



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

JULIE KEEPS QUIET (12A)

Director: Leonardo Van Dijl

Starring: Tessa Van den Broeck, Grace Biot, Alyssa Lorette

Belgium/Sweden, 2024, 1 hour 40 minutes, Dutch/French + English subtitles

This impressive feature debut from Belgian director Leonardo Van Dijl is a tense psychological drama centred on the world of an elite tennis academy.

When Julie's coach is suspended due to alleged misconduct following the suicide of one of his students, she and all of her fellow players are expected to speak up. Julie, however, refuses to talk about her experiences, instead refocusing her attention on her training.

Rather than the flamboyant stylings of Luca Guadagnino's *Challengers* (2024's other big tennis film), here we see the game depicted with muted realism, in a similar vein to the work of the Dardenne brothers who also co-produced the film. We focus on Julie's quiet determination, and the repetitive monotony of her training sessions, in a refined character study of what it takes to make it in the world of competitive sport.

"The world of sports is interesting because I can address relevant issues in a defined arena that serves as a broader metaphor for our society. On a more personal level, Julie is fearless, and that's both her strength and, unfortunately, her weak point—she doesn't know where to draw the line. I identify with Julie, the athlete. Cinema was never a given for me; I had to earn every step along the way. The journey was challenging—sometimes abusive or cruel—but in the end, I completed my film, and that has been empowering. That's what the mindset of an athlete has taught me over all these years. I also personally have a big love for tennis, and I wanted Julie to be surrounded by the things I truly love. I wanted to convey that love to the audience. I wanted to say: "You'll be okay. Despite everything, you'll be okay" (Leonardo Van Dijl).

Preview courtesy of Curzon Film

Notes compiled by Emily Mason

If you like **JULIE KEEPS QUIET**, you may enjoy:

SEX Two chimney sweeps in monogamous, heterosexual marriages both end up in situations that challenge their views on sexuality and gender roles.

WANDA Barbara Loden's first and only feature film, one she wrote, directed and starred in, has nevertheless exerted a huge influence on filmmakers of all genders ever since.