

Iran's 'The Last Fiction' joins Oscars Animated Feature race

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'The Last Fiction', written and directed by Ashkan Rahgozar and produced by Ehsan Rasuloof at Hoorakhsh Studios, is one of the 32 submissions for this year's Animated Feature category of the Academy Awards.

While submissions reached a record high this year, only five slots are guaranteed for the best animated feature Oscar category, which include Pixar's 'Toy Story 4' and DreamWorks' 'How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World', as well as Netflix's 'I Lost My Body'.

According to Indiewire, the members of the Short Films and Feature Animation Branch are automatically eligible to nominate the films for the five available slots, with other Academy members invited to opt in by watching a minimum number of films.

The Iranian animation 'The Last Fiction' is an open interpretation of the story of 'Zahhak', a page from one of the central tales of the 'Book of Kings/Shahnameh' written by acclaimed Persian poet Ferdowsi between 977 and 1010.

The film follows Zahhak's treacherous rise to the throne in Jamkard in Persia. The young and naïve hero Afaridoun will have to save the kingdom and its people from darkness. But he must first conquer his own demons in this portrayal of Persian mythology which reveals human nature.

The voice cast includes top Iranian actors such as Leila Hatami ('A Separation'), Parviz Parastui ('Today') and Ashkan Khatibi ('So Close, So Far').

'The Last Fiction' premiered at Annecy, the world's top animation film festival in France, and

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won several awards at international film festivals including the best feature animation award at the 3rd international South American films festival in Chile, the best film award at the 3rd Ajayu International Animation Festival in Peru, the best score award at the 22nd Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival in South Korea, as well as Best Animated Future Film at the 16th edition of San Diego International Kids' Film Festival in the US.