

TONI ERDMANN

Written by Maren Ade

EXT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

A house with a wild garden on a tranquil suburban street. It sits there quietly; The only movement appears to come from behind a window. We hear a delivery truck pull up. Its sliding door opens and closes. A MAILMAN walks into shot carrying a package and searches for the doorbell. He finds it amongst some ivy and rings. WINFRIED, a man in his mid-60s with wavy gray hair, an unkempt beard and a pair of colorful reading glasses, opens the door.

MAILMAN

Good morning. Package.

The mailman starts typing something on a modern electronic signature device.

WINFRIED

Wait a moment... No idea what my brother's been ordering again.

Winfried steps a couple of meters into the house and calls to someone. The mailman waits professionally.

WINFRIED (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Toni?! Did you order something?

He returns to the mailman.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

(quietly)

My brother just got released from prison. He does whatever he wants.

MAILMAN

Oh dear.

WINFRIED

He was locked up for mail bombs. Yesterday, he ate a whole can of dog food. OK, just a moment, please.

Winfried disappears again, leaving the mailman standing there. He diligently carries on holding the package.

WINFRIED (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(suddenly shouting)

Toni, get your ass out of the hammock right now!

TONI (O.S.)

I'm still having breakfast.

WINFRIED (O.S.)

Keep this up and I'll throw you out. Did you order something from Orion again?

TONI (O.S.)

No, I didn't. Don't be so mean to me.

A man appears. Apart from a few distinctive teeth, he looks uncannily similar to Winfried. He's wearing a black bathrobe and dark sunglasses. His voice has changed and he mumbles when he speaks. The mailman quickly hands him the package.

TONI (CONT'D)

What my brother said about me isn't true. I've never ordered any erotic products.

The mailman holds the device out so Toni can sign it.

MAILMAN

I don't care what's in it.

TONI

It's better that way.

Toni signs using capital letters. A pair of handcuffs dangles from his wrist and the mailman notices them with bemusement. He briefly puts his ear to the package.

TONI (CONT'D)

Thanks. Now I'm really looking forward to defusing it.

In the background, by the garden fence, LUKAS appears: He's a pale teenager (16) with tight-fitting black jeans and drooping shoulders. Winfried quickly takes off his sunglasses and removes a set of false teeth from his mouth and sticks them in his pocket. He can't help but laugh.

WINFRIED

Hey, Lukas...

Winfried looks at the mailman, who also laughs with bewilderment. It's not clear whether Winfried's act might have convinced him for a moment, after all. Lukas still stands some distance away, unsure whether he's allowed to come closer.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

(to mailman)

No offense meant. They were both me. It was obvious, right?

Winfried fishes out a five-euro bill and gives the mailman a quick pat on the shoulder. An electronic beeping sound emanates from Winfried's body.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Don't worry. That's just my blood pressure monitor.

Winfried finally takes the package from the mailman.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

You're the bravest one yet.

(to Lukas)

I'll be right there...

The mailman leaves and Winfried also disappears.

INT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - GARDEN - DAY

In the living room, Winfried hastily takes off his bathrobe. Several plastic objects and cables are attached to his body. They look like an explosive belt. He buttons his shirt and puts down the package. The device on his body is still beeping. An old dog (WILLI) hauls himself up off the floor and lies down again at a safe distance. The dog's breathing is labored and fluid rattles in his lungs.

WINFRIED

Come in...

Lukas enters the living room. Winfried opens the package and pulls out a new spray gun attachment for his garden hose.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Our lesson is tomorrow, right?

LUKAS

Yes, but I, I wanted to tell you that, um... Well, I want to quit taking piano lessons.

For a moment, neither speaks.

WINFRIED

OK.

LUKAS

I just don't have enough time anymore.

WINFRIED

We saw this coming a bit, right?

LUKAS

Yes.

WINFRIED

And what do I do with the piano now? I bought it just for you.

Lukas freezes for a moment.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Just kidding. But you have to tell your mother. I'm not doing it.

Lukas nods. The dog can be heard wheezing in the garden.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

That's just the dog.

Winfried walks into the garden to fetch his beer. He bends down to Willi again. He quickly takes a plate of sausage from the table and places it front of the dog. Willi turns his head away. Winfried grabs his beer and walks back to Lukas.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Do you drink beer already?

LUKAS

Ah, yeah, sure.

WINFRIED

My internet's acting up. That ball was there again.

Lukas bends over the laptop on the table.

LUKAS

Yeah, it's frozen.

INT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Winfried and Lukas still sit in the living room in front of the laptop, sharing a beer. Winfried's face is painted white with dark circles around his eyes that break out into jagged points. Face paints lie on the table. On the computer screen we see pictures of people painted like the death.

LUKAS

I'd put some blood there, too.

WINFRIED

OK.

Winfried looks into a small hand mirror and applies a little more blood to the corner of his mouth.

LUKAS

That looks cool. Like the Joker.

Winfried looks into his little hand mirror.

EXT. - OUTSIDE WINFRIED'S HOUSE - DAY

Lukas leaves Winfried's house carrying a dog pillow and a grocery bag. He pauses and waits for Winfried. Winfried emerges from the house with Willi in his arms, his face painted like a zombie: large black circles around his eyes, a black "grin" around his mouth and a smear of fake blood. He closes the front door and follows Lukas down the walkway. In the distance, an elderly couple walks towards Winfried and looks at him with bemusement.

EXT. - ANNEGRET'S HOUSE - GARDEN - TERRACE - DAY

Winfried walks through a landscaped garden. He slowly pulls Willi up some steps while also lugging the basket and shopping bags. Inside the house, ANNEGRET, a very old woman, sits in her living room in front of the TV. Winfried gives a warning knock on the glass veranda doors and holds a "Frau im Spiegel - Woman in the Mirror" magazine in front of his face. Its cover depicts German TV host Thomas Gottschalk. Winfried slowly lowers the magazine. Annegret, his mother, is not at all shocked to see his painted face. She slowly pushes her walking frame to the door.

