

REASON8 FILMS presents Beata Parkanová's

# TINY LIGHTS



Six-year-old Amálka is shut out of a family argument. She spends an idyllic afternoon at the lake with her grandparents and later learns the fuss was about her mother's plan to break away and live as an artist in Prague.

## World Sales

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## **Synopsis**

Six-year-old Amálka is shut out of a family argument. She spends an idyllic afternoon at the lake with her grandparents and later learns the fuss was about her mother's plan to break away and live as an artist in Prague.

## **Long Synopsis**

Early one morning, six-year-old Amálka comes down to hear mother and grandma arguing behind the closed living room door. Something about being unhappy, fairy tales, and doing everything wrong. She is bored alone in her room and returns with a storybook. But as soon as she opens the door, the adults go silent. Grandma sends her back to her room, on the promise that they will take an afternoon trip to the lake.

At breakfast, Amálka's mom upbraids her dad for serving milk a mug rather than a proper glass, which Mr. Cat immediately overturns onto her dress. She leaves in a huff. Dad takes off for a match and Amálka plays by herself in a quiet corner of the garden until her mother drops her off at grandma's and takes off without staying for lunch.

Amálka spends the afternoon with her grandparents. She is sensitive to their quibbling, but they maintain they have never had a real argument in all their years together. They walk in the woods, pick blueberries and swim in the lake before returning to meet Amálka's mother at the house with a French gallerist working on her art show in Prague. As some harsh words are being exchanged, Amálka is sent off to play in the quiet corner of her garden.

## Director's Notes

I always begin writing by taking long walks to let the subject matter speak to me. As I sought to articulate the film's form, feeling, visual and verbal aspects, I resolved that the main character of this film was not really a "child" in the conventional sense but a person who happened to have just turned six. I took some time to properly profile a character who was as at once fragile and intense. As I came to think of some of the threads of Amálka's inner and outer stories as autobiographical, I was able to work them into the film.

In the outer story, Amálka and I share a distinctive grandmother, a quiet grandfather, and parents whose marriage had fallen apart. I grew up in a small town in a house with a big garden and was a reclusive child. The song Amálka sings under the table with grandpa is the one I used to sing with mine. And the story book dad reads from at the end of the film is the one my dad used to read to me from.

It is difficult for me to say just how much of Amálka's inner life mirrors or differs from mine. I am intrigued by the notion that the inner world of the film was hatched in my brain, but somehow, I had little to do with detailing it. That said, there are aspects of me inside each of the characters on screen. The film is, indeed, about my feelings, but it's not a recollection of anyone's actual family history. I thought and wrote for a very long time; but after the script took its final shape, not a word of it was changed in rehearsal or on set. With finished script in hand, we started looking for locations and creating a visual concept. Even though the film is set in Czechoslovakia in 1991, when I was six years old, we recognized that our theme was timeless and did not want to make a period piece. So, addressing the visuals we leaned towards emotion and intensity more than description.

Finding our house was perhaps the hardest part. I felt there was no room for compromise. When I write a script, I see a movie. I don't get the text first and then the visual idea. I try to capture the world I see. I needed the cinematographer and the architect to share my vision. It is my role to present the first images of locations, interiors or individual elements from interiors so that others can recognize, understand feel what I see. In the case of the house in the film, I found it up for sale in the real estate listings. I knew right away it was the one. It was magical. A mystery, out of time and out of any particular era, with a big garden.

We were bracing for what could have been two years of casting of hundreds of little girls to play the lead role, but providence was on our side. I had worked with Mia Bankó's older sister, Lea, on my previous film, *The Word*, and had spotted Mia once out of the corner of my eye. When later we were about to start looking for Amálka for *Tiny Lights*, I just knew it had to be her. And the producer of the film, Vojtěch Frič, was so strong and brave that he believed me.

As there was no long casting process to find Amálka, I took the time to work with Mia a lot for a full year before the shoot. As she had never acted in a film before, we worked at getting her used to the camera and the crew and then reviewed previews together. I also cast the other actors in time to rehearse a lot as a family with Mia before the shoot. I devote a lot of my time to preparation, thinking through every detail of the picture in advance.

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

**Beata Parkanová** Beata Parkanová is a screenwriter and director who began her career as an author of novels and children's books. She graduated from FAMU (the Czech Film Academy) in 2015. Her first feature film, *Moments (Chvilky)*, premiered in the East of the West competition at the 2018 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. Her second feature film, *Word (Slovo)*, premiered in the Main Competition of the 2022 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, where it won the Best Director and Best Actor awards.

## ABOUT THE CAST

**Elizaveta Maximová**, who plays Amálka's mother, is a Czech actress who started her career in the short film *Atlantis* (2013), which premiered in the Cinéfondation section at the Cannes International Film Festival. Since then, she has acted in both films and series, becoming one of the rising stars of Czech cinema. She took part in another Michal Blaško film, *The Victim*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2022. In the same year, she had a supporting role in the film *Borders of Love*, which competed at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. She was nominated for the prestigious Czech Lion Award for her lead role in the TV miniseries *Actor*.

**Veronika Žilková**, who plays Amálka's grandmother, is a versatile actress who has made her mark on the Czech film industry with her captivating performances across various genres. Žilková's talent was quickly recognized, propelling her into the spotlight. With notable roles in acclaimed films like *Forgotten Light* (1996), for which she won the Czech Lion Award, and Jan Švankmajer's *Little Otík* (2000), she has showcased her remarkable ability to embody complex characters with depth and authenticity.

**Martin Finger**, who plays Amálka's grandfather, is a Czech theatre and film actor. He started in the experimental ensemble of the Komédie Theatre and in 2010 had his first leading role in the film *Pouta (Walking Too Fast)*. He has starred in films by Jan Hřebejk and also in *I, Olga* (2016), which opened the Berlinale Panorama. He has worked with Beata Parkanová since her debut film *Moments* (2018). In 2022, he won the Best Actor Award at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival for his role in her film *Word*.

## ABOUT THE PRODUCER

**Vojtěch Frič** is an award-winning film producer based in Prague. Graduating from FAMU, the Czech Film Academy, his passion for storytelling led him to produce a diverse array of cinematic works. Notable among these is *I, Olga* (2016), a compelling portrayal that garnered critical acclaim for its raw depiction of the soul of a lonely mass murderer. As a producer, he stands behind not only arthouse titles but also box-office hits like *Prvok*, *Šampón*, *Tečka a Karel* (2021).

## THE CAST

Mia Bankó  
Elizaveta Maximová  
Veronika Zilková  
Martin Finger  
Marek Geisberg

## THE CREW

Director – Beata Parkanová  
Writer - Beata Parkanová  
Producers – Vojtěch Frič, Přemysl Martinek, Martin Palán, Ondřej Kulhánek, Maroš Hečko, Peter Veverka  
Cinematographer – Tomas Juríček  
Editor - Alois Fišárek  
Production Designers – Petr Bakoš  
Sound – Viktor Krivosudský  
Composer – Michal Novinski

## TECH SPECS

Running Time: **75 min**  
Aspect Ratio: **1.77:1**  
Sound: **5.1**  
Shooting Format: **Digital, Color**  
Languages: **Czech**  
Production Country: **Czechia, Slovakia**  
Production Companies: **Love.FRAME, Bontonfilm Studios, Azyl Production**





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