



A FILM BY AGNÈS MERLET

# HIDEAWAYS



**A FIDÉLITÉ FILMS/OCTAGON FILMS/FILMGATE FILMS  
COPRODUCTION**

# HIDEAWAYS

**Directed by  
AGNÈS MERLET**

**Written by  
NICK MURPHY**

**Adaptation  
NICK MURPHY and AGNÈS MERLET**

2010 · ENGLISH · RUNNING TIME 95 MIN · 35 MM · DOLBY DIGITAL · COLOUR

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**wild bunch**

**PLEASE NOTE:** Photos and press kit can be downloaded from [www.wildbunch.biz](http://www.wildbunch.biz)





## **SYNOPSIS**

### ***A curse is just a blessing ignored...***

*James Furlong is the last in a long line of Furlongs, each blessed or cursed with a supernatural power. Growing up in remote Ireland, the boy begins to experiment, longing to discover his hidden gift. But instead, his experiments lead to the death of his family's livestock, followed swiftly by the loss of his father and beloved grandmother. By the time he's 10, James is the sole surviving Furlong.*

*He is sent to a reformatory. An outcast, he is bullied mercilessly. Following a cruel attack by the other boys, a mysterious illness sweeps through the reformatory. Finally understanding the terrible destructive nature of his hidden powers, James flees.*

*Years pass. On the run from hospital where she is being treated for cancer, Mae, 19, comes across James in his isolated cottage deep in the woods. He is terrified of harming her, but Mae has already resigned herself to her fate and is afraid of very little - certainly not of this gentle, innocent stranger. Even when she learns his story, she is unafraid, and urges him to leave his lonely life behind, to return to the world.*

*They embark on a passionate romance that leads James on a journey back to civilization, and sets him on a collision course with Liam, sole survivor of the reformatory tragedy. Bent on vengeance, Liam confronts James with the violence of his past, but through Mae, James also uncovers the full extent of his abilities and the redemptive power of love.*

## **HIDEAWAYS - Director's notes**

### **A ROMANCE**

In spite of her medical condition - she has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, which she believes she has inherited, a sort of a family curse - teenager Mae wants to embrace every moment in her life. She falls in love with James at first sight. An intense relationship develops between these two "freaks", to such an extent that it nearly hides the existence of James' mysterious powers. Mae clearly understands who James is. Even though she knows she is terribly ill, she sees herself on the eve of her life. Not yet fully integrated in the world, she is deeply convinced that James' curse will never be the cause of her death. Her love will make him forget about his curse for a few days. When she returns to the hospital, she no longer cares for her fellow patient, Liam, an orphan who has spent his life in various institutions. Mae's heart now only belongs to her lover. Liam is devastated that the strong feelings he had for Mae cannot overcome their situation. Full of frustration, he eventually tries to kill James. James has long acknowledged that he has no place in society - since its rejection of him, his powers risk killing even those he loves. Self-sacrifice seems the only possible option open to him, but he is unaware of the healing powers contained within his 'curse'.

### **A MODERN FAIRY TALE**

HIDEAWAYS is a love story, sometimes funny, with a touch of dark fantasy. At its heart lies the relationship between James and Mae, and although their romance comes to a tragic end, its final flower is a feeling of vital energy and hope. The film is also a fairy tale. HIDEAWAYS belong to the tradition that deals with an endearing but destructive protagonist, an unfortunate love story and a surreal context.

### **FANTASY**

I have clearly been inspired by some of the great classics of fantasy, and hope that the film plays with clichés while retaining its own sharp and fragile sensitivity. HIDEAWAYS revisits the Frankenstein myth, as it unfolds in Mary Shelley's book.

James is altogether rejected and misunderstood. Like Frankenstein's creature, he does not live in society, and cannot properly address the dilemma between its rules and the promptings of his heart. But whereas in the myth the creature is violent and destructive, James is a pure and benign being, an innocent lost when confronted with the cruelty of the outside world. Even if at the end of the film he tries literally everything to integrate with the community, he is faced with the fact that he attracts only hatred, and that the only escape is sacrifice.

### **THE CURSE**

James inherits a destructive supernatural ability that wounds his body and torments his soul - a curse that excludes him from the rest of the human world. Whenever he experiences physical pain, he unwillingly causes the death of the living beings in proximity to him, whether human, animal or vegetable. And the curse is growing stronger the older he gets. The love James shares with Mae will eventually allow him to reverse this malediction, to the extent that he will become a sort of a healer, able to cure the people around him.

### **LOCATIONS**

HIDEAWAYS depicts the real world, but in a slightly altered, surreal version. The stark landscapes of Ireland in the early seventies form a verdant backdrop for this horrifying tale where the real monsters are to be found among the humans and their society that does not tolerate any difference whatsoever.

