



# Tobacco Girl

A documentary by **Biljana Garvanlieva**

3sat series „Fremde Kinder“ („Foreign Children“)

30 min

Mümine is 14 years of age and lives with her family in the tobacco farming regions in the mountains of Macedonia. It is the only source of income in this region, nothing but tobacco will grow here and people say, it is the best tobacco in the world. Natives to the region also call it the „black gold.“

Mümine is supposed to marry and be sold to her future husband. One kilogram of tobacco costs 3 Euro – a girl is worth about 3000 Euro. That's the tradition amongst the Yörüken people. But Mümine refuses to accept. She would rather escape, if that meant she could marry the one she loved. In that case, her mother warns, she would become an outcast.

The Yörüks are Turkish people, they came to southern Europe along with the Ottomans 600 years ago and still inhabit the mountain regions of Macedonia. Yörük means: „He, who came by foot.“ They have conserved their century-old traditions and language and rarely mingle with others. They live in their own, anarchical world.

The film depicts Mümine in her day-to-day village life, working hard, or out for a walk with her girlfriend where they occasionally meet boys in secrecy. Anything besides

eye contact is strictly forbidden before marriage. Her family negotiates her future quite pragmatically, while she only allows herself to open up with her younger brothers and her older sister.

Mümine dreams of visiting a school downtown, like her sister does. It is quite clear to her that, if she doesn't learn something, she will be doomed to live a life working on the tobacco fields and raising children. Elementary school is now over. Will she be allowed to continue to high school, escaping the shackles of day-to-day village life?

The film accompanies Mümine on her path, in her quest to – between tradition and modernity – find her spot in life. It also provides a touching glimpse of the culture of the Yörüks, a minority almost forgotten and certainly unknown, who up to this date inhabit the mountain regions of Macedonia.