INT. - ANNEGRET'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Annegret greets Willi, who drags himself inside with great effort and lies down on a Persian rug.

ANNEGRET

Why don't you put him to sleep? He's only suffering.

WINFRIED

I'm not putting you to sleep, either.

Annegret deliberately ignores Winfried's costume. She begins imperiously examining the groceries and checking them against her shopping list. It takes her a long time to do anything, but she doesn't want help. We hear the sound of a radio coming from the bedroom.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Is Mrs. Radica still here?

Annegret doesn't answer. She sullenly inspects a couple of ready-made tartes flambées.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

I brought you these tartes flambées. They're really good. You just have to warm them up.

ANNEGRET

You eat these?

WINFRIED

Sometimes.

ANNEGRET

Then take them with you.

Winfried's gaze drifts to the table which Annegret has already set for two people.

ANNEGRET (CONT'D)

Now sit down.

WINFRIED

I have to go soon.

Winfried quickly sits down on the edge of a corner bench and puts a slice of sausage onto a piece of bread.

ANNEGRET

The Dombrechts are cutting your hedges tomorrow. You're blocking all their sun.

Winfried has to stifle his anger.

WINFRIED

That's fine. My new hose attachment has a range of 30 meters, so I'll be able to shoot right into their living room.

ANNEGRET

There's no need to joke about it.

Winfried's blood pressure monitor beeps quietly and inflates on his upper arm.

WINFRIED

I'm glad that thing's taking a measurement now. It ascertains which topics upset me most. Then Dombrowski can tell me precisely what I need to eliminate from my life.

ANNEGRET

You'll soon be rid of me.

Winfried takes another bite of his sandwich and looks at her.

WINFRIED

I might bring Ines tomorrow. Apparently she's traveling through.

ANNEGRET

Oh, she's here...?

Winfried's mother's face briefly brightens up at the good news.

WINFRIED

Yeah. I have to go.

Annegret shrugs. Winfried peels himself out of the corner. He walks into a back room, past the bathroom which MRS. RADICA, a domestic maid of Eastern European appearance, is cleaning.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Don't be frightened...

MRS. RADICA

Oh, my...

Mrs. Radica laughs. Winfried gives her a friendly handshake. Annegret follows him with her walking frame so she can keep an eye on what he's doing. Winfried takes a hat from a closet.

WINFRIED

Can I borrow this?

Annegret shrugs in agreement.

ANNEGRET

And what's with the getup?

WINFRIED

So you are interested, after all? I've taken on a side job in an old people's home. 50 euros per death. Most of them won't fight back.

Annegret shakes her head. Winfried leans down towards Willi, who has hauled himself after him.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking him. I'll just pick him up later...

INT. - SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Winfried waits with a large group of JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS in the entrance area of a school. They're standing outside a door leading to the auditorium. The children all have their faces painted like Death and they're making an effort to stand quietly. Winfried has a guitar slung around him. A COLLEAGUE is helping him look after the children. She laughs quietly.

COLLEAGUE

It is a little macabre.

WINFRIED

We can't change it now...

From the auditorium, someone can be indistinctly heard bringing their speech to a close, then the large audience applauds. The students prematurely push forward into a darkened backstage area. A few of them are carrying instruments. They collide with the art club as it leaves the stage with a huge, long artwork that requires several students to carry it. A crush ensues. One of the "young Deaths" gets pushed over and fights back.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Slowly, slowly... Arne, get up.

From outside, we hear as the music club's performance is announced.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

OK guys, now focus. Everyone's sad...

The students let their shoulders droop and amble very sadly onto the stage. Winfried checks that every last student is there. A few members of the audience burst out laughing. Winfried is the last person to take to the stage. He gives a command and the students make a voodoo-like racket, then chant...

STUDENTS

(chanting in unison)

We're dead sad that you're leaving, Mr.
Dudinger!

In the packed auditorium, people laugh bemusedly. A MANN in the front row, clearly the person being bid farewell, isn't sure how to take it. Winfried gives another command and starts playing a tune on his guitar. A few students join in on their instruments. The students start singing an adapted version of Hannes Wader's song, "Day to Day". We look into their faces, which are full of concentration.

INT. - SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Winfried walks hurriedly through the empty high school holding his school key in his hand.

INT. - WINFRIED'S CAR - STREET BY RENATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Winfried has parked his VW Passat in front of a fancy new-build house in a hillside location. He glances into the mirror and looks for a tissue, but he can't find one. He puts on his hat and gets out of the car.

EXT./INT. - RENATE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Winfried fishes a bottle of red wine from a canvas grocery bag. With his colorful reading glasses hanging around his neck, he's now only a half-Death. At the front door, he hitches up his pants and takes a breath. He plucks up the courage to ring the bell. RENATE (60) opens the door.

RENATE
My God... what's this?

WINFRIED
Sorry. I have an upset stomach.

She lets him in. GERHARD appears in the background, alarmed by Renate's scream.

GERHARD
What are you up to? I was about to get my gun.

WINFRIED
Do you have a gun?

GERHARD
Of course I have a gun.

RENATE
Were you dressed like that at school?

WINFRIED
No, I'm working part-time at the old people's home.

GERHARD
Interesting.

Winfried greets the other guests: OLIVER, mid-30s, clearly Gerhard's son, his pregnant girlfriend BABETTE, whom Winfried hasn't met before, and BÄRBEL, an

old friend of Renate's. Winfried whips out his false teeth from his jacket pocket and puts them in his mouth.

WINFRIED

Hello, Bärbel.

Bärbel laughs.

OLIVER

Winfried, hi...

Winfried puts the teeth away again.

WINFRIED

Congratulations. I'm pleased you're going to be parents. When is it due?

BABETTE

Not until October.

WINFRIED

(murmuring)

Stick together.

GERHARD

Red, white or beer?

WINFRIED

Whatever you're having... Isn't she here yet?

Winfried looks around for Ines.

RENATE

Still on the phone.

