

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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I Will Not / Embi (2018)

Ashenafi Admassu

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OVERVIEW

Film: *Embi* is an Ethiopian drama, written and directed by Ethiopian director Ashenafi Admassu in 2018. The film was shot on location in the Amhara northern region of Gondar, Ethiopia. *Embi* seems to be Admassu's only film. There is no available information regarding the director.

Background The cast of novice actors is unknown, and there is little information to be found about them on the internet. On the acting credit list, the actors' names are listed without any information on their respective roles.

SYNOPSIS

The moment she was born, Tiringo was betrothed to Bitew. The agreement between Tiringo's and Bitew's parents to marry their children has kept their two respective families united for fourteen years, and the two young people have grown to naturally see each other as future life-partners. However, upon the death of Bitew's father, Tiringo's father breaks his pledge to give his daughter to Bitew, and, instead, promises her to Fekadu, a young teacher from the city of Addis Ababa. Fekadu only accepts to marry Tiringo to please his own controlling father. Fekadu's heart beats for his colleague, Elsa. So, he intends to take Tiringo with him to the city, not as a wife, but as a young girl to educate. Bitew is not aware of Fekadu's noble intention. He is furious because he is convinced that Tiringo's father has cowardly taken advantage of his father's death to back out of a pledge he never intended to keep in the first place. He believes that Tiringo was created for him and must marry no one else but him, and he is determined to do anything to prevent her from being separated from him. However, Tiringo's father explains that he broke his pledge because Bitew has dropped out of school. Indeed, although she likes Bitew, Tiringo is determined to pursue her studies. And neither she nor her parents want her to spend her life with an illiterate person who has negative views about education.

To prevent Tiringo's marriage with Fekadu, Bitew ambushes him, takes him hostage and kidnaps Tiringo. When Fekadu's father learns that he has pushed his son to marry a girl (Tiringo), who, unbeknownst to him, was already promised to another man (Bitew), he asks Tiringo's parents to do the right thing and keep their pledge to Bitew, so that peace can prevail in a village whose harmony has been upset by Bitew's violent effort to recover his bride. Tiringo's parents agree to reconsider giving their daughter to Bitew if he consents to go back to school. Bitew agrees. Elsa, who has come to her boyfriend's rescue, is reunited with him, and the film ends with a fairytale conclusion.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Tiringo: a fourteen-year-old Ethiopian girl betrothed to a young man, Bitew, from the moment of her birth, and who aspires to being an educated woman

Bitew: Tiringo's future groom, who loses his promised wife to a man from the city because he despises her desire for education

Fekadu: A teacher from the city of Addis Ababa, who is given Tiringo's hand after her father breaks his pledge to marry her to Tiringo because the latter will not pursue his studies

Elsa: A colleague of Fekadu, who is in love with him and comes to his rescue when he is kidnapped and held hostage by Bitew

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Tiringo (Open)

Tiringo is a balanced, forward looking, cunning girl. She has her eyes set on her education, and within the cultural rules, she goes with the decisions that can help her fulfil her goal. She likes her boyfriend, but she is not unconditionally bound to him at the cost of losing her education.

Balanced Tiringo is a young girl who understands her own priorities, which are at odds with her community's demands. She knows that at some point she will be expected to get married, and she accepts her union with Bitew. However, she has her own ambition of educating herself, and she does not let the community's demands interfere with her plans. She makes it clear to Bitew that she will certainly get married, but unless he decides to go back to school, it will not be to him.

Forward-looking Tiringo projects her life into a future that is out of the confines of her village. She understands that illiteracy will keep her in a condition of a subaltern, with little or no choices, and eternally dependent upon a man. She wants new prospects for herself, and she believes in education to make it possible.

Cunning Tiringo knows how to play on the sensitive strings of her boyfriend. She knows that Bitew is a proud young man, and to make him do things her way, she challenges his pride. She calls him a coward to drive him to fight for her, and she calls him an ignoramus whom she will never marry in order to incite him to return to school.

Bitew (Closed)

Bitew is an egotistical and impetuous young shepherd. He is convinced that Tiringo is his possession, created for his enjoyment, and he is determined to prevent anyone getting close to her. His violent methods to recover Tiringo disrupt the social order in the village.

