

Simon is having dinner at his home close to the border of Armenia with Turkey with his numerous family and friends when all of a sudden his son comes to warn him that his relatives on the other side of the border (with whom they have been communicating through messages written on big pieces of paper and looking through binoculars) are asking for his presence: they have an important message to deliver – grandfather is dead and he has something for Simon. But how is Simon going to cross the 300 m of the gorge on the border between two countries when all diplomatic relationships between them is suspended and there is no way of passing over to his relatives?

Director Edgar Baghdasaryan uses the conflict between the two countries to point out to the impact of politics on the destinies of common people. Beyond its geopolitical issue there is also a fine social exploration that the Armenian director makes. All his characters are authentic and very distinct from one another. Not only does the filmmaker manage to draw a sharp edge between the different personalities and tempers of his personages but he also manages to sketch contrasty archetypes of Armenian people and reflect their mentalities and customs. Rich in circumstantial information and specific cultural sublayers the deep meanings of 'The Simon's Way' will be hard to understand without knowing the international context explained above and becoming accustomed with the Armenian culture. But the social drama will sensitise and powerfully entail the audience with the story. Simon has to find a way to travel around several countries to enter Turkey and meet his relatives.

On the risk of spoiling it (though we advised you already), grandfather hasn't left any big fortune or any kind of material inheritance to Simon – with whom we are told he didn't have a close relationship, but on the contrary they rarely saw each other. What grandfather left behind is a box with old things and pictures, and most important than everything else, a family tree. Simon is surprised and doesn't seem to understand why the old man thought about such a thing. One can only assume the old man wanted Simon to continue the work on the tree from the 'native grounds' where all other roots of the family would be traced.

'Simon's Journey' becomes not only an initiatory journey of Simon who has never traveled away from home to widen his horizons but also a quest for personal identity and possible a suggested national one. Beautifully filmed and impeccably acted, Edgar Baghdasaryan's film is as hooking and fascinating as it is intelligent and sensitive making a deep impression on the viewer.

One of the best social films we've witnessed lately.