



სადაც დრო შეჩერდა

Where Time Stood Still

A film by
Nino Benashvili

Logline



A widowed mother and daughter lead an ascetic life in a remote mountain village until their status quo is interrupted by the arrival of a traveller.

Synopsis



A widowed mother and daughter's ascetic life in an isolated village in the Caucasus mountains is interrupted by the arrival of a foreign traveller in need of shelter. His presence awakens erotic longing in both women, who are left to simmer in their guilty consciences after the traveller departs.



ZABALTEGI-TABAKALERIA

სადაც დრო იდგა



Technical Specifications

Title	Where Time Stood Still / Sadac Dro Idga
Genre	Drama
Country of Production	Georgia/USA
Filming Location	Guria, Georgia
TRT	13 minutes
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Resolution	2k
Shooting Format	Digital
Audio	5.1
Language	Georgian, English
Subtitle	English
Year of Completion	2024

Director's Note

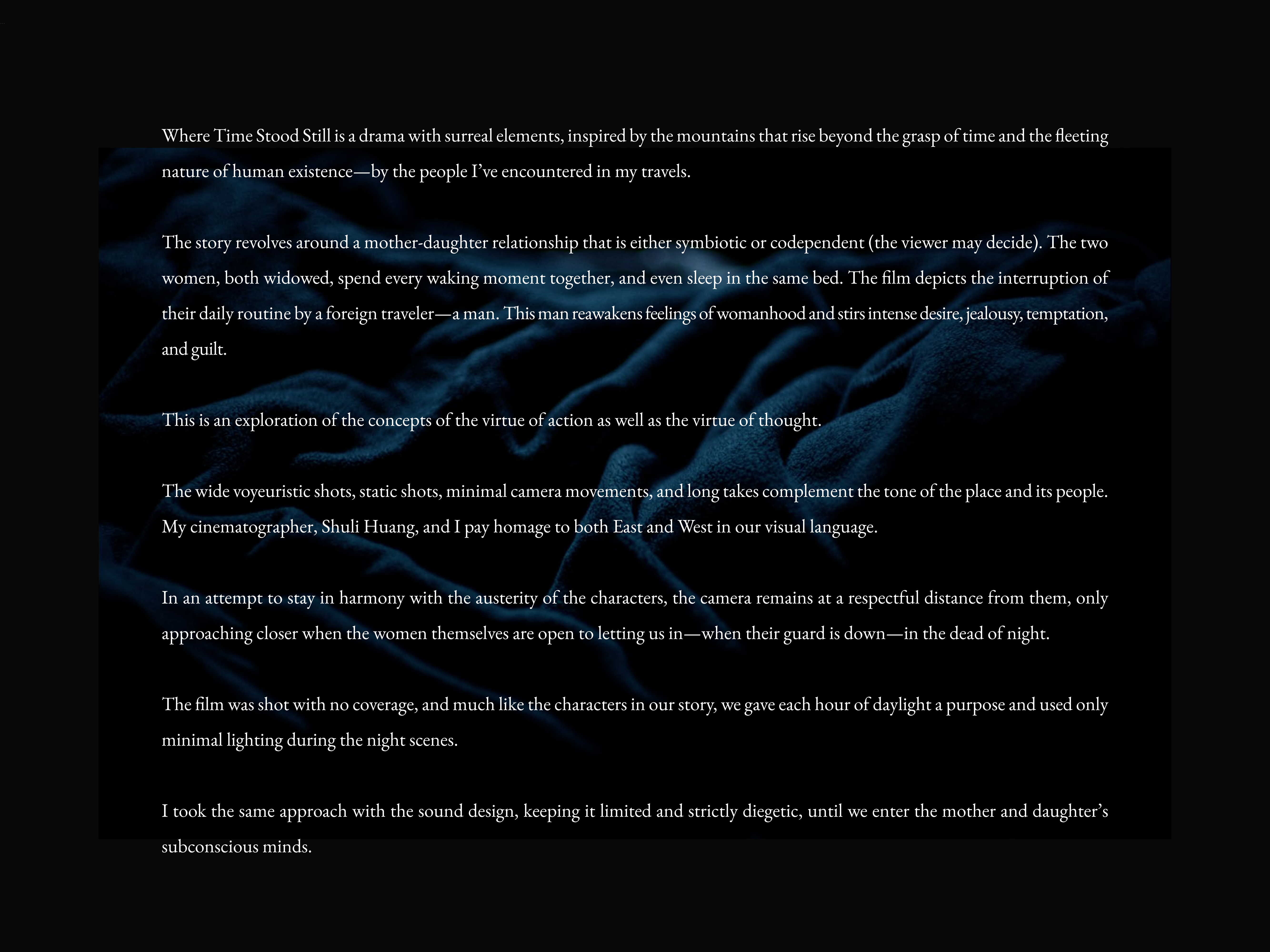
I was born and raised in Tbilisi, Georgia, and whenever I had the chance, I would leave the city to summit the peaks of the Caucasus Mountain range—a mystical place nestled on the border between Eastern and Western cultures.