Egotistical Bitew is a self-centered individual. His actions to protect his inflated ego are reckless and imperil the village social order. However, he will not listen to his brother's and mother's call to reason. For him, all actions are justified so long as they are meant to restore his bruised pride.

Impetuous Bitew is an impetuous young man who lacks the capacity for negotiation. The only way for him to resolve a conflict is through violence. On several occasions, he challenges people to a fight to avenge what he considers a wrong done to him. He also fights with his brother, kidnaps Fekadu and Tiringo to prevent them from getting married, and at the end of the film, he even shoots and wounds his brother and Fekadu.

Fekadu (Open)

Fekadu is a shy young man, extremely respectful of his father. Although he does not believe in marrying a child, he did not have the gumption to stand up to his father's decision to tie him with Tiringo.

Shy Fekadu is fond of Elsa, his colleague. In spite of his friend Josie's encouragements that he tell Elsa what his feelings are, Fekadu is too shy to declare his love. When Elsa invites him for dinner, he is elated. The planned dinner does not take place, but Elsa finds him in Dongar and they finally are able to be a loving couple.

Respectful Fekadu is a city boy with great respect for tradition. He has a first date with Elsa, but he cancels it and rushes to the village at his father's wishes. His father orders him to marry Tiringo, and although it is against his principles to marry a minor, he accepts the union to please his father with no intention to live with Tiringo as a couple but with the objective of giving her an education in the city.

THEMES

SOCIETY

Patriarchy Honoring the father's spirit and word, keeping the father's authority intact in the society, is significant in traditional Amhara culture. And the death of the father must not signify the end of his authority. For Bitew, Tiringo's father's decision to marry his daughter to someone else upon his father's death is not just an insult to him, it is an act that violates his father's spirit. Bitew's violent pursuit of Tiringo has thus a dual purpose: reclaim his promised wife and restore his father's honor. It is in accordance with this view that his older brother, Gabriele, decides to be by his side even though he disapproves of Bitew's violent ways. The weight of patriarchy is also observable in the decision-making process when it comes to marriage and to litigating conflicts. Only men's viewpoints matter. The male elders decide which men the girls must marry, and the girls' opinions are not sought. Such is Tiringo's case. And when the community is in crisis, only old men gather on the village square to debate and come up with a verdict. The male figure is the authority from which the law emanates, and that law is irreversible.

Culture: *The name-of-the-father* The name-of-the-father is significant in the Amhara culture. When Gabriele asks Fekadu to promise him that he will not press charges against his brother before he frees him, Fekadu makes that pledge on the name of his father, which persuades Gabriele to let him go. When Fekadu asks Gabriele why he keeps going on with Bitew's plan, even though he does not support it, Gabriele tells him that he has sworn to his father to protect Bitew and never abandon him, and that pledge is sacred to him. When Fekadu's father orders him to take fourteen-year-old Tiringo as his wife, Fekadu complies even though he does not believe in a union with a child, and he later confesses to Tiringo that his intention is not to make her his wife but (so as not to vex his father) to take her to the city and give her an education. In traditional Amhara culture, children are expected to wash their fathers' feet, as Tiringo does in one scene. This is a sign of reverence to the father whose name is sacred. The name of the father must not be spoiled, and the promise that the father makes or that is made to the father is inviolate and must be kept. The film ends with a restoration of the names of Bitew's, Fekadu's, and Tiringo's respective fathers when the promises made hitherto, and which risked being broken at one time, are kept with Bitew's and Tiringo's marriage.

Country vs City The film revisits the conflict between country and city. Josie is a caricature of the city dweller. He is represented as out of shape, lazy, and not serious. The peasants in the village consider that they are the true workers of the country, those who feed city folks. Therefore, they have little consideration for people like Josie. For Bitew, the worst that can happen to Tiringo is to be tied to a man from the city, which for him, too, is the greatest humiliation. The villagers see city folks as people with no value, who think that everything has a price and can be purchased. Thus, they repeatedly refer to Tiringo's and Fekadu's marriage as a monetary transaction. Tiringo, they say, is sold, and not married, to a man from the city. However, this perception is not shared by everyone. For Tiringo and her parents, the city is the place of education, emancipation, and transformation of one's living conditions. For that, they are happy to marry their daughter to Fekadu, who can help her pursue her studies and better her life.

