



# **A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE**

**(Dolgaya schastlivaya zhizn)**

**a film by Boris Khlebnikov**



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## **Synopsis**

A young farmer named Sasha stands at the beginning of a new, happy life. The state is buying up land from small landowners. For Sasha, this is a chance to escape the potato farm he has grown tired of, and return to the city, taking along his beloved Anna (a clerk in the local land administration department). But once the deal is closed and the farm is doomed, the local villagers suddenly rise up in protest. They convince Sasha, the 'boss', to come to their aid and save the farm – the village's only means of survival. Sasha is touched by the villagers' eagerness to cast him in the role of a local leader and object of their love and hope. He tries his best to help the villagers. But when he puts the brakes on the transfer of the farm to the state, local officials view it as a symptom of schizophrenia, and his girlfriend takes it as his refusal to share a life in the city with her. Sasha finds himself caught up in a fight which is not his, entangled in a web of passion, pride, and irreversible actions.

## **About *A Long and Happy Life***

*A Long and Happy Life / Dolgaya schastlivaya zhizn* is the conclusion of Boris Khlebnikov's trilogy about the inevitability of choice. The first two films, *Free Floating / Svobodnoe plavanie* and *Help Gone Mad / Sumasshedshaya pomoshch*, enjoyed a warm reception at international film screenings. The screenplays for all three films were written by Alexander Rodionov. *A Long and Happy Life* stars Alexander Yatsenko.

## **Comments from scriptwriter Alexander Rodionov**

*For the screenplay, Boris Khlebnikov and I studied the farming industry, collecting observations and conducting interviews in central and northern Russia. We were captivated by the bravery and enthusiasm of all sorts of people: young and old, talented businessmen and risk takers, people from old farming families and recent emigrants from the city.*

*Out of all the people we spoke to, we tried to pick the boldest, though not the most successful, young farmer as the prototype for Sasha, our main character. We used his experience as the prism through which we examined the conflict that emerges between the dream of 'a long and happy life', and the dream of freedom, independence, and the right to choose.*

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## **Boris Khlebnikov (director)**

Boris Khlebnikov was born on 28 August 1972. Before enrolling in the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography, he spent two years studying biology at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute. His feature-length directorial debut was *Roads to Koktebel / Koktebel*, co-directed with Aleksey Popogrebsky.

2003 - *Roads to Koktebel / Koktebel* (co-directed with Aleksey Popogrebsky)

2006 - *Free Floating / Svobodnoe plavanie*

2009 - *Help Gone Mad / Sumasshedshaya pomoshch*

2009 - *Crush / Korotkoe zamykanie* (segment from *Shame / Pozor*)

2012 - *Nowhere to Rush / Nekuda speshit* (segment from *Salvation Tunnel / Spasitelny tunnel*)

2012 - *Until the Night Separates Us / Poka noch ne razluchit*

2013 - *A Long and Happy Life / Dolgaya schastlivaya zhizn*

## **Director's Statement**

*It all began when I watched, for the umpteenth time, the 1952 American Western High Noon. At some point, just for fun, I came up with a Russian version of the story. At first, I didn't take it seriously. But for some reason, I gradually came to believe that I could really do this.*

*I wanted to make a full-on, modern-day Western. We when we started to study the subject of the story, as we began to visit farms, naturally, the plot and the genre began to fall apart. We were deluged with observations that pulled the story in a completely different direction.*

*We shot the film in the north, on the Tersky Coast of the White Sea, in the village of Umba in Murmansk Region. The area has a unique natural beauty: pinewoods, cliffs, and small plots of land that used to house farms. It was crucial that we convey the sense that this village is very far from Moscow, that this is a place where the relationship between people and government is more direct.*

*When I saw the way trees and bushes consume and destroy the deserted farms, I knew this was the perfect location for our shoot. Here, you get a real sense that nature is watching everything we do, that it is stronger than us.*

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**MAIN CAST**

Alexander Sergeevich	Alexander Yatsenko
Anya	Anna Kotova
Volodia	Vladimir Korobeinikov
Serega	Sergey Nasedkin
Zhenia	Eugene Sityi
Zhenia`s wife	Inna Sterligova
Sashka	Alexander Aliabiev
Serezhka	Sergey Pestrikov
Olezhka	Gleb Puskepalis
Senior Specialist Andrey	Pavel Kolesnikov
Head of department Denis	Denis Yatkovskiy
Police officer	Valery Konstantinov
Head of KFK "Oktiabrskoe"	Mikhail Hapchuk
Kiosk sales person	Ludmila Familtseva
Andrukha	Andrey Monakhov

