

Translation from Bulgarian

SNEJKO (SNOWBOY)

Documentary script

All characters in this film are real.
Their names are real, and what is happening to them is reality.
Only the dreams are invented.

SNEJKO'S DREAM

The boy's glance is wandering amidst fluffy clouds. The milky white transparency is opened up to show the green peaks of the Rhodope Mountains. Far, far away – nine mountains away, the worried voices of hundreds of Rhodopian sheep bells can be heard. The camera is quickly flying over the mountain peaks until it finds the wild river of Shiroka Laka. The houses are blinding white. The huge gates are closed with a bang. The banging is resounding throughout the mountain. One gate, second gate, third gate is closing! The mountain is echoing like a bell...

“NADEJDA” QUARTER

Snejko opens his eyes. The clock is ringing. It is six o'clock. The boy jumps out of bed. He looks around. On the table where text-looks are piled up, stands a photo of the Rhodopean village with its white houses and huge gates. They are all wide open, waiting for someone.

The boy's sleepy face is reflected in the mirror. His eyes are smiling. Sorrow is hiding deeply beneath this smile. Snejko is twelve years old. He is full of energy and he doesn't know what to do with it. He splashes two hands-full of cold water on his eyes. The boy grows numb. He wakes up...

There is a cup of milk, biscuits, cocoa on the table...Snejko is drinking the milk. A hand smoothes down his uncombed hair. It is not clear whether this is a caress or a casual gesture...

The pre-fab blocks of flats in the “Nadejda” quarter. People are hurrying along the narrow streets. Looking from above, they seem like moving black points in a huge concrete labyrinth.

Snejko has put his school-bag on his shoulder and is hurrying to school. The concrete buildings on both sides are hanging above him, pressing him. The boy is moving quickly. His feet seem to fly above the ground. His eyes are feverishly looking for someone...

Three boys Snejko’s age are walking behind him. Snejko’s eyes are worried. As if he’s trying to hide everything about himself, about his dream, about his deep secret...

The boys pay no attention to him. They just nod and pass by. Snejko relaxes, he hurries up again. A shadow flies over the boy’s face. He raises his eyes.

A bird is flying in the narrow space between the pre-fab buildings.

Snejko smiles. The distant chime of the Rhodopian sheep-bells is heard.

FIRST LETTER TO SNEJKO

This letter comes from the Home for children, deprived of parental care in Shiroka Laka. It is situated on top of a hill. Thence one can see the whole colorful village. On this background the camera finds an angry scowling boy of Snejko’s age. This is Radi.

RADI: I’m angry with you, you should know that! Where’s the feather? I’ve turned the whole Home upside down. It’s nowhere... You know, when spring comes – we let the kites fly...Mine looks like a falcon and I want to put on it the feather we found in the nest. Will you send it to me? Everyone will stare!... You haven’t forgotten the address, have you? .. Oh, yes! I forgot to tell you, that I was adopted. For a little while... They brought me back because I let the water flow from the bath-tub and there was a flood...Now I’m back in the Home...Well, bye, for the wind has come. We are going to let the kites fly...

“NADEJDA” QUARTER

Snejko is looking up at the sky. The camera moves quickly away from his tense face. A huge kite in the form of a bird is flying among the gray pre-fab buildings. A feather is waving at its rear end...

The school bell startles the boy. He is standing at the school entrance. About a dozen unruly boys drag Snejko along to the school yard.

THE SCHOOL YARD

The camera is slowly moving among the children. They are standing straight, looking at the school entrance. We are following Snejko. He slowly starts to the entrance. We hear his husky voice.

SNEJKO'S VOICE – I live again!...I found myself parents and they adopted me...Nobody knows about that, only my teacher...That's a secret...I have a new family name. My family name is Parvanov. Like that of Bulgaria's President...Snejko Parvanov!...However, the children call me Snow white, you know – because of the fairy tale. They ask me all the time where the dwarfs are...However, I don't pay much attention to them...

Snejko is sitting in the first row next to a pretty blonde girl. He steals a glance at her but the beauty is cocking her nose, carefully watching the blackboard. There hangs a map of Bulgaria. A boy is telling about the Rhodopean mountains.

BOY: The Rhodopes...they are situated...in the south-western part of Bulgaria...These are beautiful mountains. Orpheus was born there...

The boy is showing the outlines of the mountain with the pointer.

Snejko is looking at the drawn mountain. He is smiling at something.

The camera "enters" the drawing of the mountain. ..It turns real.