Winfried sits down on a chair while he waits.

WINFRIED

(to Renate)

Her flight was OK?

RENATE

Yeah, she was tired.

Renate goes to fetch another plate.

GERHARD

But apparently things went really well in Shanghai.

WINFRIED

Isn't she in Bucharest anymore?

GERHARD

Sure, but she had meetings there. She wants to go there next.

WINFRIED

Oh, right...

GERHARD

Yes, it all went really well. They're opening a new branch there. So she was meeting managers from Siemens. New clients and executives, too.

Renate returns and puts a plate down in front of Winfried.

WINFRIED

Oh, right.

GERHARD

It's incredible the heavyweights she's in the ring with.

Winfried notices some gifts lying on the table.

WINFRIED

Whose birthday is it?

RENATE

We decided to celebrate early.

Winfried sits back in surprise.

WINFRIED CONRADI

Oh, come on! You should've let me know that.

A woman (INES) approaches the patio door, talking on her cellphone. She rolls her eyes by way of apology for the phone call. She is wearing a crisp shirt and blazer. Winfried briefly reaches towards Gerhard's neck and pretends to strangle him. Ines smiles.

BÄRBEL

And in Bucharest, what... what's she doing there?

GERHARD

She's in the oil business.

Bärbel nods knowingly but doesn't dare ask any more questions.

OLIVER

She's only advising an oil company. She's still a business consultant.

BÄRBEL

Oh, right.

WINFRIED

I have to write that down now, too.

Ines has finished her phone call and enters the room. She comes over to say hello to Winfried.

INES

You guys talking business again? Hello, Dad...

They hug awkwardly because of Winfried's face-paint. Winfried rubs her neck.

WINFRIED

Hello... spaghetti. How's it going?

INES

Really good, actually.

WINFRIED

I didn't know you were celebrating your birthday already. I have a meeting in Bucharest next week, so I'll bring you your present then.

INES

Sure, please do that. Any time. Just ring my bell...

WINFRIED

Yeah, you might be surprised.

They sit down.

RENATE

(to Ines)

Everything cleared up?

INES

Yeah, it was nothing.

RENATE

(to Ines)

There's something all over the back of your blazer.

Winfried looks at his hand. He had white face paint on it when he rubbed her neck.

WINFRIED

Oh, no...

RENATE

Take it off right away... There's still time to wash it out!

BÄRBEL

Gall soap.

Renate tries to take off Ines' blazer.

INES

Mom, leave it. I have a whole suitcase full of things.

WINFRIED

I'm sorry about that.

INES

It's just a tiny spot.

Winfried's blood pressure monitor starts to inflate.

INES (CONT'D)

What was that?

WINFRIED

Just my blood pressure monitor.

INES

What's wrong with you?

WINFRIED

Nothing. Routine.

INES

And am I supposed to get your outfit?

WINFRIED

We were joking around with the school band. Saying goodbye to our principal.

INES

That doesn't explain anything, but whatever.

WINFRIED
I'll wash this stuff off now.

Winfried leaves.

INT. - RENATE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Winfried exits the bathroom, now without his face paint. He's just finishing a phone call. He still looks ill, however, because he hasn't been able to wash off all of the paint. He spots Renate in the kitchen and walks over to her.

INT. - RENATE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Winfried leans on the countertop next to Renate.

WINFRIED
I'm afraid I have to leave soon. Willi's at my mother's place.

RENAME
And how's he doing?

WINFRIED
Quite good. Sleeps a lot.

He pulls a dental retainer box from his jacket pocket, takes out the false teeth and shows them to Renate.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)
They're almost broken again, here. Can you fix them again with that professional glue?

RENAME
Sure. You're a private patient, so I'll do anything.

WINFRIED
Yeah, I don't dare go to the doctor any more. Everyone wants to treat me right away.

RENAME
That thing is so annoying when you're sleeping. We've had it, too. Is there a specific reason?

WINFRIED
Nothing, but they're giving me a blood thinner now.

RENATE
Gerhard takes that, too.

She gestures at a pretty pillbox with compartments for each day of the week.

RENATE
You guys should talk sometime.

Winfried puts in the false teeth.

WINFRIED
Could you make them permanent, too? I find my
crowns so boring.

Renate laughs. She looks into the darkened garden, in which Ines' outline is visible.

RENATE
All she does is talk on the phone.

WINFRIED
We must've done something wrong.

EXT. - RENATE'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Winfried walks through the garden, searching. He's put his jacket on again. The garden is empty.

EXT. - IN FRONT OF RENATE'S HOUSE - DAY

Winfried walks around the house and spies Ines next to the garages. For a moment, it's as if she's hiding from her family. Her shoulders are hunched and she's smoking. She holds her Blackberry in one hand. Winfried is just a few meters away from her when Renate calls to him from the house.

RENATE
(indistinctly, from far away)
Come back inside!

INES
I'm still on the phone!

Ines thinks Renate was calling to her. Only then does she see Winfried standing next to her. She reflexively lifts the phone and now that she has it at her ear, she carries on acting.

INES (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yeah, good. And what else did he say? OK, that's no bad thing.

(quietly, to Winfried)

I'm almost done, Dad.

Winfried waits. Ines acts out the phone call so convincingly that he suddenly wonders whether there really might be someone on the other end.

INES (CONT'D)

All the same, I'd like to get back in touch tomorrow. But I'm glad we talked. Yes, you have a nice evening, too.

She hangs up.

WINFRIED

Everything OK?

INES

A bit of stress... Are you leaving already?

WINFRIED

I'm afraid I have to. Do you want to come to Grandma's for breakfast tomorrow?

INES

I'm flying at ten already. Did you tell her I'm here?

Winfried shakes his head.

WINFRIED

It doesn't matter, I'll call Inge. I've hired someone to be a substitute daughter, anyway.

INES

Aha. And what kind of stuff does she do?

WINFRIED

Different things. Sometimes I just want her to bake a cake. Sometimes she helps me to cut my toenails. The kinds of things daughters normally do.