RELATIONSHIP (marriage, love)

Marriage Marriage in traditional Amhara culture is rarely a personal matter between two individuals. It is a union between two families, and in this important matter, the opinions of the groom's and the bride's relatives take precedence over what the couple want. Tiringo was betrothed to Bitew from the moment she was born. Her fate was thus sealed, and all she could do was to grow up with her future husband and learn to love him or, at least, learn to be accustomed to his presence. When Tiringo's parents reneged on their pledge to marry their daughter to Bitew and decided to give her to Fekadu, they not only broke long-standing ties between two families, but they also upset the social order in a community for which sincerity in the word given and other people's trust in this word are the foundations of community. Thus, Fekadu's father is devastated when he learns that by marrying his son to Tiringo, he has unwillingly upset his community. From the moment he learns that Tiringo was promised to Bitew, Fekadu's father works at restoring the social order by cancelling his child's marriage with Tiringo and asking Tiringo's relatives to do the right thing and stick by their initial promise. The decision by Tiringo's father to renege on his pledge was made because Bitew would not pursue his studies and was preventing their daughter from going to school. Finally, though, Bitew agrees to go back to school and to allow Tiringo to pursue her dream of an education. Ultimately, the

families resolve the issue by signing a reconciliation order and by reuniting Bitew and Tiringo. In this way, order is restored in the village whose organizational structure was upset by broken promises.

Love Tiringo did not choose Bitew as her lover. He was imposed on her at birth. She grew up with him as a playmate and learned to love him in that sense. Tiringo's love for Bitew is not necessarily fairy tale love, that is, romantic, idealistic and passionate. It is from the register of habituation to and affection for someone and caring for that person. She likes Bitew, but she is not blindly in love with him to the point of giving up on her own dreams of being an educated woman. So, she urges Bitew to pursue his studies as a condition for them to get married. However, Bitew is set on being an illiterate shepherd and on preventing her from learning from books. When Tiringo's parents break their vow to tie her to Bitew and find her a husband from the city in the person of Fekadu, Tiringo is delighted. But Bitew notes her delight with sadness and anger. And Tiringo is frank with Fekadu. She tells him right away that she married him not out of love but because she wants an education, which is to Fekadu's liking, too, for he has no intention of making a fourteen-year-old child his wife. He tells her that he accepted the marriage just to give her an education and has no intention of marrying her. All is settled when Bitew agrees to go back to school as a condition for marrying Tiringo. Tiringo's rational, unemotional love for Bitew allows her to make balanced choices for herself.

PSYCHOLOGY

Objectification Bitew tells his mother that no one except he will marry Tiringo because she was created for him. From his perspective, Tiringo is not an independent being endowed with the capacity to freely choose who she will marry. Instead, she is a thing created for his enjoyment. Bitew's view of Tiringo is an acquired understanding about women in traditional Amhara culture. Bitew has been socialized, like most of his fellow tribesmen, to view women as men's property. This outlook on women in Amhara society causes them to be exchanged as mere commodities. Tiringo is said to have been not "married to," but "sold to" a man from the city. Bitew cannot fathom the idea that Tiringo, "his thing," could be traded without his knowledge. This, for him, is theft and an assault on his pride, which he is determined to restore by killing Fekadu and recovering his promised bride. Bitew's violent endeavor to assert his pride and recover his bride is deescalated when Fekadu's father insists that Tiringo's father respect his initial pledge and see that Bitew be restored in his right to his property, that is, Tiringo.

Trust/Honesty/Sincerity Fekadu's father states that Ethiopian citizens who lack faith and sincerity are like plants that cannot grow because they lack roots. He tells Tiringo's brother that if their pledge to Bitew was based on sincerity, it would have resulted in a positive outcome for the two families involved as well as for the whole community. However, because the promise made to Bitew's family was rootless, that is, based on insincerity, it caused a feud between several families. Keeping one's promise is important in this Amhara community. Bitew's brother, Gabriele, has promised his father to be his brother's keeper. So, he supports Bitew's plans to take Fekadu hostage. As Bitew's actions become more and more violent, though, Gabriele urges his brother not to force him to break his promise to his father and turn against him. However, he has not promised Bitew that he will prevent Fekadu's escape. So, he lets Fekadu go but not without having the latter make him a promise, that of dropping all eventual charges against his brother, Bitew. Fekadu keeps his promise, and Gabriele fulfills his promise to his father to look after his brother.

