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Beau/Derek on Salmon Fishing in the Yemen

"Salmon Fishing in the Yemen" attempts to dilute, if not to eradicate, the Arab stereotypes created by the dichotomy between Eastern and Western civilizations through a dream that is incomprehensible.

Enter the bountiful wealth provided by an Arab sheik--portrayed by Amr Waked--whose mission in life is to improve the living conditions of his war-torn country, Yemen. The potentate's plan is to create a vestige of an implausibility and impossibility by turning the desert into a pond filled with premium Scottish salmon. It is through his passion for fishing that he concocts this noble idea with his esurient and unfathomable desire for economic progress.

The script is written by Simon Beaufoy, well-known for his work in the Oscar-winning film, "Slumdog Millionaire." Beaufoy is also famous for creating extraordinary and noble lives through unremarkable characters or "commoners" in movie scripts. This, once again, is evident in "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen."

Enter Fred, a fisheries expert played by Ewan McGregor, and Harriet, the sheik's representative from London. Off they go to Yemen, with the common purpose of exploring the sheik's dream. However, with the flagrant and war-stricken region at hand, their mission turns to a poignant humanitarian service. The ending is predictable and yet thoughtful.

Seemingly enough, as the movie aspires for the lowest common denominator between war and peace, moviegoers will be in the bifurcation of disparity -- either you will like the film or you won't.

Come to Lamorinda Theatres and perhaps you can find the common ground between East and West in this wonderful Indie film!

(Derek Zemrak is a filmmaker and the president of the California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFFA); Beau Behan is the CAIFFA program director and director of the Lamorinda Theatres.)

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