### **THE SETTINGS**

The film's careful stylization was meticulously addressed through production design and CGI. The revamped hospital is contrasted with the desaturated, sombre hues of the dead forest that is James' home. This forest acts as a metaphor for James' tormented soul and his abandoning of life. His journey back into the world is mirrored by the return to rich colour - Mae's world.

## **DIRECTION**

The film is shot in CinemaScope. The Irish landscape is a character in its own right. Beyond its striking beauty, it possesses a unique dramatic majesty - an environment that embraces both romanticism and roughness. In order to achieve the proper touch for a modern fairy tale, the image in *HIDEAWAYS* is highly stylized, utilizing artificial lighting even for the outdoor scenes, and creating an everlasting dusk (the photography of Gregory Crewdson was an inspiration). The film steers clear of Gothic clichés in order to offer a more contemporary interpretation of the fairy tale. With its own organic rhythm, it allows the story to describe violence in a more mysterious and less obvious manner. In general, the characters that represent "society", (the doctors, the nurses, the Gardai), are somewhat stylized to exemplify hypocrisy whereas James and Mae retain a more subtle realism. The musical score - by and large classical in its inspiration - is interwoven with Mae's beloved songs of the sixties.

*Agnès Merlet, 2010.*

**AGNÈS MERLET**  
**Selected Filmography as**  
**Director - Screenwriter**

**HIDEAWAYS (2009)**

**DOROTHY (AKA DOROTHY MILLS) (2008)**

Fantasy Film Festival, Germany, 2008.

Sitges Film Festival, 2008.

Malmö Film Festival, 2008.

**ARTEMISIA (1997)**

Nominated Best Foreign Movie, Golden Globes, 1998.

Selected at the Scriptwriters' Seminar, Sundance.

Won Best Feature - France, Avignon-New York, 1998.

Won Jury Prize, Mar del Plata, 1998.

Released in 35 territories: Miramax for USA and UK.

**SON OF THE SHARK (1993)**

Grand Prix of the best scriptwriter.

International Critics' Award, Venice Film Festival, 1993.

Nominated Best First Film, César Awards, 1994.

Nominated Best Foreign Film, Bafta Awards, 1994.

Won Best Film (Young Directors),

European Film Awards, 1994.

Won Prix Tournage, Avignon Film Festival, 1994.

Won Public Prize, Belfort Film Festival, 1993.

Sundance festival.



## **CAST**

<i>Mae O'Mara</i>	<b>RACHEL HURD-WOOD</b>
<i>James Furlong</i>	<b>HARRY TREADAWAY</b>
<i>Liam</i>	<b>THOMAS BRODIE SANGSTER</b>
<i>Mrs. O'Mara</i>	<b>SUSAN LYNCH</b>
<i>Sergeant</i>	<b>STUART GRAHAM</b>
<i>Doctor Russell</i>	<b>ADRIAN DUNBAR</b>
<i>Mrs. Moore</i>	<b>KATE O'TOOLE</b>
<i>James Furlong (10)</i>	<b>JAMES WILSON</b>
<i>Kevin</i>	<b>CRAIG CONNOLLY</b>
<i>Cathy Furlong</i>	<b>LESLEY CONROY</b>
<i>Philip Furlong</i>	<b>AARRON MONAGHAN</b>
<i>Charlotte Furlong</i>	<b>RUTH McCABE</b>

## **CREW**

Directed by  
**AGNÈS MERLET**

Screenplay  
**NICK MURPHY**

Adaptation  
**NICK MURPHY & AGNÈS MERLET**

Producers  
**OLIVIER DELBOSC  
MARC MISSONNIER  
JEAN-LUC ORMIÈRES**

Coproducers  
**TOMAS ESKILSSON  
JAMES FLYNN  
SEAN WHEELAN**

DP  
**TIM FLEMING, ISC**

Editor  
**Sylvie LANDRA**

Production Designer  
**DIDIER NAERT, ADC**

Costume Designer  
**PASCALINE CHAVANNE**

1st Assistant Director  
**FRED NICOLAS**

Visual Effects Supervisor  
**ANDREAS HYLANDER**

Associate Producer  
**CHRISTIAN HOLM**

Casting Director  
**FRANK MOISELLE**

Sound  
**BRENDAN DEASY  
MICHELLE CUNIFFE**

Original Music  
**ERIC NEVEUX**

Executive Producer  
**CHRISTINE DE JEKEL**

Line Producer  
**MARY ALLEGUEN**

Post-production Supervisor  
**SUSANA ANTUNES**

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**WILD BUNCH & MARS FILMS**

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