INES

So she can call you on your birthday, too. Then I don't have to worry about it.

WINFRIED

It was only a joke.

Renate approaches the two of them carrying a wrapped up piece of cake and the hat, which Winfried had forgotten. By way of a goodbye, Winfried simply takes Ines' hand firmly in his.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

I don't know if I still have make-up anywhere.

INES

It's a shame this was so brief. We'll have a really long Skype soon.

Her tone is particularly tender, and it almost sounds like she's talking to a small child.

WINFRIED

Right, sure. My Skype's working again.

RENATE

Yeah, she shouldn't work so much.

Renate pinches Ines' cheek.

WINFRIED

She's doing great.

EXT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Winfried walks into his garden. He's fetched a blanket and a bowl of ice cubes. Willi lies on the lawn in the garden. The dog isn't well. Winfried lies down very close to him on a pillow taken from a chair. It's a bright, windy night. He pulls the blanket over himself and shuffles even closer to his dog, who is now pretty much only exhaling.

WINFRIED

(quietly)

My Willi, don't be frightened. Don't be frightened. Are you my dear Willi...such a lovely Willi.

As he speaks, he gives the dog two ice cubes to lick. They clink quietly. Willi tries to stand up but falls to one side. Winfried again shuffles closer to him.

EXT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAWN

The sun is rising when Winfried wakes up on the lawn. Willi is no longer lying next to him. Winfried sits up. He spots Will a few meters away, under a bush. He kneels down next to him and touches him. The dog is dead.

INT. - WINFRIED'S HOUSE - KITCHEN OR LIVING ROOM - DAY

Winfried has gone into his house. He stands for a moment in the kitchen. He reaches for the coffee filters. He looks out of the window at his dog, as if he's waiting for Willi to get up again, after all. But the fur under the bush is so motionless that it suddenly seems fake. Only the bush above it moves.

INT. - BUCHAREST OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Winfried sits in the modern reception area of an office building. He's wearing sunglasses and holding a newspaper. He peers at the entrance doors. Now and again, businesspeople enter the lobby and employees leave the building. The elevator doors opposite him open, so Winfried lifts up the newspaper. An unknown man in a suit steps out. Winfried lowers his newspaper again. He begins to rip a small hole in the paper. He looks at the modern, illuminated reception desk. Behind it, two female RECEPTIONISTS, with their hair styled in tall up-dos, appear to be talking about him. One of them walks over to him in her high-heeled shoes.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you sure you don't want us to call someone?

She speaks English with an Eastern European accent.

WINFRIED

No, thank you.

The receptionist nods and walks back to her desk, where she whispers to her colleague. It becomes clear that Winfried has already been sitting here for quite some time: He's raised the women's suspicions. Winfried folds up his newspaper. At that moment, a group of businesspeople (including HENNEBERG, DASCALU and ANCA) enters the building. Winfried spots Ines among them. Quick as a flash, he puts in the false teeth, lifts up the newspaper and walks along next to the group, conspicuous in his effort to be inconspicuous. Ines looks straight at him, and, for a moment, she seems to freeze. But then she walks on and continues her conversation with a colleague, who turns around to face her. Winfried watches her, and the group disappears into an elevator beyond a staff-only barrier. Winfried walks onwards, out of the building. Outside, he removes the false teeth and sunglasses. For a moment he stands there, perplexed, unsure whether Ines saw him or not.

EXT. - IN FRONT OF BUCHAREST OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Winfried walks outside, onto the street. New, modern glass buildings contrast with dilapidated blocks from the Ceausescu era.

Winfried looks around and is about to continue when, suddenly, a young Romanian woman wearing a business suit stops him.

ANCA

(in English)

Excuse me, I am sorry... Are you Mr. Conradi?

WINFRIED

(mixing German and English)

Ja. Yes.

ANCA

Hello, Anca Pavelescu. I am the assistant of Ms. Conradi. One minute please...

Anca puts her cellphone to her ear and speaks to someone.

ANCA (CONT'D)

Yes, I got him.

She hands the phone to Winfried.

WINFRIED

Hello. I'm sorry. Just a flying visit. No, you don't have to come here. I'll book myself into a hotel somewhere. Yeah, nothing, no. No, really, nothing's wrong.

He listens, and relents.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

OK... fine. Yes, OK. See you later.

He hands the phone back to Anca.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

(in English)

I shall follow you.

Anca looks at him in surprise.

EXT. - BUCHAREST OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Winfried sits with Anca on the office building's modern roof terrace. She has laid out a few tourist brochures and a city map, which she's marking with crosses.

ANCA

And here is the Radisson, also one of the five-star hotels in town. The restaurant is excellent. And there is also a nice cigar lounge for business meetings... or drinks in the evening.

WINFRIED

I am only the father. Just holidays.

(in German)

I don't really look the part.

Anca's cellphone rings. She listens with intense concentration. Winfried looks around at the terrace. A few people in suits are sitting and smoking.

ANCA

She asks whether you would like to accompany her to a reception of the American embassy this evening?

WINFRIED

Was that she?

ANCA

(in German)

Yes, she's still in the meeting.

WINFRIED

(mixing German and English)

OK. When she will...

For a moment, neither of them knows what to talk about.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

(in German)

And how is my daughter as a boss?

(in English)

As your chief?

Anca isn't sure how to respond.

ANCA

Yes, she's very honest, and she gives me a lot of feedback... about my performance.

WINFRIED
(stammering in English)
"Performance?" This means... this describes your
job?

ANCA
(in German)
Performance means my work in general... in
meetings, with the team, dealing with clients.

WINFRIED
And what's most important when dealing with
clients?

ANCA
That no concept makes sense if the client doesn't
want it. It's an art to tell the client what he
actually wants.

WINFRIED
I'm sure my daughter's good at that.

INT. - CAR - HOTEL FORECOURT - EVENING

Winfried sits on the back seat of a spacious car being driven towards the entrance to
a hotel. The driver, BOGDAN, is speaking to someone via a cellphone earpiece.