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**MAIN CREW**

Writers Alexander Rodionov, Boris Khlebnikov  
Director Boris Khlebnikov  
Director of Photography Pavel Kostomarov  
Editor Ivan Lebedev  
Production Designer Olga Khlebnikova  
Costume Designer Svetlana Mikhailova  
Make-Up Raisa Molchanova  
Sound Maxim Belovolov  
Assistant Director Olga Granina  
Color Kirill Bobrov  
Line Producer Natalia Borisevich  
Executive Producer Andrey Murtazaliev  
Producers Roman Borisevich  
Alexander Kushaev  
World Sales Films Boutique

KOKTEBEL FILM COMPANY with the support of RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
presents

a film by BORIS KHLEBNIKOV 'A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE'  
cast ALEXANDER YATSENKO ANNA KOTOVA VLADIMIR KOROBENIKOV SERGEY  
NASEDKIN EUGENE SITIY INNA STERLIGOVA, costume design SVETLANA  
MIKHAILOVA production designer OLGA KHLEBNIKOVA sound MAXIM BELOVOLOV  
editor IVAN LEBEDEV director of photography PAVEL KOSTOMAROV producer  
ROMAN BORISEVICH ALEXANDER KUSHAEV  
written by ALEXANDER RODIONOV and BORIS KHLEBNIKOV  
directed by BORIS KHLEBNIKOV

**2013, Russia, 77 minutes, Dolby Digital SR, Shooting format: HD (Sony Digital  
Camera PMW-F3), Screen Ratio: 1:1.85**

## KOKTEBEL FILM COMPANY

Koktebel Film Company was founded in 2003. In the ten years of its existence, Koktebel has developed a reputation based on a number of outstanding projects. Its films *Roads to Koktebel / Koktebel* (2003), *Free Floating / Svobodnoe plavanie* (2006), *Simple Things / Prostye veshchi* (2007), *Help Gone Mad / Sumasshedshaya pomoshch* (2009), *Wolfy / Volchok* (2009), *How I Ended This Summer / Kak ya provel etim letom* (2010), and *Living / Zhit* (2012), have largely shaped the face of new Russian cinema. These films have all represented the country at prestigious Russian and international film festivals, receiving well-deserved awards. Koktebel Film Company introduced the world to the talented directors Boris Khlebnikov, Aleksey Popogrebsky, and Vasily Sigarev.

Films produced by Koktebel:

- *The Person of French Nationality / Litso Frantsuzskoy Natsionalnosti*, directed by Ilya Khotinenko, 2000.
- *Roads to Koktebel / Koktebel*, directed by Boris Khlebnikov and Aleksey Popogrebsky, 2003.
- *Free Floating / Svobodnoe plavanie*, directed by Boris Khlebnikov, 2006.
- *Simple Things / Prostye veshchi*, directed by Aleksey Popogrebsky, 2006.
- *Wolfy / Volchok*, directed by Vasily Sigarev, 2009.
- *Help Gone Mad / Sumasshedshaya pomoshch*, directed by Boris Khlebnikov, 2009.
- *Tale in the Darkness / Skazka pro temnotu*, directed by Nikolay Khomeriki, 2009.
- *How I Ended This Summer / Kak ya provel etim letom*, directed by Aleksey Popogrebsky, 2010.
- *Living / Zhit*, directed by Vasily Sigarev, 2012.
- *A Long and Happy Life / Dolgaya schastlivaya zhizn*, directed by Boris Khlebnikov, 2013.

## Comments from producer Roman Borisevich

*This is the second time a film produced by Koktebel has been selected for the main competition at Berlinale. Our participation in the 60th Berlin International Film Festival in 2010 was a success for us: Aleksey Popogrebsky's film How I Ended This Summer received three awards. The stars of the film, Sergey Puskepalis and Grigoriy Dobrygin, both received the Silver Bear for Best Actor, and Pavel Kostomarov, who is also our director of photography on A Long and Happy Life, received an award for Outstanding Artistic Contribution for his cinematography. I hope audiences at the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival will be able to relate to the personal story of an individual which is at the core of our new film.*