



SLOVENSKÝ
FILMOVÝ ÚSTAV
SLOVAK FILM
INSTITUTE

A MERE JOKE

A SLOVAK FILM. ABOUT A JOKE THAT WAS NOT FUNNY AT ALL...

A Mere Joke

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ers opposition against a more powerful enemy senseless. He even draws an advantage from his obedience when he asks a card of apology from them so that he can dodge work and go to a date. The conflict between Juraj and Dodo is culminating and the boy has to endure a series of dirty tricks from Dodo's gang. He puts some stones into the sack labeled with Dodo's name thus breaking the sorting machine. When he understands that the devoted second-year students will not oppose the elders, that his parents will not withdraw him from the brigade and that the intimate experience with Svetlana, who is in love with Dodo, was just her caprice, he decides to reveal the whole situation to the teacher. The teacher Hartlová introduces a more strict checking, and third-year students have to give back the efficiency bonus and pay for the repair of the sorting machine. The punished students want to take their revenge and to search out traitor. The opportunity comes when the teacher has to leave because of personal problems with her husband for a short time. They exert humiliating pressure on the second-year students in a locked-up gymnasium. They abuse the physical handicap of Juraj and the boy, under heavy stress, reacts by desperately confessing what he has done and by blaming his school-mates of being cowards. Dušan



A group of students from the electrotechnical technical college led by the teacher Hartlová take part in a potato picking brigade. A gang of third-year students led by Dodo Urban, inspired by the chicanery of the older school-mates in the last year brigade, want to try their methods and for this reason they provoke a conflict with Dušan Majer who is repeating the second year. Dušan takes revenge but flees afterwards and his blame is taken over by Juraj Dobíš. He incites an even greater resentment of the leader of the third-year students when he succumbs to the temptations of his sweetheart Svetlana both of them went to visit at the neighbouring village where the girls are being put up during the brigade. In order to meet the requirements of the management of the cooperative and the teacher, the third-year students decide to force the second-year students to give them daily sacks of potatoes for what they obtain efficiency bonus from the cooperative manager by means of a trick. They manage to scare the younger students to such a degree that, apart from the uncompromising Juraj, they all yield at the beginning. There arise a conflict between Juraj and Dušan: To submit oneself too to oppose violence? Juraj refuses to pick potatoes for the third-year students, Dušan conforms to their conditions. He consid-

cannot bear his humiliation anymore and pounces upon Dodo's gang. There arises a fight in which the second-year students win. On the next day, they find out, that Juraj disappeared. Dušan Dobíš discovers him. Juraj is mentally almost on the point of suiciding himself and he is doubting about sense of his protest. So much violence because of one sack of potatoes... But Majer who almost killed one third-year student in the heat of the fight finally realised that the moral duty of those who are persecuted is to defend themselves. The second-year students won but they almost fall for the temptation to chicanery the defeated? Despite the consequences in the consciousness of both groups, the headmaster of the technical college, for the sake of a clean record of the school, concludes the whole affair by calling it an innocent boys' joke.

