

Scene 1: The Cliff Hanger

[AMBI- Battery Nat sound]

A 75 year old man lowers himself over the edge of a cliff.

Elias: And if I don't come up look for me down there among the trees (laughs)

He steadies himself using the long tufts of grass growing out of the rock. They strain under his weight.

[AMBI- Elias climbing down cliff]

Elias: Ok so far so good

He's dangling over the edge of The Battery. In St. John's Newfoundland. Below him a single pear tree. Its leaves and branches swaying in the breeze.

Elias: So do you see any pears on the tree?

If you bend a certain way you can see the city just across the harbour. The colored houses, the Basilica. But that all feels so far away .

All that matters in this moment are the pears.

Elias: Here on this branch. So I'm trying to pull it towards me without falling down to the abyss

It's a steep drop. But he's determined. He leans against the trunk of the pear tree and reaches way up into its branches. Towards a single ripe pear.

Elias: There that's a good one

His fingers wrap around the fruit. And he pulls it from the tree

[AMBI- Pear being pulled from tree; Birds take flight]

Scene 2: Cyprus Flashback

[Bullets firing; Angry chanting in the streets]

[News broadcaster: The first of the Turkish troops have landed Cyprus]

[Cypriot official: This is a take over of the Greek Administration by Greece]

[News Broadcaster: As the Turks advance the number of Greek Cypriot refugees is growing rapidly]

[Turkish army marching]

Elias: In 1974 when the war broke out in Cypress I had no contact with my family

[News broadcaster: As the Turks Advance the number of Greek Cypriot Refugees is growing rapidly]

[Gun firing and a man screams]

Elias: I didn't know whether they were dead or a live.

[ABRUPT CUT with no Ambi or sound underneath]

[Beat of silence]

Close your eyes. Imagine for just a moment that you are this man.

Elias: Elias Bartellas.

You grew up in a small village.

Elias: There where about 700 hundred inhabitants. And I remember every house and every front yard.

You are the son of a farmer

Elias: We had melons and watermelons and eggplants and cucumbers and tomatoes and we had okra and of course we had fig trees.

You sell figs and pears door to door with your brothers.

You leave to go to school in a far away country. And then...

[AMBI- Bombs dropping; faster even more chaotic]

You spend the next three years trying to piece together what has happened to your family.

Elias: The whole family fled right? And some of them didn't even have shoes on because they had to flee. So they lost everything.

And to your home.

MUSIC

Elias: Elias: Asomados. Asomados. The name now doesn't exist. So when I look at the map there is no name. I can see the names of other villages but my village doesn't exist.

MUSIC

The Turks have drawn a new boarder across the island. Your old life. With your mother and father is to the North of this line. Across a chasm that no-one is allowed to cross.

You decide to leave. To wait out the storm. But you need to say goodbye.

Elias: And of course my parents were in the age where they didn't know wether they would live to see me again. Yeah that was a very emotional moment.

MUSIC

You go to this place between two worlds. To the scar that has shattered your home. And you look at your parents a hundred meters away.

Elias: We just stared at each other with the space of the no mans land in between us.

Somehow. Your mother bribes one of the guards. Maybe the one with the large gun. And for a second the war doesn't matter. Because you are in your parents arms again.

Elias: I embraced them, and they embraced me and we said goodbye.

[Fade to Black]

Scene 3: Moves to Canada

You fly across the sea. To another island. Called Newfoundland

Elias: I came on the 10th of October. It was a very windy day when I came. And I couldn't wait to get up in the morning and see St. Johns. With the skyscrapers.

There are none. This is not what you thought Canada would be.

Elias: So I thought 'I won't stay in this village more than a few months, I'll go somewhere else.'

But there is no place else to go.

Elias: When I came here, some of the neighbors they were not very welcoming. Because I was from CFA. Come from away.

Because you look and talk differently. Because you're not from here. Because you don't belong.

Elias: Yes

But there is no place else to go.

Scene 3: The death in the house

Elias: Shortly after I came here someone called me to go to the neighboring house.

Yeah they found out I was a doctor.

A knock in the middle of the night. A neighbor you have never met before is dead.

Music

Elias: He was lying in the bed. And the bed was in the beautiful room overlooking the harbour.

Fingers on the neck. Mirror to the mouth.

Elias: So it was a strange feeling to go in for the first time and see instead of getting to know the neighbors, to go and pronounce him dead.

Maybe they pull a sheet over him when you are done. You hold them while they cry.

Elias: Since then they call me 'The Doctor.' There are many other doctors since then living here. But I'm 'The Doctor'

A few years later. You buy the house. The one with the beautiful view. The one where everything changed for you. Because a man died. And you were a doctor.

Scene 4: Home in Cyprus is GONE

Elias: My parents stayed behind in the village for 40 years or more hoping they would save the village and they would save their houses. ...

