

Living with the Dead

A FILM BY CHRISTINE VARTOUGHIAN

Drama | 94 minutes

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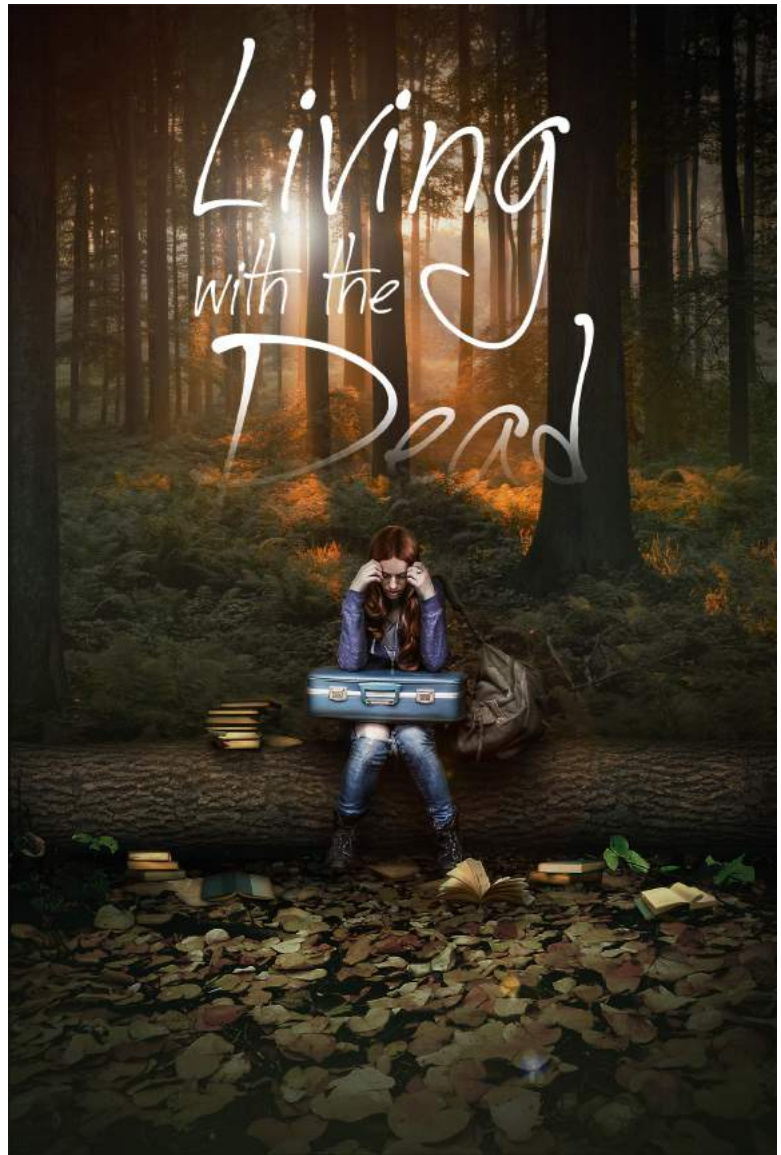
THE FILM

Max McLean is eighteen years old and can't get out of bed. Since her boyfriend Adam killed himself over a year ago, Max has been using sex, drugs, and parties to ignore the pain until one day she wakes up in a hospital, haven taken a nearly lethal overdose of sleeping pills. While being haunted by visions of Adam, Max runs away from home and ventures into the forest with a bizarre but curious boy named Ish.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Max McLean is eighteen years old and she can't get out of bed. Since her boyfriend Adam's suicide over a year ago, Max has been using sex, drugs, and parties to help her ignore the pain until one day when she wakes up in a hospital, having taken a nearly lethal overdose of sleeping pills.

Now Max is back home and everyone in her life wants her to move on. For her doctors, moving on means taking her pills; for her parents, it means enrollment in Yale. But Max can't move on, not until she understands why Adam hung himself. Her focus is on a mysterious suitcase full of books he left behind that include the works of Sylvia Plath, Kurt Cobain, David Foster Wallace and other artists infamous for their suicides. Max needs time and space to figure out what is contained within these note-scribbled pages as she is continuously haunted by visions of Adam, wearing a white tuxedo.



