

Fireflies - Synopsis

82 min. documentary

In his book "*The Lover*", A.B. Yehoshua writes: "*Again and again since the cease-fire there has been that odd announcement in the papers about Giora, who disappeared. Something like this: Mom and Dad are looking for Giora... At the beginning of the war on such and such date in so and so location he was seen in action in his tank. But ten days later... Giora's traces have vanished*". The Giora A.B. Yehoshua is referring to is Giora Meisler, and the film "**Fireflies**" is the story of the search for Giora Meisler, told by his brother Gili Meisler, seven years younger than him.

The year is 1973. The story begins during the Yom Kippur war. The first days of the war have gone by without a word from Giora. The recognition that Giora is missing gradually seeps in. The family searches for him with consistency, determination, with scientific precision. The father, a renowned mathematician, Prof. David Meisler, keeps an accurate journal in which he writes everything down and accumulates every piece of information. And Fanya, the mother, program editor at Voice of Israel station, tells the story that incites the country over the airwaves. Then there's Gili, only 12 years old at the time, but he was there and he remembers it all. Perhaps he is to blame for Giora's disappearance? The last time, when they argued, before the outbreak of the war, Gili told Giora "I hope you die in the army".

Giora is both present and absent. During a sabbatical in Toronto – to where the family fled – an IDF envoy arrives and says: there are findings, not quite 100%, but there are findings. It's probably Giora. And then, nearly two years after the war, Giora is buried on Jerusalem, though his story is not. Gili keeps searching. In fact, from then until now, he continues the search. Gili's life becomes a continuous journey, in search of the memory, in search of Giora.

The year is 1984. Having grown up and served in the military, Gili embarks on a journey to the Far East, the Israeli trek of every military alumnus. There is a lot to search for in the Far East, especially for Gili, who for years has been addicted to Zen, Buddhism and karate. There, in the Far East, so they say, everything happens and all options are open. One can even see fireflies.

But for Gili, the journey to the Far East quickly becomes a search for Giora. Here, in Nepal of all places, he will find the brother who disappeared. And why not? Here's Juni, a handsome Nepalese fellow, with long hair, exactly Giora's age. Maybe he really is Giora. After ingesting a full jar of magic mushrooms jam and diving into a world of continuous hallucination for many days, Gili is convinced – Juni is Giora. "I have found him!" he informs his parents in Israel. And Fanya and David Meisler, no longer youngsters, reach Kathmandu within 48 hours in order to rescue their only remaining son Gili. Even after arriving back in Israel, still in the clutches of the hallucination, Gili continues the search. Suddenly, late at night, he knocks on the door of artist Larry Abramson, whom he once heard whistling Giora's whistle, and tells him: "You are Giora!" The following day he submits a handwritten ad: "*Giora, Mom and Dad don't really believe. I think you must be very lonely and maybe alone. Sorry for everything I did to you. Really. Please. Please. Come back already. I'm so sorry. If I knew exactly where you lived, I would come immediately*". The ad is published the following day in *Ha'Aretz*, on May 23rd 1985.

The year is 2005. Gili is 44, married with two children, a university graduate with a profession. David and Fanya have passed on. Gili, totally sane, knows that he will never find Giora. Now it's time to convey this to all the people he thought were Giora. He must tell Larry Abramson he is not Giora. But more important, he must also travel to the Far East to make the announcement. And so Gili sets out on a second journey, perhaps the last, to Nepal, to tie up loose ends, to come full circle, to confirm and verify and mainly to tell Juni, no longer a boy either – you are not Giora. Only after this second trip to the Far East, and only after saying what he had to say to the others, he knows the journey in search of Giora has come to an end.