

## HAF 14 The Priest in the Village



**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** China

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Drama, Suspense | 16mm | Yulin Dialect | 90 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

Renai WEI Yongyao

**PRODUCER:**

ZHAO Jin

XU Jiahao

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents, Pre-sales

**BUDGET:**

US\$750,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

First Feature Director

**ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS**

In a rainy mountain village in Southern China, a priest insists on holding a traditional seven-day funeral. However, his city-based family members are against the decision.

## SYNOPSIS

Strange things keep happening in a rainy mountain village in Southern China. The mother of the priest anticipates her death and is waiting for the end. However, after a month, she still remains alive. Not knowing when the mother will pass away, the priest's sister and brother, who work in the city, have to return to the village from time to time. Meanwhile, peculiar incidents such as vanished cows, mysterious ghost fires and children getting sick successively perturb the villagers. The priest is charged with finding a solution. Caught between his family affairs and his communal responsibility, the priest is at loss. When his mother finally passes away, the priest announces that the funeral is to be followed by a seven-day vigil. The brother and the sister cannot stay that long due to their work. The priest insists on the decision and maintains that it is a protection for their deceased mother's soul. As the tensions in the family as well as the pressure coming from the villagers intensify, what will the isolated priest do?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The story of this movie is primarily based on true events in my hometown. As the priest of my village, my uncle is in charge of all spiritual ceremonies. Yet, a new concrete road has transformed the villagers' lifestyle. I still remember how villagers stared at me when I first arrived home in a car. Now, along the unstoppable path of urbanization, younger people leave for the cities for better jobs. As in the story, while some no longer believe in the priest, there are always those who adhere to the tradition, which is how the kernel of this conflict comes about. I want to present people as they are, caught in the heart of changes.

## DIRECTOR

### **Renai WEI Yongyao**

Renai is an independent filmmaker born in Guangxi, China. As the first Chinese student to study cinema photography at the Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts, Prague (FAMU), Renai received the mentorship of the Oscar-winning cinematographer Vladimir Smutny. In 2017, Renai's short film *Heimweh* was selected in the official competition of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ostrava Kamera Oko Film Festival. His feature film project, *The Wind Will Say* (2018) was selected in the project market of the 8<sup>th</sup> Beijing International Film Festival and the film lab of the 20<sup>th</sup> Shanghai International Film Festival.

## **PRODUCER**

### **ZHAO Jin, XU Jiahan**

Zhao Jin and Xu Jiahan co-founded and are producers with MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS and also are partners in the international sales of PARALLAX FILMS. The projects they have produced include *Vanishing Days* (Berlin, 2019), *Three Adventures of Brooke* (Venice, 2018), *I've Got a Little Problem* (Busan, 2017), *Life Imitation* (BFI London, 2017). They have participated in international sales of *Girls Always Happy* (Berlin, 2018), *The Fragile House* (Locarno, 2018) and others.

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

### **MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS**

MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS is a film production and service brand that is devoted to developing and producing films with international vision and idiosyncratic style, both commercial and arthouse. Striving to integrate all segments of the global film industry, MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS also has two subsidiaries: an international sales and film festivals PR company, PARALLAX FILMS, and a new media brand, DEEP FOCUS. The company has agents in Paris, New York, Hong Kong and Tokyo and its business covers all major film markets and festivals worldwide.