



A fairy play about gold, death, and love without loving

A SLOVAK FILM

Story: Juraj Jakubisko, Merited Artist

Screenplay: Juraj Jakubisko, Merited Artist and Jozef Pašák

Directed by: Juraj Jakubisko, Merited Artist
Director of Photography: Laco Kraus

CAST:
Bolek Polivka, Ondřej Pavelka,
Deana Horváthová, Markéta Hrubešová,
Stefan Kvietik, Miroslav Macháček,
Stanislav Štepa
and others.

I AM SITTING ON A BRANCH AND I AM FINE





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The war is over, the air is sparkling with peace elation but confusion, hunger and poverty reign on the earth. Not a stone was left standing and one has to look for a new place in life. The trains do not operate and wander across the burnt up land in endless streams. The former actor Pepe Macáček, alias Angelis, returns from Mathausen and the soldier Prengel from the Italian front. By chance they together find gold hidden in a old bicycle and since that moment their destiny is united by the joint ownership of the treasure. The forced union of the taciturn hillman and the talkative artist slowly grows into a deeper relationship between two men affected by war especially when they find Prengel's native farm burnt down and the family slaughtered. Moreover, they are bound together by a deadly menace from a group of cutthroats, the owners of the treasure, who are in search of them.

Pepe gives up his dreams about the circus and both the "war orphans" take charge of an abandoned bakery, the owner of which - Mahler- died together with his family in Oswintim. It is just the portrait of the beautiful baker's daughter that reminds us of old times. The new mayor of the town, the former Prengel's teacher, provides the friends with a generous quantity of flour and other ingredients but the attempt at baking bread ends up in a flop. Nothing can hold Pepe in the shop any longer, he even exchanges his part of the treasure for freedom and he leaves to look for the marquee of his circus. But a ginger-haired girl, strikingly similar to the baker's daughter Ester emerges from the morning haze. She lets herself be driven to Mahler's house and it seems that she recognizes the place although she behaves unnaturally, she is full of anxiety and she does not talk. Pepe and Prengel find a new sense of life in taking care of her. Gradually, the identity of the girl and the way she escaped from the concentration camp came to light. The forced stay in a brothel saves her life but has a traumatic effect on her and

brings about her bitterly hated pregnancy. She delivers the child with the help of the two men but she refuses to take care of it. Pepe and Prengel bring up the child with affectionate tenderness but at the same time they compete more and more eagerly to win the favour of Ester as a woman. They earn their living by baking gingerbreads, their private enterprise flourishes and they do not notice the events of the current times rushing in their own - but for many dangerous direction. Their strange coexistence is condemned by a growing number of people from the small-town society and especially a female functionary of the national committee who is, under her tough slogans, hiding her erotic interest in the merry Pepe. The threat grows bigger but the trio, living in biblical simplicity, fails to notice it. In the mountains there resound the shooting of the last clashes with the men of Stefan Bender and the cutthroats whom Pepe and Prengel robbed of their gold appear in town. It costs Ester her life and the two bakers, full of grief and feelings of guilt, bring up the little orphan. The situation gets a vertiginous momentum and the fifties brutally affect innocent people. Prengel's protector, the war hero Kornet is thrown to prison and after the discovery of the golden treasure Pepe and Prengel end up there, too. Little Ester is brought to an orphanage.

It is the year 1957 when they are released. The first artificial satellite of the Earth has been launched. A masquerade is organized at the orphanage officially celebrating the sputnik but Pepe and Prengel rejoice first of all over their found-again little girl.

They take her to the fields and all the three of them climb up in the crown of a largely ramified tree. The higher they climb, the older they become and by their side there is suddenly a mature, grown-up and beautiful Ester, exactly the same one they used to love and still do.