BOGDAN
(into earpiece)
We are here.
(to Winfried)
She is coming.

WINFRIED
Thank you.

He pats Bogdan on the shoulder. Outside, Ines hurries out of the hotel and climbs
into the back seat of the car, next to Winfried. She kisses him on both cheeks.

INES
(in German)
Wow, what a long day, right?

WINFRIED
Yeah, well, sure, you have to work.

INES
Yes.

WINFRIED

I've really invaded you here, huh?

INES

How long were you actually sitting there?

WINFRIED

Three hours. I wasn't even sure you'd recognized me.

INES

Yes, I did, but that was the entire Romanian board of Dacoil. How was everything with Anca?

WINFRIED

They were all terribly nice to me.

Winfried nods towards Bogdan.

WINFRIED

The driver, too.

Ines nods and smiles tensely.

INES CONRADI

So listen, concerning this event tonight: It's a business reception given by the American Embassy. There'll be speeches, appetizers, small talk and that's it.

Ines looks at her cellphone and rejects an incoming call.

WINFRIED

Great. Can I go like this?

He's wearing dark-colored jeans, a shirt and walking shoes. Ines tries to gloss over the problem.

INES

Yeah, that's OK.

WINFRIED

There's a great football match today, too. If Bogdan drops me somewhere... I'll have a beer.

INES

But I've already arranged this now.

Winfried quickly takes his false teeth from his jacket pocket and puts them in his mouth.

WINFRIED

I just wasn't sure whether it's really OK for you
and the ambassador...

INES

Are you interested now or not?

He takes the teeth out again. She looks at the entrance. Other people are already going inside.

WINFRIED

Of course. I think it's amazing that you're taking
me with you. I've never been inside an embassy
before.

INES

That's a hotel.

WINFRIED

Oh, right.

INES

Just one last thing: After the reception, if there's
a chance to have a drink with the CEO,
Henneberg, our client, I have to go alone, OK? I'm
fighting right now to get our contract extended.

WINFRIED

Yeah, of course. No concept makes sense without
the client.

INES

You can say you're my father, but maybe that
you're tired because you've done so much
sightseeing, or something.

WINFRIED

But I also don't mind if you tell them I'm your
Grandma.

Ines and Winfried get out of the car.

INT. - HOTEL LOBBY - STAIRCASE - EVENING

Ines and Winfried enter the lobby of a large communist-era hotel. Winfried looks around with interest. Ines walks purposefully to the table where the guest list is and procures two wristbands. Guests hurry up a staircase. Ines realizes that the speeches have already begun. She glances quickly at her phone. Then she and Winfried walk up a grand, communist-era staircase towards a room in which a speech is already being held.

INT. - HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Ines and Winfried slip into the ballroom, which is full of people. Bar tables are lit in the colors of the U.S. flag. People are clapping, and Ines joins in without knowing what was just being said.

U.S. AMBASSADOR

But this is still not the answer to this simple and serious question: Why Romania? And as an ambassador in this country one must have a good answer to that. And I have one: Romania offers significant opportunities to American businesses with products, services, or technologies that either meet growing private demand or contribute to the country's development priorities.

Ines looks around discreetly and, once again, claps along distractedly with everyone else. Most of the guests are businesspeople of various nationalities. The Ambassador says a few words in Romanian and then brings his speech to a close.

U.S. AMBASSADOR (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, the buffet is open!

INT. - HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

The speech is over, and the guests move towards the buffet. Ines looks around and eyes a group of businesspeople. Winfried looks at a man he thinks he recognizes.

WINFRIED

Hey, that guy looks like Tiriac.

Ines looks half-heartedly towards the man in question.

INES

Yeah, maybe. Could you grab us something from the buffet?

WINFRIED

OK.

Ines watches as Winfried walks to the buffet. She's glad to have him occupied. She edges towards the businesspeople (VERMILLARD, DASCALU). She shrewdly waits until an opportunity presents itself, then homes in on Henneberg, a man aged around 60, and shakes his hand.

INES

Our third time today, finally... Good evening.

HENNEBERG

Yes, good evening.

INES

That was a fascinating speech...

HENNEBERG

Yes, we're not where we want to be yet, but Romania has really shown great economic strength in overcoming the crisis.

Henneberg glances at the other people lining up to speak to him.

INES

I looked at our business case again. And I'm optimistic that we'll be able to make a well-founded statement on Monday.

Without really having listened, Henneberg turns and gestures at a pretty, Russian-looking woman (NATALJA) aged around 40.

HENNEBERG

Natalja, here is your specialist. I'm sure Ms. Conradi can help you.

NATALJA

So nice to meet you.

Ines doesn't know what this is about, but nonetheless she's pleased that she's been drawn in so quickly.

HENNEBERG

She needs to do some shopping tomorrow.
(to Natalja)

Ms. Conradi works in Bucharest for... how long?

INES

It's been almost a year now. You keep me busy.

HENNEBERG

So I guess you can ask her any shopping question.

The two women shake hands. Henneberg turns away to a new, far more interesting conversational partner - MR. MYERS, an American.

NATALJA

I'm sorry for this. I am sure you are busy, but...

INES

No, it's OK.

NATALJA

We have this wedding in Moscow this weekend. And I still need some presents.

Ines is still looking at Henneberg, who has now been accosted by Dascalu.

INES

I don't do too much shopping here myself, but there are several big malls. Plus, there is an area with exclusive shops... depends on what you need.

NATALJA

The mall is OK. I have only two hours tomorrow. I also need children's stuff, cosmetics...

In the background, Winfried reappears carrying two plates piled with food. He puts them down on a table next to Henneberg.

INES

Why don't you give me your number, and I'll scout for the best place and text you?

The two women begin to swap their numbers. The others say goodbye to Henneberg, the executive. He's used to having people line up to speak to him, so he turns to Winfried, assuming that he's next.

HENNEBERG

Good evening.