During my travels, I knew that if the need arose, I could depend on the hospitality of the local people and knock on any door for shelter. I understood that even in modern times, someone would always invite me in, welcoming me with the words, “A guest is a gift from God”—an honor extended to both foreigners and Georgians alike.

The people I encountered during my travels didn't speak much. Creatures of habit and century-old traditions, they gave each hour of daylight a purpose—there was a time for feeding cattle, there was a time for praying, and even singing.

In this deeply religious culture, each member of the family has strictly defined roles, and the ancient traditions remain as unmoved as the mountains that surround them.

Naturally, there is a dark side to this adherence to archaic routines, and it will come as no surprise that it is mostly women who suffer from it. In these societies “until death do us part” loses its meaning. Even if they are widowed, women are still expected to maintain their husband's honor; they are closely scrutinized by their family members and neighbors of both genders.



Where Time Stood Still is a drama with surreal elements, inspired by the mountains that rise beyond the grasp of time and the fleeting nature of human existence—by the people I’ve encountered in my travels.

The story revolves around a mother-daughter relationship that is either symbiotic or codependent (the viewer may decide). The two women, both widowed, spend every waking moment together, and even sleep in the same bed. The film depicts the interruption of their daily routine by a foreign traveler—a man. This man reawakens feelings of womanhood and stirs intense desire, jealousy, temptation, and guilt.

This is an exploration of the concepts of the virtue of action as well as the virtue of thought.

The wide voyeuristic shots, static shots, minimal camera movements, and long takes complement the tone of the place and its people. My cinematographer, Shuli Huang, and I pay homage to both East and West in our visual language.

In an attempt to stay in harmony with the austerity of the characters, the camera remains at a respectful distance from them, only approaching closer when the women themselves are open to letting us in—when their guard is down—in the dead of night.

The film was shot with no coverage, and much like the characters in our story, we gave each hour of daylight a purpose and used only minimal lighting during the night scenes.

I took the same approach with the sound design, keeping it limited and strictly diegetic, until we enter the mother and daughter’s subconscious minds.



NINO BENASHVILI

Writer and director

Producer, editor & sound designer

Nino Benashvili is a writer and director from Tbilisi, Georgia, based in New York City.

She is the first Georgian woman to attend the NYU Tisch Graduate Film program, where she has been named a 2023 BAFTA US Scholar and has been awarded the Maurice Kanbar Scholarship.

Her debut narrative short film *სადაც დრო იდგა/Where Time Stood Still* will compete with the world premiere at 72nd Donostia-San Sebastián Film Festival in Zabaltegi-Tabakalera Section.

Born during the Georgian Civil War, Nino focused her award-winning documentary short, *ნიქოზის შვილები/Children of Nikozi (2021)*, on her childhood village of Nikozi, which was bombed during the Russo-Georgian War in 2008. The film has been screened at festivals worldwide, won Bronze Remi at 2021 Houston Worldfest International Film Festival and aired on PBS.

Nino earned her B.A. from St. John's College Annapolis, where she double majored in Philosophy and the History of Science, with a double minor in Classical Studies and Comparative Literature. In addition to Georgian and English, she is fluent in German and Russian, and has a working knowledge of Ancient Greek and French.

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Cast



KETA LORTKIPANIDZE

Daughter

Keta Lortkipanidze is a theater and film actress with over 20 years of experience. She began in theater, where she played numerous leading roles in productions like *Richard III* and *Brothers*. Her success extended to Georgian television, starring in series such as *Shua Kalakshi*, *Girl from the Suburbs*, and *Next to Us*. Keta has also appeared in various films, including *Where Time Stood Still*, *Idiocracy*, *Everything Will Be Fine*, *Mister Nanny*, *Love at First Sight*, *The Adventures of Ano and Vano*, and *Dinola* (2023 European Film Awards).