Years go by. And your mother dies

Elias: She was the last person to live in the village.

In the village that no longer exists.

Elias: When they died they thought that the Turks would respect the fact that they owned the house and they died in the house.

But they don't.

[FADE TO BLACK]

Scene 5: Planting the tree

So in St. John's you plant a pear tree

Elias: Well I wanted to plant fruit trees. But as you see it's very steep there.

Rocks above you. The sea below you.

Elias: What I did was- I knew where I wanted to plant the trees.

So you get a rope. You tie it to the trunk of the baby tree. And you lower it down the cliff.

Hoping that the rope will hold. That this new life won't tumble into the ocean.

Elias: It was hard. But nothing I wouldn't do again.

Then you lower yourself down the cliff.

Elias: I used the rope again. I tied it to the fence and I was holding it as I was going down.

[AMBI- WAVES]

You can hear the waves. Here on the edge of the world.

Elias: Most of it is rock there. But I found enough soil,

Something for them to sink their roots into.

Elias: And in addition to the soil was in the pot made them just survive.

And you wait

[FADE to Black]

Scene 6: No matter how much time goes by you still can't go home

Back in Cypress time passes

Elias: Things changed then we could get a special visa or permit to cross the boarder.

You walk over that line that your mother couldn't cross.

Elias: That was a year or two after my mother died

You are now a father. You bring your wife and children to Cyprus. To show them the house you were born in.

[BRING IN MUSIC crescendo it through scene... excited.hopeful]

Elias: And the way to do that is to wait until Sunday and on Sunday we are allowed to go to the village to attend a mass.

You pray. You want to go home.

Elias: But in order to walk there, which was only probably about 70 meters away from the church we had to get the permission of the Turkish Soldier.

He agrees. So for the first time in 40 years you walk down the street to your childhood home. Your heart is racing.

Elias: What did it look like? It was run down. Yeah run down. Before we had fruit trees in front of the house. But the fruit trees were gone.

Music ends

Elias: It looked like when I was started walking and started talking. I could imagine

myself in it and I could imagine myself being there inside with my parents and with my younger brothers and sisters. I remember all the good times and the bad times that I had in the house.

There is a lock on the door. A sign that says do not enter.

Elias: We wanted to just go inside the house but the soldier said no you're not allowed to.

Music

You're Inches away.

Elias: Then we wanted to take a picture of us, the whole family in front of the house that I was born in.

He says no. But theres no place else to go.

Elias: We had to haggle with the soldier. And reluctantly he agreed and what was interesting he took the picture for us. I gave him the camera and he took it.

You stand with your wife and children. You smile. While you smile. You say goodbye.

Elias: So that's the picture I have in my mind now of the house in Asomatos.

[Theme]

Scene 7: The Pears taste like home

[AMBI- Elias peeling pears]

Now, back in Newfoundland. In a room with a beautiful view of the harbour. Elias Bartellas peels a pear.

[AMBI- Elias peeling pears]

Elias: Ok so we'll see try to peel them. Normally I don't peel pears I just eat them with

the skin

They're small. Could easily disappear in a closed fist. But they're precious.

[peeling sound]

Elias: But I'm not sure if they are ripe.

There's something loving in the way he holds them.

[peeling sounds]

Elias: So do you want to try them?

I do.

Elias: Ok so the moment of truth.

[Sound of taking a bite]

Elias: MMM that's good! [Chewing sounds] MM. Yeah its much tastier than what I expected it to be. Very good.

What do you think it tastes like?

Music

I like to think that it tastes like home.

Elias: It brings me back to the days when I was in the village in Cyprus.

Music

Elias: Actually two days ago just in the morning I couldn't sleep, at 4 o'clock in the morning. And then I started - I walked in my thoughts I walked to all the neighborhoods in the village.

Music

Elias: And I remember each person who they were and what they were remembered for. One was the fiddler, another one was doing the roofs another had a bus he was a driver

for the bus. [Gets choked up] And it's very emotional event remembering that [Sigh].

Music

Elias: But I don't know to be sentimental because these days what's happening with Turkey invading Syria. And yeah this reminds me of my family running away trying to escape death.

Music

Elias: Yeah but I don't have anything against the turks. I know what's happening now in a lot of countries in the world in Syria in Iraq in so many countries. And I see the photographs of the houses how they're destroyed whole village is.

Once upon a time. A man planted a pear tree. As a way to set down roots. When his world was torn out from under him. The tree grew. On the side of a cliff. Clinging to the rocks for dear life. As the wind and this Newfound soil rejected it. But pear trees are tough. And it made a home for itself on that cliff. Below a house with a beautiful view. Along the side of the North Atlantic. Where thousands of miles across the sea lay a land full of fruit trees.

Elias: What is home? It's a place where you feel its yours. Home is the place where I feel I belong. And the moment I come home I feel I'm safe.

Music