WINFRIED

Good evening. I'm just the father.

Winfried nods towards Ines.

HENNEBERG

I see.

The two women are still talking.

INES

(to Natalja)

I have been to Moscow only once, but I really loved it. I was so impressed by the Bolshoi Theater.

NATALJA

Oh yes, it is a remarkable place.

Ines keeps an eye on her father while she continues to listen to Natalja.

HENNEBERG

(to Winfried)

Are you visiting?

WINFRIED

Yes. A totally spontaneous decision. I've never been to Romania before.

HENNEBERG

Then you just had a good introduction from the Ambassador.

Their conversation comes to an amicable halt.

WINFRIED

I'm actually here to negotiate with her. She's hardly at home anymore, so I hired someone to be a substitute daughter. A really nice young woman. Now it's just the question of who pays her.

Henneberg can't help but laugh. Ines is straining to hear what her father's saying, whilst also trying to politely focus on Natalja.

HENNEBERG

That's a modern solution. And is the other daughter better than her?

WINFRIED

The cakes are better, and she cuts my toenails.

Again, the executive can't help but laugh. Winfried gestures towards Natalja.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

But she's not your daughter, right?

Ines freezes. It was obviously a joke. The executive grins and shakes his head, but then firmly says his goodbyes and turns to someone else. Natalja joins him. Winfried and Ines are left by themselves. Winfried gives Ines her plate, which is full of small appetizers. Ines says nothing and, for a moment, she seems despondent.

INES

He's the CEO I told you about. He's a really important contact for me.

WINFRIED

OK. Criticism accepted.
(referring to the food)
I didn't know what you like.

A woman (TATJANA) interrupts Ines from behind. She's passing by, struggling to keep up with a group of Chinese businesspeople.

TATJANA

I'm freaking out with these Chinese wannabe investors. Are you coming on Monday?

INES

Yes, but text me where...

TATJANA

Da Vinci, 9 p.m.
(quietly)
I don't know what to talk about.

INES

Just talk about food. That always works.

TATJANA

Like "What's your favorite Wan-Tan?" I know nothing about Chinese food.

EXT. - HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The reception guests are slowly leaving. Winfried arrives carrying his and Ines' jackets. Ines is still looking over at the group surrounding Henneberg (Vermillard, Dascalu, Myers). They're already making their way towards the exit. She and Winfried also walk towards it. Suddenly, Henneberg is behind them and addresses Winfried.

HENNEBERG
(in English)
Want to join us for a drink?

He catches himself and switches to German.

HENNEBERG (CONT'D)
We're going for a drink, if you'd like to join us.
What was your name again?

WINFRIED
Winfried.

Henneberg also looks at Ines, but the question seems to be aimed mostly at Winfried. Natalja joins him, and she seems to be keen for Ines to come along, too.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)
Thank you, that's terribly nice of you, but I'm too
tired. I've done too much today. Sightseeing.

INES
(in English)
But I'd love to grab a drink. Where are you
going?

Because it's an international group, she's switched into English.

HENNEBERG
I think your father would like you to join him.

Henneberg says it so bluntly that it almost sounds like he's withdrawing the invitation.

INES
(to Winfried)
Come on, one more drink.

The situation becomes uncertain, and the group is waiting.

WINFRIED
No, no, I have to sleep. I walked through the
whole... Ceausescu palace today.

DASCALU
(with a Romanian accent)
Is it open again to public?

Ines greets Dascalu, a Romanian manager aged around 50, with a handshake. The group turns to leave.

INES
(to Winfried)
Come on.

WINFRIED
(quietly)
Oh right, you want me to come now?

Ines nods discreetly.

EXT. - DA VINCI LAKESIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A classy restaurant where foreign businesspeople meet and the Romanian upper class flashes its cash. The group sits on a terrace near a swimming pool. A select group of people surrounds Henneberg: Natalja, Winfried and Ines along with three further businesspeople, M. Vermillard, Mr. Myers and Dascalu. They all appear to be managers or business partners of Dacoil. Winfried has a large glass of beer in front of him. The others are more refined, with glasses of wine and champagne.

HENNEBERG
Bring your wife next time... and spend a weekend. The sea is very close and there are good French private schools. Romania is a lot better than its reputation. You can have a good life here.

He's addressing the French businessman, Vermillard, who will soon take up a post in Bucharest.

VERMILLARD
I saw some houses today. I am already convinced.

Natalja is sitting next to Ines.

INES
(to Natalja)
Where do you live?

NATALJA
I live mostly in Frankfurt and France.

INES
How nice...

NATALJA
I really like Frankfurt. I like countries with a middle class. They are relaxing me.

INES
(in German)
I totally understand.

Ines picks up a piece of octopus carpaccio and tries to give some to Winfried, but he refuses.

INES (CONT'D)
Try something different for a change.

WINFRIED
You know me.

Ines focuses on the conversation.

MYERS
But the crazy times are over.

HENNEBERG
There is still a lot of potential. I just told Van Rompuy, letting Romania in was one of the rare EU decisions that was actually good. You just have to change the corporate culture.

VERMILLARD
(to Henneberg and Dascalu)
Tell me a bit about the young Romanian manager generation?

Dascalu is about to respond when Henneberg turns to Ines.

HENNEBERG
She is the specialist. She has all the insights.

For a moment, Ines is surprised that he's deferring to her on such a pertinent question.

INES
So, when I started here I was really surprised. Almost everyone did a Master's degree abroad, speaks several languages. They are all very dedicated. I would even say most of them have a very international way of thinking. Which is great.

Ines' English is so perfect that she could be mistaken for an American. The way in which she speaks is self-confident and to-the-point. Dascalu, the Romanian manager, interrupts her.

DASCALU

But they don't understand Romania any more. They are faster than the rest of the country, they don't want to stay here. I don't believe very much in an international perspective.

INES

I was just trying to say that knowledge is international. I totally agree with that, too.

DASCALU

Romanian knowledge runs deep. Take a look at our oilfields.

