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SYNOPSIS

During the early 19th century it is predicted that Kurmanjan, a young girl from Central Asia, will have a great destiny and that she will become the ruler of her country and save the nation from total destruction. This prediction was mocked, as women at that time had no rights.

As a young woman, Kurmanjan is forced into an arranged marriage with a man she does not love. However, on the first night she runs away back home, breaking with tradition and bringing shame on herself and her family. The feud between the two families is resolved by Alymbek Datka (ruler of the Alai highland country) who frees Kurmanjan from the imposed marriage and later takes her as his wife. But several years later he is murdered, leaving Kurmanjan widowed with a young family.

After her husband's death, the burden of the responsibility for the safety of the people and the independence of her country falls on the shoulders of Kurmanjan. Nearby enemy states attack Alai but Kurmanjan gathers together an army and fights back. Due to her wisdom and strong-willed character, she manages to prevent interstate intrigue between the Kokand Khanate and Bukhara Emirate and receives the title "Datka" (General), the first time in the history of Asia that this honored title has been received by a woman.

As time progresses, the Russian Empire invades Central Asia and begins its colonial policy but, after long battles and numerous losses, eventually signs a peace agreement with Kurmanjan Datka. However, the new Russian military governor dislikes Kurmanjan and decides to destroy her people. Kurmanjan, realizing the power of the Russian Empire's army, does not want to come into conflict with him. However, the governor orders the arrest of one of Kurmanjan's sons, ostensibly for the murder of Russian soldiers, and sentences him to death by public hanging. Kurmanjan is faced with the dilemma of choosing between the life of her son or the fate of the entire nation.



FILM REVIEW

“With its sweeping visuals and colorful pageantry, the film directed and written by Sadyk Sher-Niyaz, certainly provides the backdrop for its patriotic narrative.”

- Los Angeles Times

“Breathtaking epic saga... astonishingly impressive... coated in heartbreaking poetry and ethereal mysticism. Sher-Niyaz’s feature provides everything expected from a film of its magnitude while uniquely celebrating its homeland. Lavishly executed to the smallest details ... splendidly captures everything from the vivid colors of the Kyrgyz traditional attires to the magnificent vastness of the warriors’ land.”

- Indiewire

“Breadth of filmmaking... reminiscent of David Lean. This is an extraordinary film. Its epic in dignity. Its epic in its integrity. Its epic in its performances. Its epic in its directoral debut

-Sharon Stone





Lunara Ayaskanova
as little Kurmanjan



Vasiliy Polzunov
as General Shvnikovskiy



Elina Abai Kyzy
as young Kurmanjan



Aziz Muradillaev
as Almbek Datka



Nazira Mambetova
as middle aged Kurmanjan



Adilet Usubakiev
as Kamchybek



Zhamal Seydakhmatova,
as old Kurmanjan



Alexander Golubkov,
as General Skobelev

PREMIERES



August 22, 2014 // World Premiere at the Montreal World Film Festival (Canada)

August 23, 2014 // Yakutsk International Film // Awarded the special jury prize. (Russia)

August 31, 2014 // National premiere of the film in Bishkek. (Kyrgyzstan)

October 12, 2014 // International Eurasian Film Festival in New York. // “Best Film”, “Best Actress”, “Best Screenplay” and “Best Supporting Actress”. (USA)

October 19 and 22, 2014 // International Film Festival East-West. Classic and avant-garde in Orenburg. (Russia)

October 22, 2014 // International Film Festival “Bastau” in Almaty (Kazakhstan).

October 20 to 26, 2014 // Silk Road International Film Festival // Audience Choice Award (China).

November 19, 2014 // International Film Festival on the Bosphorus (Turkey).

January 2 - 12, 2015 // International Film Festival in Palm Springs (USA)

September 21-23, 2015 // Fukuoka Film Festival (Japan)

March 2016 // Friborg International Film Festival (Switzerland)