

Dead River (1990)

It is hot summer afternoon. The Sun is smiling at the pictorial landscape with the nice Czech hills where the streams wind in the valleys and the god's animals feed on the forest clearing. Everyone must fall in love into this part of the land which so well made by the god. No one is wondering at two boys who are playing, splashing water at each other and having fun from this beautiful day.

At once, one of the boys dives into the river. The other is marvelling at him: "What are you looking for, Joyce?" After a while, Joyce emerges with triumphant smile in his face. He is holding a cray. Nice, shining, black cray which is rare these days. Then, he recovers from the amazement and runs to the bank of the river.

"Paul, look at the cray!"

"Nice, but we can't fry him anyway. Crays are strictly protected."

"Let's look at him properly. I have never seen a cray."

The boys were looking at the cray, and then, released him into the river. It was late and so the boys went home.

The same day, in the nearby factory a meeting was held concerning construction of the new plant for processing cellulose which should be launched in two years. The meeting continues in a quiet tone and the attendants tick one point after the other.

The turn has director Hacker: "The last point is the problem of sewage water. It seems that there is only one choice – drain the sewage into the river. It is necessary to make a decision over cleaning the water before letting out."

Deputy director Peters was not disbalanced form his contemplation over getting the timber for his house at all. He resolved the situation with lightness: "The construction of sewage plant would cost half a million of dollars. It's mush easier to detach six thousand dollars for financial penalty. This amount is not needed to pay if nobody would sue us. It would save the money for construction of the sewage plant and the unnecessary work."

It was Friday and the others were not interested in the problem being somewhere in their farm-houses or at the river, in their thoughts. The attendants were happy when the director dismissed the meeting with the words: "I accept the proposal of the deputy director Peters and close the meeting. Thank you for attention."

After two years, one hot summer afternoon, two boys come to the river. Longing for cool bathing they jump into the river, romp, swim and splash water at each other as usually. At once, one of the boys stiffens as doped. He stands for a while, and then, takes a fish floating on the water. The fish looked quite normal but a fault was in it. It was dead. The boys look around. On the top of water, many dead lifeless fishes float. All of them are dead. Boys smelled at the water tasting the stench they have never spotted in their lives.

They were shocked. Then, they recovered and ran out of the river as fast as never before.

“Joyce, the river is dead.”

“It is not a river, Paul. It is a junk. The last summer, we were bathing here and the river was beautiful and clean. Now, it is a pongy junk.”

“I have never seen so many dead fishes.”

“Do you remember the cray we have caught two years ago? If we had baked him it would be better. Now, he won’t be eatable, surely.”

“It is terrible. I can’t believe that this is the river we had swum last summer.”

“Let’s go away so we won’t smell in the same way. We won’t spend holydays here.”

Disconsolated with this experience the two boys walked slowly from the river. Their hands hanged like a loose tooth and their eyes were looking for salvation in the deepness of the Earth. They could not understand that something like that could happen. They did not believe that someone could make “pongy junk” out of the river. It was a nightmare. They did not understand anything. The fishes would never be alive again. Maybe, that there would never be life in the river, never would people swim there. But it is not a dream it is reality.