Choice/desire One of the elements that distinguishes the city from the village is that in village girls have very few choices, whereas in the city girls can take ownership of their future, precisely because the city gives them a chance at education and open-mindedness. Elsa has a college education and, despite her father's objection that teaching is beneath her, she chooses to be a teacher. She also has the choice of her partner in life. She loves Fekadu. He loves her, too, but he is hesitant to declare his love. She takes the first step and invites him for dinner, determined to tell him about her sentiments. Contrary to Elsa, Tiringo cannot decide for herself. She wants to pursue her education but was betrothed at birth to Bitew in an agreement between Bitew's father and her father. Tiringo cannot go against her father's will and has no other alternative but to marry Bitew. Nevertheless, Tiringo's life is not totally devoid of choice. Her father knows her aspiration and poses as a condition for her marriage to Bitew that he must return to school. And when the latter is reluctant to pursue his studies, Tiringo is offered to Fekadu from the city. Tiringo plays on her father's latest decision, urging Bitew to return to school and give her father a chance to reverse his

decision. Her subtle insistence works. However, her marriage to her childhood love and her education are secured by some detours that seem not to be of her own doing.

QUEST (fulfillment)

Fulfillment *Embi* is a film about the quest for the fulfillment of one's dream. Young Tiringo dreams of being educated and having a life that is different from the one that her parents know in the small village of Dongar. She spends her days tending to the family cattle and reading her books at the same time, all to the disappointment of her boyfriend, Bitew. Bitew wants a traditional, uneducated wife, who will be submissive to him. Therefore, he forbids Tiringo to read, snatches her books from her and throws them away. Tiringo's parents, whose desire is to see their daughter marry a young man from the village and still pursue her studies, are upset with Bitew's behavior. So, they break their pledge to give him their daughter and find her another son of the village, Fekadu, who lives and works in the city. However, Fekadu is pursued by Elsa, his colleague who is in love with him, and whom he, too, loves. At the end, all the characters' quests are fulfilled. Tiringo has a boyfriend who commits to going back to school. Fekadu and Elsa find each other. And peace is restored in the village.

PLOT

Tiringo dancing In the small Ethiopian village of Dongar, a wedding feast has gathered the villagers. People eat, drink, and dance. A young girl by the name of Tiringo is happily dancing and is the subject of the young men's attention. A young shepherd by the name of Bitew watches her intently from afar.



Jealous boyfriend A young man approaches the dancing girls to admire them closer. Bitew violently pulls him aside and accuses him of looking too avidly at Tiringo. The young man proclaims his innocence, but Bitew forces him into a fight to make him pay for his impertinence.



Quit your job Meanwhile, in the city of Addis Abeba, Elsa, a young teacher, is in a heated conversation with her father. He thinks that her teaching job and salary are below her family rank. He wants her to quit her job. She argues that she must put her acquired skills to work, and that she did not graduate just to have her graduation pictures decorate the walls of her father's living room.



Declare your love Elsa, Josie, and Fekadu are friends and colleagues at the Entoto Secondary School. Josie teases Fekadu for always helping Elsa. Josie thinks that Fekadu is fond of Elsa and would do anything for her. Fekadu admits that Elsa is lovely and does not leave him indifferent. Josie urges Fekadu to declare his love to Elsa before someone else snatches her.



Fekadu does not get it Josie asks Elsa why she is not bold enough to express her love for Fekadu. She tells him that she has tried subtle ways to let Fekadu understand that she loves him, but he does not seem to understand. She tells Josie that she might invite Fekadu to dinner the following day and tell him openly about her feelings for him.



Throw your book away Tiringo is in a field watching after the cattle while reading a book at the same time. Bitew walks to her and reminds her that he already told her to throw away her book. She wants to know what took him so long to come. He tells her that he took a detour to avoid crossing paths with her brother. She teases him, saying that he is spineless.



They want to separate us Bitew wants to know why Tiringo wanted to see him. She informs him that her father and the village Orthodox priest want to separate them. They have decided that she should marry another man, a man from the city. Bitew tells her that it will be over his dead body. She tells him that in this case, he is already dead for her father is determined to marry her to the man from the city. Bitew hears Tiringo's brother coming, and he scurries away. Tiringo's brother warns his sister to stop seeing Bitew.