TAMAR MDINARADZE

Mother

Tamar Mdinaradze, born on August 17, 1959, in Ozurgeti, Georgia, is a celebrated actress with a background in music and drama. She graduated in piano from Moscow Gnesin State Musical College and in drama acting from Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film State University. A leading performer at Ozurgeti State Drama Theatre, Tamar won Best Performance in a Female Role for *Kiss* at 2019 international festivals. She received the Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Award in 2021 and was recognized as a *Cultural Ambassador* of the Georgian Stage. In 2023, she appeared in *Blackbird*, *Blackbird Blackberry* at 2023 Cannes Quinzaine des Cinéastes, and her latest film, *Where Time Stood Still*, is to premiere at San Sebastian.



JACK HUBBELL

Guest

Jack Hubbell from Connecticut, USA and now based in Tbilisi, Georgia, is an actor, photographer, and writer. His passion for performance began in high school and developed during his studio art studies at Denison University. After working on small film projects in Cleveland, his love for acting flourished abroad. Jack also expresses his creativity through photography and writing, focusing on adventure and human connection. His work across these mediums reflects a deep love for storytelling and a pursuit of new experiences.



Website www.shulihuang.com

SHULI HUANG

Cinematographer

Shuli Huang is a Chinese writer, director, and cinematographer living in New York.

His first short film, *Will You Look At Me*, premiered at the 61st Semaine de la Critique where it was awarded the Queer Palm of Festival de Cannes 2022, and went on to win the Short Film Jury Award at Sundance Film Festival 2023. *Goodbye First Love*, his second short film premiered in competition at Berlinale Shorts 2024 and was later selected for New Directors/ New Films 2024.

He worked as a cinematographer on several feature films, including *Farewell, My Hometown*, which won the New Currents Award at Busan International Film Festival 2021, and *Borrowed Time*, selected for International Film Festival Rotterdam 2024.

Shuli studied cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy and film directing in the Graduate Film Program at New York University.

Producers



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JOECAR HANNA

Producer

A Chinese-Lebanese filmmaker raised in Valencia, Spain, is currently a fourth-year student in the Graduate Film MFA program at NYU. During his early 20s, he edited six feature films and a TV show, including a Goya-nominated animation film.

Upon moving to New York, he began gaining recognition, winning the Black Family Prize for his short film *Deliver Me*. This film premiered at SXSW 2023 and was sold to Canal+, earning him a BAFTA Scholarship nomination and the Ang Lee Scholarship Award. JoeCAR was also selected for the Marcie Bloom Fellowship (Sony Pictures Classics) in 2022-2023. Recently, he played one of the main roles and edited *Lump*, the upcoming feature film by director Alexandre Rockwell.

Additionally, he is currently working on his first feature film with Joshua Astrachan (*Animal Kingdom*) as the producer while preparing his thesis film, which received the Spike Lee Production Fund.



Website www.citrine-presents.com

NATALIE REMPLAKOWSKI

Producer

Natalie Remplakowski is a Polish-Canadian filmmaker based between Toronto and NYC with over a decade of broad experience in both scripted fiction and creative nonfiction work for all platforms. Natalie has been a producer on award-winning films and series that have been recognized by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television and festivals worldwide including Venice, TIFF, Sundance, Cannes, New York Film Festival, SXSW, among others. She is a current candidate of New York University's Tisch Graduate Film Program. Natalie is the founder and president of both Toronto and New York City based Citrine Productions. Citrine is currently in post-production on *Sea Horse*, written, directed by and starring [Aisha Evelynna](#), partially funded by [Telefilm Canada's Talent to Watch Program](#). Natalie holds a BFA in Theatre with a Specialized Honours in Acting from York University.



Website www.fireproduction.ge

TAMAR TVARADZE

Producer

Tamar Tvaradze is a producer, guest lecturer and the founder of Fire Production, with over 13 years of on-set experience. She has extensive expertise in international film and video production. A graduate of Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film State University of Georgia in film directing, she has produced award-winning short films like *Dinosaur*, *Anna*, and *Neighbors*, as well as the feature films *Grandmother* and *Golden Thread*. Her work has been recognized at festivals such as the Tbilisi International Film Festival, Los Angeles Short Film Super Festival, and Uppsala Short Film Fest. She was also nominated for the 2020 European Short Film Award. Her latest short film project as a producer *Where Time Stood Still* is set to world premiere at San Sebastian Film Festival.