SECOND LETTER TO SNEJKO

The camera is moving among ancient pine trees. It finds three boys with three bag-pipes. They are walking among the trees and playing...They come up on the Snejanka Peak. They are facing a magnificent view. Their bag-pipe playing resounds like a solemn hymn in a heavenly temple.

The bag-pipe players stop blowing the pipes and start shouting with all their strength.

BAG-PIPE PLAYERS: hallooo!

The echo carries their voices to the sky.

The boys are smiling. The sun is shining in their eyes. They are talking all at the same time, as if competing to tell what's most important.

BAG-PIPE PLAYERS: How are you, Sofian boy?.. You forgot all about us, didn't you? You've become an important person, haven't you?..You should know, however, that you've missed a lot. We went to a fair in Rojen. That was something, I tell you!... We played with one hundred bag pipes!...You've never heard such a thing ! We almost got deaf from playing...There were also foreigners there and they liked us very much...Some Norwegians wanted to adopt us. The three of us! When they found out that we weren't brothers they gave it up. Some Norwegians!...Otherwise we are OK. How about you?...Do you envy us for playing with one hundred bag-pipes...

As if confirming the words of the little bag-pipe players a hundred bag-pipes are heard. The music is rising above the mountain...The camera is quickly moving away from them...It is also moving away from the drawn mountain on the school map...

IN THE CLASS ROOM

THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER: - Snejko!...Snejko!...Where are you?...

Snejko is startled. The children are laughing.The boy reddens and hangs his head down. Thank God, Snejko is saved by the bell...

THE SEPARATION

The school passage is swarming with excited children. This is the end of the school year and they will be separated.

Snejko is walking among the school children, looking at the pretty girl from the first row. She's talking to some girl-friends. The boy passes them by.

SNEJKO: Have a good time during the holidays!

THE GIRLS: To you too!..To you too!..

The beauty looks down on him.

THE BEAUTY: We are leaving for Greece for the vacation!

The girls around her are excited by such a vacation and they start a vivid conversation. Snejko is drowning in the sea of children in motion. His silhouette is scattered by the sun light, as if it is melting him down in the distance...

THIRD LETTER TO SNEJKO

A rapid flowing mountain river is cutting the village right in the middle. A girl is reflected by the water. The river distorts the girl's face and carries it quickly away...This is Slavka. She has undergone ten surgeries and now she can walk and speak. She has metal braces on her teeth. Slavka smiles and the braces sparkle in the sun.

SLAVKA: - Hi, Snejko!...I came back from Plovdiv today. Dr. Ivanov promised to perform my last surgery in twenty days...Then I'll be able to play football with the boys. They look at me in a strange way. As if they are trying to say something...Have you got a girl-friend?...Well, tell me, don't keep mum!...

While Slavka is talking, we can see her crippled feet clad in special shoes. The camera shows us several newspaper photographs taken of the girl and the medical teams of her ten operations.

SNEJKO'S CONFESSION

The boy is in his new home. He is standing at the window, looking at the roofs of the prefab blocks of flats. The setting sun is shining on their smooth surface. The light reflection almost hides Snejko's face. The boy is talking slowly, as if trying not to spoil the sunset magic.

SNEJKO: - My biological parents left me at a Home when I was a baby. I've never seen them and I don't know who they are...I've lived in many Homes and in many towns. When I became ten I was taken to the Home in Shiroka Laka...At the beginning of last year they started to take me out...Every vacation!...One day they asked me if I wanted to be their son. I immediately said I did. I've been dreaming of this. And I knew I'd find parents. I'll call them mum and dad and they'll take care of me...

THE SILENT DINNER

The dining room in Snejko's home. We see his parents for the first time. They are in their forties. The mother is an active woman, full of energy. She's simply dressed, her face is caring and emotional. The father is a robust guy, always smiling and pretending to be severe. The three of them are taking their meals in silence but the atmosphere around them is full of tenderness and warmth. They are stealthily looking at each other, smiling over their family secret and breaking off pieces of the warm bread on the table. Their fingers touch and the three of them wince almost unnoticeably.

The sun has set but its light has tainted the sky with its bright fire light. This can be seen in the window behind Snejko's back.

Snejko's school report lays next to the warm bread on the table. It is opened on the last page showing the annual grades.

The father is looking at the boy.

THE FATHER: - Good for you!...If you go on like that – it's really very good!...

THE MOTHER: - Prepare your luggage tonight, for we're leaving very early tomorrow...You won't be able to get up...

SNEJKO: May I watch some video?

THE MOTHER: How did you think of the video?

THE FATHER: You may.

Snejko is beaming.