It's not clear how ironic he's being. To be safe, Ines laughs. Winfried is listening distractedly to a mediocre pianist.

VERMILLARD

(to Ines)

What exactly are you doing in Dacoil?

INES

I am a consultant at Morrisons. We are working for Dacoil evaluating if it will pay off to outsource some services.

Dascalu frowns briefly, and Henneberg notices this.

HENNEBERG

(in German)

Interesting how you describe your job.

His tone is cutting.

INES

(in German)

I'm sorry, please say it in your own words.

HENNEBERG

(in English, to the group)

She is evaluating a way to improve our maintenance service. We see outsourcing as the last option of many.

INES

I'm sorry, this is what I tried to say.

For a moment, the group falls silent.

HENNEBERG

But her father had a great business idea for Romania. He hired another girl at home to be his daughter. Because this one is never there and he needs somebody to cut his toenails.

Everyone laughs slightly. Ines, too, bravely laughs along. Henneberg checks his watch. Winfried puts the false teeth in his mouth and quietly mutters at Henneberg.

WINFRIED

Don't you dare steal my idea.

He very quickly puts the teeth away again.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Sorry, I like to make jokes.

Henneberg laughs indulgently, but it's clear that he's now dismissed Winfried as a total madman.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

(in German)

No, we're incredibly proud of her. What she does here... and stuff.

Ines smiles, trying to rise above the situation. Henneberg gestures at a WAITER to bring him the check. Henneberg stands up and shakes hands with everyone.

Now that Henneberg is gone, the rest of the group immediately dissipates. Dascalu follows Henneberg. The Belgian and the Frenchman talk for another minute. The waiter brings Winfried another beer.

EXT. - DA VINCI LAKESIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ines and Winfried now sit alone at the otherwise empty table with Winfried's beer. Ines remains silent for a while trying to cope with her anger.

INES

Why do you do stuff like that when I've explicitly asked you not to?

WINFRIED

I somehow had to make it clear to him that it was a joke. What exactly is "outsourcing" again?

INES

It's when you transfer work to another company.
He wants to transfer the maintenance of the oil
installations to another company.

WINFRIED

So what was wrong with that?

INES

I just shouldn't have let it slip out... He wants us
to prove that it's precisely the right thing to do,
but he doesn't want it to be his idea - so he can
pin the responsibility on us if he needs to.

She doesn't want to talk about it.

WINFRIED

And... what are you responsible for?

INES

Dad, these processes mean hundreds of
employees being transferred and later laid off.
These kind of decisions are unpopular, so he
needs to be able to blame someone else. Then
you can read in the paper again that some
consulting firm has ruined something.

WINFRIED

It's incredible the kinds of decisions you're
involved in making.

INES

Again: I don't make any decisions. I just do the
calculations. You know that.

WINFRIED

I'm not criticizing you. I just want to understand
it. What these projects are about...

INES

How long are you planning to stay?

WINFRIED

I took a month off.

Ines freezes for a second.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

That was real fear.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Winfried sits on a freshly-made sofa-bed, digging in his suitcase. He swallows a couple of pills from his new pillbox. The room's decor is impersonal. Ines steps into the doorway and watches as Winfried takes a bag from his suitcase and tries to smooth out a gift's crumpled wrapping paper. From it hangs a photo of Willi, which he quickly removes.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the living room, Winfried puts a sausage from his local butcher, a bottle of Riesling and a packet of *Aachener Printen* gingerbread cookies on the table. Ines quickly takes a final look at her laptop, which is also on the table. The living room opens out onto a large roof terrace. The whole place seems sterile and a bit American: the kind of luxury you can find anywhere in the world. Only a few objects hint at the fact that we're in Eastern Europe.

INES

I just have a massage tomorrow. After that, I'll show you Bucharest.

WINFRIED

OK, but only if it suits you. So, here's your present. If you don't like it, throw it away.

INES

Thank you... Why didn't you wait and come on my actual birthday?

WINFRIED

I don't know what your plans are.

Ines unwraps the gift and pulls out an expensive designer cheese grater.

INES

Oh, wow...

WINFRIED

That's a really good cheese grater. A French one, from Designo.

Ines puts the grater to one side and folds the wrapping paper.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

I just happened to walk past the store. It always annoys me when the parmesan is so hard. There's something in that little roll, too. Buy yourself a blazer, or something else...

INES

You don't have to give me money. Thank you...

She doesn't open up the roll of bills.

INES (CONT'D)

And who did you leave Willi with?

WINFRIED

Well, Willi... Willi unfortunately died.

Ines looks at him confused and a bit shocked.

INES

What? When?

WINFRIED

A couple of days ago.

INES

And what was wrong with him?

WINFRIED

Fluid on his lungs. He'd had it for a while.

Ines walks over to Winfried and tries to give him a hug, but he shrinks away.

INES

And why didn't you even call me?

WINFRIED

Because I don't always have the time, either.

Winfried stands up and walks into the kitchen to put the groceries into the refrigerator. Ines watches him.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Would you like some sausage?

INES

Not for me, thanks...

Winfried looks for a knife to cut up the sausage. The kitchen is barely furnished.

INT. - HOTEL POOL AREA - DAY

Winfried waits on a lounge in the chic pool area of a hotel. He's taken off his shirt and rolled up his jeans. Ines approaches wearing a bathrobe and flops down on a lounge next to him.

INES

Man, that was bad. I walked out. I'm not paying 100 euros for someone to pet me.

The SPA MANAGER arrives.

SPA MANAGER

We are sorry for the inconvenience. Who was the girl?

INES

A blond, skinny woman.

SPA MANAGER

Mariella. I am sure she is sorry. There is a time slot in 30 minutes with another masseur, Dragos.

INES

Just bring someone who beats me up...

SPA MANAGER

Can I bring you something to drink?

INES

At your expense?

SPA MANAGER

Yes.

INES

Oh, great, we'll have two glasses of champagne, two freshly squeezed orange juices and two club sandwiches.

