

REASON8 FILMS presents Dmitrii Davydov's

SCARECROW



People avoid and fear her but make their way quietly to her door, because only she can resolve problems of all kinds. She is a healer, a hermit, a holy fool and a drinker, who gave up on herself a long time ago. She knows the saving grace she administers is destroying her. But try as she may, she never succeeds at withholding anything.

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Director's Statement

"Scarecrow" is about what it means to sacrifice for the sake of others. The idea had been growing inside me for ten years. I began developing the story of a healer. After some time, I put it aside in favor of other projects. But last year I went back to the roots of the original idea — it's time had come.

The main character of the film is burdened by an internal tragedy. She wields the great gift of healing others, but cannot help herself. Self-sacrifice is the only way for her to numb her pain and escape unbearable stress. Her situation represents an eternal dilemma: is it possible to live on one's own in calm and comfort, or are we all destined to live for the sake of others. By choosing the latter, Scarecrow forgoes contentment and gives of herself completely. The fear the villagers bear for her incredible gifts turns into resentment. The community is unable to understand or accommodate the loner. They doubt her powers and exclude her in ways that open her life to violent confrontation.

Scarecrow holds out hope that if only she can find her long lost daughter, all will be well. Her hopes are dashed when she discovers the daughter living in a brothel in town, condemned to a life of involuntary servitude all too painfully similar to her own fate.

Even as I support the general concepts of justice, honor and conscience, there are no pronounced antagonists in my films. None of my characters are absolutely good or bad. Every one of them has his or her own beliefs and points of view. It is important only that everyone in society makes the effort to listen to the voices of others. As we approach the denouement of the story, Scarecrow becomes ever more quiet. Complete silence ensues.

Synopsis

Concerned villagers bring Scarecrow to the clinic, where a young woman is dying of a gunshot wound accidentally inflicted by her husband. The new doctor recommends taking the woman to the city; but the district police officer Ivan argues she would not survive the trip. Despite her initial resistance, Scarecrow agrees to intervene, after she hears that if the woman dies, inspectors would come to turn the whole town upside down and the children would be left in the hands of the idiot who shot their mother. Scarecrow asks to be left alone with the dying woman.

As she doubles over vomiting, Scarecrow tells Ivan the woman will be all right. She asks if he has any news for her. He has none, but gives her some money and asks her not to buy vodka with it. Scarecrow walks alone at night drinking from the bottle. She visits a friend who stokes a giant furnace and has a cot in the boiler room, where Scarecrow drinks and complains.

Scarecrow goes to the general store to buy bread, but the local thug Stepan and his buddies kick her out. A woman arrives at her home with a bag of groceries and a bottle of vodka, her husband's tool is out of order. They have tried everything and don't believe in healers, but have heard a lot about Scarecrow. She asks the husband to drop his shorts and orders the wife to go outside. Later, Scarecrow wretches and spits as the couple take off. Scarecrow lives in squalor and dark primeval solitude. A neighbor arrives to beg one more time for help for her daughter, but Scarecrow holds firm and turns her away.

Three people arrive with their grandmother, who does not want Scarecrow to come near. They leave her to work. A man brings fire wood and asks Scarecrow to help his son, who recently started stuttering. At night, Scarecrow plays the fool outside a neighbor's kitchen and is later spied through her window wildly dancing alone, as if possessed. A passing thug sees her and spits.

After an altercation at the clinic, Scarecrow gets badly beaten by Stepan, whose wife is pregnant and soon needs Scarecrow's help.

Scarecrow holds out hope that she will one day find her daughter and start a better life. Ivan's leads in the city find the daughter's address. Scarecrow sets out for a reunion that was not meant to be.

She returns to the village to in despair. Even as she knows the help she gives has been draining away her own life force, Scarecrow resolves to reverse course and help her neighbor's daughter, no matter how damaging it will prove to be.

About the Director

Dmitrii Davydov was born in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and trained as a primary school teacher. In his native village he organized a club for teenagers and made amateur videos and short fiction films. His work in film has always be oriented to local content – intimate stories elevated by the universal language of film. He works with non-professional actors, many of which come from amateur theater, and crews made up of fellow Yakut filmmakers.

In 2014, Dmitrii wrote the script for his first feature film, "Bonfire," which was released two years later and has played at more than twenty international film festivals. His short "River" and feature film "There is No God but Me" were released in 2019. "Scarecrow" is his third feature.

Filmography:

2020 – *Scarecrow* - 72 min

2019 - *There is No God but Me* - 115 min

2019 - *River* - 21 min

2016 - *Bonfire* - 84 min

About the Lead Actress

Valentina Romanova-Chyskyray was born in 1971 in the village of Mindagai, Churapchinsky District, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), surrounded by nature and a rich musical and storytelling culture. She is a graduate of Republican Creative Workshop of National Art of Yakutsk State University n.a. M.K. Ammosov.

In 1996, Valentina became a soloist of the State Variete Theater and soon gained popularity as an ethnic singer. Her music employs a wide variety of traditional vocal techniques and draws upon oral epics, folk songs and animal imitation. She mixes jazz, ethno, Yakut folklore, and rock, and is distinguished by an almost psychedelic performance style and a range of three octaves.

Valentina has given recitals and masterclasses in London and Helsinki. In 2007, she released her first album at the SOAS University of London. In 2008, she recorded two pieces that were included in the Bril Brothers' album of jazz music. Valentina Romanova is the founder of her own vocal school. Author of the one-woman show "Kotobun". "Scarecrow" is Valentina's film debut.

About the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

The Republic of Sakha-Yakutia in northeast Siberia is the largest republic of the Russian Federation, comprising 18% of Federation land, but with a population of fewer than one million. Given its extremely harsh climate, railways bypass this region. Rivers are the primary transportation routes for the three or four months they are navigable. Winter sled trails are well travelled; but most locations are reachable only by air. Fortunately, isolation has afforded Sakha people the rare opportunity to preserve their unique identity and language and nurture a small but vibrant film culture.

THE CAST

Scarecrow – Valentina Romanova-Chyskyrray
Police Officer - Anatoly Struchkov
Stepan – Artur Zakharov
Stoker – Mikhail Afanasyev
Prostitute – Lana Andreeva
Madam – Marianna Atlasova
Lyuba – Tatyana Ustinova
Volodya – Ilyas Zarovnyaev
Police Detective - Nikolai Ivanov
Housewife – Anna Zakharova
Nikolay – Igor Bystrov
Nikolay's son – Vitaliy Grigoryev
Larisa – Varvara Kalashnikova
Stepan's wife – Sargylana Lukovtseva
Vera – Nadezhda Kuzmina
Marfa – Anilena Guryeva
Marfa's daughter – Naryya Nikolaeva

THE CREW

Writer/Director – Dmitrii Davydov
Cinematographer – Ivan Semyonov
Editor – Stepan Burnashev
Composer – Sergey Yarmonov
Producer – Dmitrii Davydov
Executive Producer – Naryya Nikolaeva
First Assistant Director – Evgeniy Nikolaev
Gaffer – Aryyaan Kolodeznikov
Makeup artist – Tamara Ivanova
Sound editor – Sergey Yarmonov

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Bonfire Production

TECH SPECS

Running time: 72 min

Languages: Yakut, Russian

Ratio: 2.35

Resolution: 2k

Color



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