

One Film - Many Histories: an Inquiry Into Before the Rain

Synopsis

For those who have not seen *Before the Rain*, or who wish to see it again, the film is widely available through PolyGram Video in both the UK and US. The following brief synopsis is supplemented by details in many of the essays in the section.

Part 1: Words

Kiril is a young monk who has taken a vow of silence in a twelve century Macedonian monastery nestled high in the mountains. One night a terrified young Albanian girl, Zamira appears in his room. He does not understand her language, but moved by her fear and the feelings she stirs in him, Kiril shelters her. The next day a gun-carrying band bursts into the monastery searching for the girl, who, they claim, has murdered their brother. They do not find Zamira, but the monks do, and the couple are expelled from the monastery at night. Fleeing through the hills the next day, Kiril tells her they will go to visit his Uncle, a photographer in London. Suddenly the couple are surrounded by Zamira's family. Her grandfather slaps her around and when she attempts escape, her brother guns her down. She dies in Kiril's arms...

Part 2: Faces

Anne, separated from her husband, is a picture editor in a busy London photo agency who is daily exposed to the horror of war through current photographs from Africa and the Balkans. One day her lover, Aleksander, a wild, Serb Macedonian Pulitzer-prize winning war photographer, who now lives in London, announces he has resigned the agency, tells Anne he is returning to

Macedonia that night, and asks her to go with him. Why the sudden decision, she asks. Because, he says, in Bosnia my camera learned how to kill. Anne pleads with him, says she cannot leave so quickly, and Aleks departs. That night in a posh restaurant where she asks her husband for a divorce, a waiter and a customer, both Balkan, get into an argument that ends in a shootout in which Anne's husband is killed and his face shot into a bloody pulp. . . .

Part 3: Pictures

Aleksander's attempt to find peace in his childhood village is doomed to failure. The virus of hatred and war has permeated his own home. The old social accord between Albanians and Serbs, Muslims and Orthodox, has been destroyed, and the two groups, armed to the teeth, view each other with suspicion and hostility, worried that Macedonia will be the next Bosnia. For a while, Aleks tries to pretend things are okay, but when Hana, his Albanian childhood love from a neighboring village, seeks his help to protect her daughter Zamira, accused of killing Aleksander's cousin with a pitchfork (after they had sexual relations), Alex must step out from behind his camera and act. Saving Zamira from his kin who have been holding her prisoner, he is gunned down from behind by a own cousin, and as rain begins to fall, the girl runs off towards a nearby monastery. . .

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