The night before she's set to move into the dorms at Yale, Max sneaks out of her parent's house and gets on a bus headed towards a town she has never heard of before.

Along the way Max meets an offbeat young man named Ishmael. Ish is a fellow runaway who secretly camps out in the town library and has a love of literature that rivals her own. Max

hesitantly accepts Ish's invitation to share his couch (and his life) in the library after hours. In the next few days Max enters an unfamiliar world: Ish introduces her to the joys of nature, freedom, and what it really feels like to climb a tree. From spending days exploring the forest, auditing an existential theatre class at the local college, and midnight adventures in the library, Max feels something for the first time in a long time - happiness.

As Max struggles to wean herself off her prescription pills and obsession with Adam's books, she continues to be haunted by Adam's ghost and feels torn between understanding 'what was' and pursuing 'what might be.' When Max's friendship with Ish deepens into love, things seem too good to be true and Max discovers that no one is as they appear. Ish has his own dark past that he cannot escape from, at least, not without Max's help.

Together, Max and Ish leave their pasts behind and run off on an unplanned journey to wherever life will take them.



THE FILMMAKER

Christine Vartoughian is an award winning filmmaker and native New Yorker. Her short film, *The Visions of Dylan Bradley*, which she wrote and directed, has screened at over twenty festivals in the U.S. and received numerous awards. Christine holds a BFA in Drama from SUNY Purchase College and an MFA in Film and Television from SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design), where she was a recipient of The Presidential Fellowship. *Living with the Dead* is her first feature film and is based on events from her own life. She is a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Director's Lab and of the female filmmaker's group, The Film Fatales.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Living with the Dead deals with subject matters of mental health, suicide, and growing up amongst these current issues that continue to be taboo but very relevant in today's society. I wrote this film a few years ago after suffering an emotional breakdown over the loss of someone I loved. I found inspiration in the resulting depression that ensued and led me down a path filled with psychiatrists, prescription medications, and a loss of my sense of self.

The films I watched as a teenager and the films I continue to watch as an adult help me find understanding and comfort with the universal obstacles that everyone faces at some point in their lives. I believe that *Living with the Dead* can provide young people with similar insight and compassion as they grow up, and that would be the greatest thing I could achieve as a filmmaker.

CAST

Emily Jackson (Max)



Chris Bellant (Gabriel)



Chris Riggi (Roland)



Craig Kelly (Ish)



Selenis Leyva (Dr. Quenda)



Robert Clohessy (John)



Benjamin Frankenberg (Adam)



Marc Coppola (Prof. Tyre)



CAST CREDITS

Max McLean	...	Emily Jackson
Ish	...	Craig MacDonald-Kelly
Adam	...	Benjamin Frankenberg
Dr. Quenda	...	Selenis Leyva
John McLean	...	Robert Clohessy
Sophia McLean	...	Deborah Twiss
Professor Tyre	...	Marc Coppola
Gabriel McLean	...	Chris Bellant
Roland	...	Chris Riggi
Young Ish	...	Tanner Flood
Marty	...	Thomas Poarch
Amy	...	Aurora Heimbach
Train Ticket Agent	...	Kristen Adele
Megan	...	Cara Francis
Mr. Lollipop	...	John Thomassen

CREW CREDITS

Writer/Director: Christine Vartoughian

Producers: Rebekah Nelson, Christine Vartoughian

Executive Producers: Vincent Butta, Armine Ceslov,
Julie Jackson, Debra Markowitz, Marie Adler

Director of Photography: Wilfredo Ramos

Composer: Allan Pray

INFO

Production Company: Lion Hearted Films

Sales Agent: Adler & Associates Entertainment

Title.....Living with the Dead
Year of Production.....2015
Total Running Time.....94 minutes
Country of Origin.....United States
Genre.....Drama
Shooting Format.....HD
Finish Format.....HD 1080p
Aspect Ratio.....16x9
Language.....English