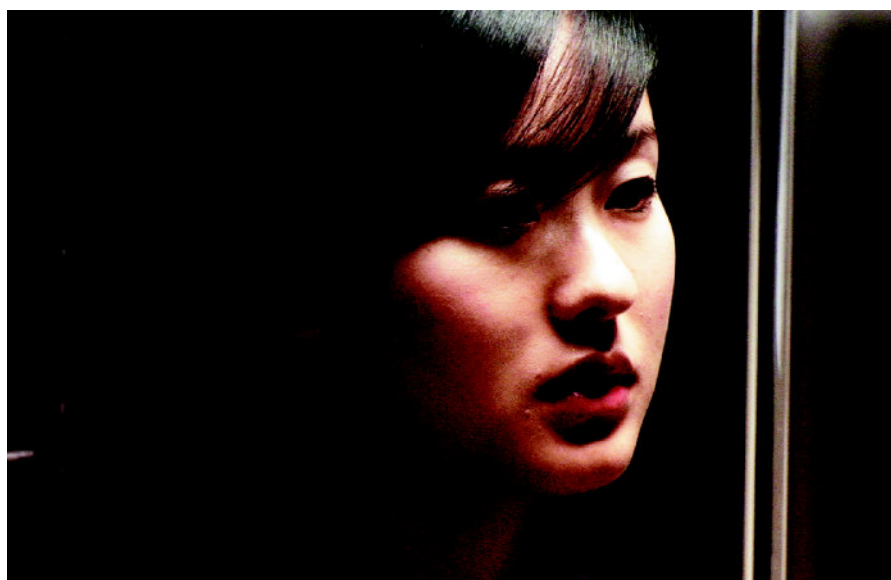
Crew and Cast

Director	Eric Khoo
Screenplay	Eric Khoo Wong Kim Hoh
Cinematography	Adrian Tan
Herself	Teresa Chan
Jackie	Enzann Lee
Sam	Samantha Tan
Fatty Koh	Seet Keng Yew

Synopsis

Singapore, the present. An ageing grocer is unable to accept the recent death of his wife, to the great concern of his social worker son. An overweight security guard named Fatty Koh is secretly in love with a woman who works in the building he supervises. He writes her a letter, but tears it up in a moment of self-loathing. Teenager Jackie arranges a date through an internet chatroom. Her date is revealed to be another girl, Sam. They become romantically attached, but Jackie later discovers Sam is also seeing a boy, and they separate. Real-life sixty-one-year-old Theresa Chan has been deaf and blind since she was 14. Her daily routines are shown while extracts from her autobiography appear as subtitles. The shopkeeper's son helps Ms Chan's career, and brings her some of his father's cooking on his visits.

After seeing Sam with her new girlfriend, Jackie jumps from a roof, but her fall is broken by Fatty Koh, who is walking below. Fatty is killed, but Jackie survives. The shopkeeper's son is called to attend to Jackie's attempted suicide and is unable to keep his regular appointment with Ms Chan; he asks his father to go in his place. At Ms Chan's house, the shopkeeper thinks of his wife and finally admits to himself that she has died. As he cries, Ms Chan comforts him.



Reviews

Eric Khoo's fourth feature, and his first solo effort since **12 Storeys** in 1997, adopts a familiar narrative by focusing on the true story of deaf and blind Theresa Chan while intertwining her situation with three fictional tales all having the common theme of love.

Be With Me opens on an old manual typewriter. An unseen typist is beginning a manuscript, setting up the theme of the three stories of love, loneliness and yearning but touching on different stages of these feelings. The first tale concerns a lonely, old shopkeeper (Chiew Sung Ching) who has given up on life, but still cooks food for his late wife, not accepting that she has died. The pain and sorrow is clear on his grief stricken face. Gradually interlaced is the livelier story of two average Singaporean teens getting to know each other via an Internet chat room. When Sam (Samantha Tan) and Jackie (Ezann Lee) eventually meet in person, they each discover that the other is female. Nevertheless they begin a clandestine relationship until Sam starts dating a boy. The final installment focuses on shy, overweight security guard Fatty Koh (Seet Keng-yew) whose love for the attractive woman who works in his building is matched only by his appetite for food. After stalking her by security cameras at work and watching her at home, he finally plucks up the courage to write her a love letter in Chinese with the help of a dictionary. Through a series of twists all three tales are connected together.

Khoo has based his film on Theresa Chan's autobiography, which details her fight to lead a normal life despite suffering deafness at age 12 and blindness two years later. The film has very little dialogue and is mainly silent, but the thoughts and feelings of the various characters, and their collective anguish for love, are communicated through body language and facial expressions. The typical use of food in Singaporean cinema emerges as a key factor in the first story to highlight loneliness.

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