SNEJKO'S VIDEO MEMORIES

The three of them are in the sitting room, watching video. Snejko is sitting on the floor, changing video cassettes, speeding up some episodes, increasing the volume of others. His parents make comments, they laugh, they talk all at the same time.

These are frames from the day they adopted Snejko. He is dressed in a Rhodopean ethnic costume and sings a song standing in front of a white house in Shiroka Laka.

The father is taking pictures of him with an amateur camera...

The three of them are walking hand in hand along a street in Shiroka Laka.

The children from the Home are seeing Snejko off in the yard. Some of them are crying. The tutors are consoling them. ..The Head master of the Home is uttering an emotional speech...

The three of them are laughing. The mother is secretly wiping up a tear. Snejko resets the cassette and points on the screen.

SNEJKO: - This is Slavka!...This is Radi!...Mr. Shikov!...

THE MOTHER: - You will see them tomorrow!...

THE DRIVE

Frames from the amateur videofilm are merging with frames of Snejko travelling in the car. The boy is sitting on the back seat and looking through the window. His parents are sitting at the front of the car. The father is driving along the curving road. The old frames are reflected on the glass of the car. They appear and disappear, like pictures painted by an invisible hand...

The car is climbing up the road, among the hills of the mountain.

SHIROKA LAKA – THE YARD – THE WELCOME

The car stops in the yard of the Home for raising children deprived of parental care. The children jump out of the entrance door, as if they have been prepared for this moment and they surround the car.

Snejko sees Slavka through the car window. She is smiling, her braces glittering. Behind her Radi is waving his hand, angry and frowning. The three bag pipe players are blowing the bag pipes. The head master of the Home, Mr.Shikov, is heading the group.

Snejko gets off the car, shaking hands or embracing some of the children. Voices are heard: “Welcome! Hey, you are late!...We’ve been waiting for you!”

Snejko’s parents shake hands with the Head master.

A little boy starts crying. He can’t bear the emotion. He is crying with huge tears, as if he’s lost the most precious thing in the world.

Snejko is moved and excited. Somewhere far away he can hear the Rhodopean bells. They are echoing in the mountain like festive bells...The camera makes a full rotation around the boy.

THE YARD – THE SEPARATION

A year before, at the same place. The same car, the same people in the middle of the yard. The frames are amateur-like, of the same color as those in the home video episode.

The children say good bye to the boy. He treats them to chocolate sweets. The nannies and the tutors are crying. The same little boy is crying, having remembered the previous event. The Head master is holding a speech full of pathos and excitement.

THE HEADMASTER: - Children, today we are saying goodbye to Snejko. He found his parents and will live in Sofia!...Snejko, don't forget about us!...

SNEJKO: I won't forget you, Mr.Shikov!... Help yourself to a sweet!

THE ROMAN BRIDGE

Mr.Shikov is dressed up in a formal suit and with a tie. He is leading the group of children on their way to the village church. In the middle of the group walks Snejko leading his parents by the hands. From time to time the boy glances at his mother and father. He wants to make sure that he is not dreaming and that everything happening to him is real.

Everybody is crossing the ancient Roman bridge connecting the village to the temple of God. Hundreds of festive sheep bells are heard. The one hundred bag pipes join in. The church bell tolls! The mountain is celebrating!

On the background of this picture, as if created by the hand of a medieval mural master, we can hear Snejko's exited voice.

SNEJKO'S VOICE – I am happy to be here. With my friends. Radi, Slavka, Petyo, Stilian, Ventzi...I don't wish to any child to come to a Home. Not that its bad, it's simply different. .. I hope everyone of my friends will find parents...Wherever I am,* whatever happens to me, even if I change my name, I'll never forget my friends...

THE TEMPLE OF GOD

The children light candles in the church. The priest walks around Snejko, performing the christening rite. He cuts the hair of the boy, he washes his feet, his face...Throughout all this he never stops singing the church psalm...

PRIEST - This child is christened with the name Snejkooo!

The choir sings "Amen"! Everybody is making the sign of the cross. So are the parents of the boy. So is Snejko, looking up to the icons on the altar. All children cross themselves. They secretly pray that such a thing would happen to them too.

THE DREAM OF THE ORPHANS

Our film will end the way it started. The camera quickly rises above the temple, resounding the tolling of bells, sheep bells and bag pipes. It reaches as far as the clouds hiding the glances of the sleeping orphans...

Snejko's story turns out to be the dream of all orphans...

They are sleeping, warmed up by the sun warming the bedrooms through the windows. They are dreaming of their parents...

The gates of the white houses are opening one after another. They resound like church bells. They echo throughout the whole mountain...