Bitew is brooding Bitew's big brother, Gabriele, wants to know what the matter with him is. Bitew explains that his promised bride, Tiringo, has been 'sold' to a city man. His brother is surprised that Tiringo's family will break their promise of marrying her to Bitew after their father's death. Bitew tells his brother that Tiringo seems to relish the idea of marrying a city man and already sees herself as a city woman learning from books.



Bitew is mocked In the mountains overlooking Dongar, the village of the protagonists, and the neighboring villages, the shepherds are singing Bitew's humiliation in parables for everyone to hear. The shepherds characterize Bitew as a weak man, who has been dispossessed of his future bride, and who lacks the bravery to take appropriate actions to regain his pride. Bitew understands the parable and takes offense. He challenges his fellow shepherds to a fight to get revenge for their insults. The young shepherds jostle but never fight, and they end up shaking hands.



An urgent call In Addis, Fekadu is elated to get a surprise invitation from Elsa to have dinner with her the following day. Fekadu's phone rings as he is choosing his outfit for his date with Elsa. It is his brother calling from the village of Dongar, urging him to come immediately because their father is dying and wants to see him. Fekadu leaves precipitously for the village without thinking of telling Elsa.



Stood up Unaware that Fekadu has left for his village, Elsa makes herself beautiful for her date with him. She waits for him at the restaurant where they are supposed to meet, but he does not make an appearance. She tries in vain to reach him on his phone.



Tiringo's ambition Tiringo is washing her father's feet and having a conversation with him and her old brother. Her father wants to know how her education is going and urges her to persistently pursue it. Her brother is persuaded that Tiringo does not need education, and that her desire for education is a stage that she will outgrow as she matures. Tiringo is not pleased that her brother trivializes her ambition to be an educated girl.



Bitew has a plan In the local bar where the young shepherds gather for some home-brewed alcohol, they empathize with Bitew. They find it unfair that Tiringo's father broke his word and decided to marry Tiringo to a city man. Bitew's friends vow to stand by him and help him whatever his decision will be. He tells them that he has a plan in mind.



You shall marry Tiringo In Dongar, Fekadu is being pressured by his father and the village orthodox priest to marry fourteen-year-old Tiringo. Fekadu protests that Tiringo is a mere child and not of marrying age yet. Fekadu's father is inflexible, and the holy man reminds Fekadu that he owes respect to his father and reverence to his holy presence. Fekadu's father tells his son that the marriage date has been fixed, and that it is no use protesting. Fekadu feels powerless.



Bitew must go back to school Bitew's big brother explains to Bitew the reason Tiringo's father gave him for breaking his promise. He wants his daughter to pursue her education, but Bitew has been an obstacle to her education. Tiringo's father explained that he sent Bitew's mother a message through the village elders that Bitew should get back to school if he wants to marry his daughter, or he will have to break off his engagement. This is what he did when he received no encouraging reply from Bitew's mother.



Tiringo's father is inflexible Bitew's older brother explains that his mother and he never received the message sent to them by Tiringo's father. He begs Tiringo's father to reconsider his decision to give Bitew the opportunity to correct his behavior in order to save the two families' relationship. Tiringo's father remains inflexible. He tells Bitew's brother that he waited three years for an answer and cannot wait any longer. He does not want to jeopardize his daughter's education.



You brought us shame Gabriele accuses his young brother of bringing shame to the family with his bad behavior. Bitew gets angry. He tells his brother that he needs no one's help, and that he will find a solution by himself.



She was created for me Bitew goes to his mother to tell her what Tiringo's parents have decided. He tells her that Tiringo's father has taken advantage of his father's death to renege on his pledge. Bitew's mother tells him that if Tiringo once loved him and is now happy to go with her parents' plan, then, he should forget her. Bitew tells his mother that it is out of the question to forget Tiringo, for she was created for him. Bitew leaves his mother, angry.



This is unlike Fekadu Elsa asks Josie if he has any news of Fekadu, for she has been unable to reach him by phone. Josie tells her that Fekadu has gone to his village to marry, and he jokes that he will be returning with a child, for his wife is a mere fourteen-year-old girl. Elsa is shocked and replies that this is unlike Fekadu.