Key Crew



KOTE JAPARIDZE

Production Designer

Born in 1971 in Tbilisi, Georgia, Kote Japaridze is an accomplished film production designer with extensive experience in both Georgian and international cinema. He graduated from the Art Academy of Georgia with a degree in Film and Television Production Design.

Kote has worked on numerous award-winning films, to highlight a few: Nana Ekvimishvili and Simon Gross's *My Happy Family* (2017 Sundance Grand Jury Prize) and *In Bloom* (2013 Berlinale CICA Award, Georgia's entry at the 86th Academy Awards), as well as Levan Koguashvili's *Brighton 4th* (2021 Tribeca Best Narrative Feature). His work also includes short films like Nino Benashvili's *Where Time Stood Still* (2024 San Sebastián official selection) and Dea Kulumbegashvili's *Léthé* (2016 Cannes nominee and San Sebastián official selection).



REUBEN HAMLYN

Co-editor

Reuben Hamlyn is an Emmy and BIFA-nominated writer, director, and editor based in New York, originally from London. His collaborations as an editor have premiered at Venice and San Sebastián film festivals. His directorial debut, *Another Body* (2023), premiered at SXSW, won the Special Jury Prize, and received Emmy and BIFA nominations. His short film *Roger* (2019), commissioned by the BFI and BBC Arts, aired on BBC Four and won multiple awards. His latest short, *Bitter Weeds* (2024), is a semi-finalist for a Student Academy Award. Reuben is an MFA candidate at NYU's Grad Film program, supported by a TSOA Scholarship and W.T.C. Johnson Fellowship.







Production Journey



‘After a snowstorm blocked our original filming location the day before production, we pivoted to a new village, where we started anew, all our previous plans given to the wind. Sometimes, the best results come in the most extreme of situations.’ - **Kote Japaridze, Production Designer**

‘We convinced the mayor, who had forgotten about the roads to Qvabga, to clear them for the first time since Soviet times. Village representatives even joined us in shoveling snow—it was surreal.’
- Tamar Tvaradze, Producer

‘Each morning it was unclear if we could get up to the filming location, it was off-road driving on ice with wolves howling around us, so much extreme, so much excitement with the best cast and crew.’
- Irakli Chapidze, Associate Producer/ Driver



‘I can say for sure that this was the best expedition/set, so beautiful both the place, people and the director’s vision.’ - Naniko Sulakvelidze, HMU

‘I couldn’t feel my toes and it was still great.’ - Gaby Clingman, 1st AC

‘This film lead us through the roads (literally and figuratively) as magical as the mountains of Guria.’
- Kato Tkemaladze, 1st AD



‘You couldn’t be bored with this set, the best expedition with the best people.’
- Tamar Mdinradze, Mother

‘In extreme conditions, away from civilization, I was able to enter my character in a very organic way. One of the best creative collaborations for me.’ - Keta Lortkipanidze, daughter

Crew



Co-producer Metro Production
Jiashu Jhou

Associate Producer Irakli Chapidze
Ardavan Sepehr

Additional Writer Qeti Jakeli
1st Assistant Director Kato Tkemaladze
Production Manager Giorgi Ninikashvili
Koka Chkhaidze

Costume Designer Anka Gabunia
Set Dresser Noe Kapanadze
Hair and Make-up Naniko Sulakvelidze

1st Assistant Camera Gaby Clingman
2nd Assistant Camera Paata Gelashvili
Gaffer David Kramer

Key Grip Andre Shen
Electric David Eremadze
Playback Koba Rostiashvili

DIT/BTS Nina Babalashvili
Sound Mixer Giorgi Koridze
Boom Operator Katie Eristavi

Location Scout Oto Toidze
Levan Saralidze
Elene Benashvili
Nona Qiliftari
PA/Drivers Giorgi Giorgadze
Aleks Macharashvili
Rezi Chkhaidze

Post Production Sound Irakli Ivanishvili
Tamta Mandzulashvili
Nino Benashvili

Original Score Alexandra Funes
Whistling Tune Nancy McArthur
Score Mixer Josué Vela
Additional re-recording Mixer Wren Stark Haven
Additional foley Jonathan Braithwaite
Wren Stark Haven
Jonathan Braithwaite

Colorist Clinton Homuth
Assistant Colorist Austin Tang
Producer for ArtJail Alison Maxwell
Campaign Creative Direction Andre Shen
Graphic Designer Andre Shen
Poster Designer Tatia Nadareishvili





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