Fekadu has a child bride Fekadu is returning to Addis with his new child-bride. She wants to know why he was hesitant to marry her. He tells her that she is a mere child and that he is taking her to Addis not as his wife, but to give her an education. She tells him that she agreed to marry him to get an education, however, and it is too late for him to see her as his young sister because, unbeknownst to him, the marriage legal papers have been signed by their two families. Fekadu is shocked.



The ambush The minibus in which Fekadu and Tiringo are travelling is ambushed by Bitew and his gang. They order Fekadu and Tiringo to get out of the vehicle. Fekadu hides his phone in his socks. Tiringo explains to him who the ambushers are. He is surprised to know that she was already promised to another man, and he realizes that he is in serious trouble.



Fekadu is held hostage Fekadu and Tiringo are taken to the forest. Bitew's gang confine Fekadu in a hut while they are chatting around a campfire. Fekadu gets his phone from his socks and calls his friends in Addis to tell them that he is being held hostage somewhere in the forest of Dongar. Bitew's older brother hears Fekadu calling. beats him and takes the phone away.

Ominous dreams Fekadu's father has not had news of his son and his new bride for a while. He is worried and is visited by nightmares of his son being abducted. He senses that something is wrong. In the morning, he goes to pray at the village church for his son's wellbeing.

Bitew will kill Fekadu Bitew takes Tiringo to his mother's place. He declares that no one else but he will live with Tiringo. His mother tries to reason him to be sensible and avoid any violent actions. She and Tiringo tell him that Fekadu is innocent, for he had no idea that Tiringo's father had an agreement with Bitew's father. Tiringo, tells him that the way he goes about trying to get her back is the wrong way. She tells him that she chose to marry Fekadu and was not pressured into it. Bitew gets upset and vows to kill Fekadu.



Fekadu escapes Fekadu is tied to a tree and watched over by Bitew's brother. Fekadu tries to convince Bitew's brother that he only went along to please his father and that he did not intend to take Tiringo as a wife. He tells him that his goal was to give her some education in the city, and that he did not know that she was already promised to Bitew. Bitew's brother trusts Fekadu. He allows him to escape when no one is looking.



Bitew quarrels with his brother Bitew is not happy that his brother, Gabriele, let the prisoner escape. His brother explains that it is time to de-escalate the situation, especially when the prisoner is innocent. Bitew calls his brother a coward. Gabriele slaps him.



Going to rescue a friend Elsa and Josie decide to go rescue Fekadu, but they have no idea where he is being held, except that it is in the village of Gondar. Josie is not very confident that they will be able to find Fekadu without a precise idea of where he is detained. Nevertheless, the two friends embark on the rescue mission, guided by a local shepherd.



Josie, the city slicker Josie is out of shape and cannot keep up with Elsa and the shepherd-guide. Elsa urges him to muster some courage to keep up. The shepherd mocks him as a typical lazy city man. Josie takes a break under a big tree and jokes that this walk is as long and exhausting as a war refugee's migration and jokes that the must have crossed into Ethiopia by now.



Disquieting parables In the village, Tiringo's unsuspecting brother comes to ask Fekadu's father whether his sister and her husband have sent news of their safe arrival in the city. The father has no news, but Tiringo's brother tells him that he has heard some disquieting parables by the shepherds that allude to someone being held hostage in the forest, and he is worried. Fekadu's father wants to know why he thinks the parables have anything to do with them.



Unethical behavior Tiringo's brother confesses to Fekadu's father that his sister was betrothed to Bitew, and that his father broke that promise. Fekadu's father is devastated. He tells him that what they did is unethical, sinful even. Tiringo's brother begs Fekadu's father for some advice to get out of the mess his family created. The old man advises him to alert the police.

Father would not approve Fekadu runs through the forest, chased by Bitew and two of his friends. He is caught. He tells Bitew that his intention is not to marry Tiringo. Bitew then suspects that he wants to use her as a servant and gets even more violent. Gabriele appears and asks Bitew to restrain himself. He tells him that their father would not approve of his behavior if he were alive. Bitew retorts that it is rather his brother's dereliction of duty that their father would not approve.



Elsa meets Fekadu's father Elsa, Josie, and their guide come across Fekadu's father on his way to the police. They tell him that Fekadu called about being held hostage in a forest. They tell him that they have already informed the police. Fekadu's father tells the guide to take Josie and Elsa to his house while he warns the village elders.



Tiringo's brother comes to fight Bitew tries to kill Fekadu, but his brother, Gabriele, who has been watching him carefully, intervenes just in time to prevent the murder. Gabriele tells him that one of his sentries informed him that Tiringo's brother is after them. Gabriele accuses his young brother of getting them deeper into trouble with his senseless acts. Tiringo's brother is headed in their direction armed with his rifle.



Elsa's father is worried In Addis, Elsa's father is worried about his daughter's silence. He has not had any news from her for two days and tries unsuccessfully to reach her on the phone.

The rootless plant Tiringo's brother, Josie, and Elsa are watching Fekadu's father plant some trees. Josie asks him why he removes the roots of the plant before putting them in the soil while the roots are essential to the plant's growth. Fekadu's father replies that indeed, truth and sincerity are the root of good citizenry, which Tiringo's parents lacked when they broke their promise to Bitew's family. The rootless plant is a jab at Tiringo's parents.



Fekadu escapes a second time The police are interviewing the villagers. Elsa gets a phone call from her father, who announces that he is on his way to the village. Meanwhile, in the forest, where he is held, Fekadu begs Gabriele to let him go a second time. Gabriele asks him to first promise that he will not press charges against his brother whom he swore to his father to protect. Fekadu gives Gabriele his word of honor, and Gabriele unties his hands, frees him, and gives him back his phone.



Bitew is a coward Bitew is taking Tiringo to a new hiding place. She calls him a coward for holding Fekadu hostage while he could just as well solve the issue by speaking to the elders. She tells him that she will not live with a coward. He gets angry and threatens to hurt her. His friend gets between them.



Bitew shoots at Fekadu In his flight, Fekadu runs into Bitew, who shoots him immediately. Fekadu falls to the ground, hurt. The gunshot alerts the police, Gabriele and Tiringo's brother run in the direction of the shot.



The shootout Fekadu is hurt. Bitew reloads his gun and points it at Fekadu. He is determined to kill him. His brother arrives and points his gun at him, urging him to let Fekadu go. Elsa, Josie, the police, and Tiringo's brother also arrive. Tiringo runs to her brother for protection. A shootout occurs. In the confusion the police shoot Gabriele, and Tiringo's brother shoot Bitew. Elsa runs to Fekadu, who is lying on the ground, and holds his head in her arms, crying for help.



The elders' decision

The villagers conclude that Bitew has behaved badly because of his love for Tiringo. However, they also note that Tiringo's family betrayed the most important asset of a man, his word. The elders decide that Bitew will marry Tiringo, but first, he must go back to school.



All is well that ends well

Fekadu recovers at his father's house in the company of his friends. At Tiringo's father's house, Tiringo's big brother is teasing her. He tells her that her longing for education is the source of all the trouble. She retorts that he is the one who encouraged her to pursue her education.



Josie will not walk Elsie's father has arrived at the bus station and calls Josie to come and take him to the village. Josie dreads the long walk, but Fekadu's father reassures him that he will be going on donkey back. Despite his fresh wounds, Fekadu wants to go thank Gabriele, Bitew's brother, for all he did for him.



Declaration of love Bitew is reunited with Tiringo. His arm is healing fast. Bitew asks Tiringo to teach him how to read. Fekadu declares his love to Elsa. One of the village girls declares her love to Josie. He takes off running, for he will not go through what his friend Fekadu underwent. The film ends on this comical note.



Questions

1. What is the marrying age in your culture/country? How would the marriage of a fourteen-year-old be treated by the authorities?
2. Why is Bitew so hostile to Tiringo pursuing her studies?
3. What does Bitew fail to see in Tiringo's aspiration as potentially positive for their future married life.
4. Josie's and Elsa's trip to Dongar was not just a rescue mission. It was also a learning excursion, a return to the source. What did Josie and Elsa learn on this excursion to the village?
5. In *Embi*, a reconciliation order, signed by the various actors involved in the kidnapping and imprisonment of Fekadu and in the shootout with the police, settled the matter amicably. Would this method of conflict resolution be acceptable in your culture? Why or why not?
6. What elements of Amhara culture featured in *Embi* do you find appealing, and which ones do you see as unacceptable?