The manager balks at the size of the order, but says nothing. He leaves.

WINFRIED

Wasn't that a bit much?

INES

No, it's fine. My company spends so much money here... It's not as if he's paying for it.

WINFRIED

Your mother said you're in love.
Will the gentleman introduce himself to me?

INES

Oh, I just said that so she'd stop asking me.

WINFRIED

But are you a bit happy here, at least?

INES

What do you mean by "happiness?" "Happiness"
is a strong word.

WINFRIED

I mean do you have a bit of a life, too?

INES

Like going to the movies or something?

WINFRIED

Well, just doing something you enjoy.

INES

Lots of words buzzing around here: "fun,"
"happiness" and "life." We should sort things out.

Suddenly, Ines gives Winfried a serious look.

INES (CONT'D)

What do you think it's worth living for? If you
want to discuss the big topics?

WINFRIED

I can't say that off the top of my head. I really just
wanted to know how you're doing.

INES

I know that. But then you should have your own
answer.

Winfried considers, but can't come up with a response.

INES (CONT'D)

One day, I'll explain to you how to ask questions
if you want to find something out about
someone.

The two flutes of champagne arrive. They briefly clink their glasses together. Winfried puts in the false teeth, flops back on the lounge, and drinks his champagne with gusto. Ines ignores his joke.

INES

Tell me something about you. How's Grandma doing?

WINFRIED

That's a good sign, ma'am. I wasn't at all sure whether you knew your Grandma was still alive.

INES

Dad, I'm tired of your jokes.

WINFRIED

Why?

INES

Because I don't find them funny.

Ines' cellphone rings. She looks at the screen and stands up when she sees who's calling. She walks away. The WAITER brings the club sandwiches. Ines hangs up and returns to Winfried.

INES (CONT'D)

Shit, I have to meet Natalja, Henneberg's wife. She's at this mall. I'm afraid it's important.

She starts to pack her bag. Winfried takes another bite of his sandwich.

INES (CONT'D)

It's actually way more interesting and Romanian than the Ceausescu palace. It's Europe's largest mall and no one has money to buy anything. It won't take long. I'll show you around afterwards.

INT. - SHOPPING MALL - VIEWING GALLERY - DAY

Winfried sits on a stool at a bar table and looks out from a viewing gallery onto an ice rink. A group of children is trying to skate with the help of plastic penguins. Weaving between them are a couple of young professionals who glide elegantly across the ice. A WAITER brings the check. Winfried gulps the dregs of his coffee and picks up his tattered newspaper. He stands up. The mall is a temple to consumption beyond anything found even in the USA: waterfalls tumbling over plastic cliffs, an ice rink, slot machines and stores. These elements come together in an explosion of

capitalist futurism. Winfried walks past huge ice cream dispensers. Next to them, a bored woman reads a book.

INT. - SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Winfried walks along a row of storefronts, searching. He spots Ines, who's still talking to Natalja in front of a shoe store. Natalja sees him first. Ines follows her gaze and turns around.

NATALJA

I'm so sorry, Mr. Conradi. This is such an awful place...

INES

(in German)

You poor thing, you had to wait ages.

Ines briefly puts her arm in Winfried's. A man, Natalja's DRIVER, silently appears next to them.

NATALJA

I have to hurry... Thank you Ines, you saved my life.

INES

No, I really enjoyed it.

To prove her point, she holds up a shopping bag full of things she's bought for herself. Natalja kisses Ines on both cheeks and disappears.

INES (CONT'D)

Man, was it very terrible?

WINFRIED

Are you really a human?

(BEAT)

No, it was great here. I watched some wonderful ice skating. I went to Lidl, too...

INES

Do you still want to do something? Go to the Ceausescu palace?

WINFRIED

Or go home?

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Back in the apartment. Winfried stands the kitchen, where he's started making spaghetti. He chops an onion and looks at Ines, who's on her phone on the roof terrace. She comes back inside and sits down in front of her computer. Winfried puts a glass of red wine down next to it.

INES

Thanks.

WINFRIED

Are you hungry yet? Everything OK, spaghetti?

Winfried rubs her neck.

INES

No, not yet...

WINFRIED

Sorry for my stupid comment earlier.

INES

What comment?

WINFRIED

Whether you're a human.

INES

It's OK... It's obvious you'd think that. I'm going to take a short nap. I might have to show the Hennebergs a new club later, but not till around midnight.

She disappears into her bedroom.

INT./EXT. - INES' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - ROOF TERRACE - NIGHT

Winfried stands in Ines' kitchen, cooking. Out on the roof terrace, he sets a table that's otherwise never used. He puts the salad and spaghetti on the table.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - INES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Winfried opens the door to Ines' bedroom. Ines is fast asleep. He calls to her, but she doesn't react. He kneels down next to her and touches her shoulder, but she's sleeping deeply and soundly. He looks at her sparse possessions. Next to her on the bed is a threadbare little corduroy pillow that he seems to recognize. He closes the door again.

INT./EXT. - INES' APARTMENT - TERRACE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Winfried stands on the roof terrace. He picks up his camera and takes a photo of the Ceausescu palace, which is visible in the distance. Then he photographs parts of Ines' apartment. He looks at a pile of books and picks up one that's lying on top. It's a best-selling self-help book about charisma. He walks back to the terrace, sits down alone and starts eating and flicking through the book.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - INES' BEDROOM - DAY

The next morning. Winfried enters Ines' room wearing pajamas. He cautiously wakes her.

WINFRIED

So, it's getting-up time now.

Ines sits up.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

I was starting to think you were dead.

INES

What time is it?

WINFRIED

Nine-thirty. You slept for ages.

Ines hurriedly grabs her Blackberry.

INES

What? Why didn't you wake me up?

WINFRIED

You were so fast asleep.

INES

I thought you wanted to wake me up for dinner.

WINFRIED

I tried to.

INES

Shit!

She walks past Winfried and out of the bedroom.

INT./EXT. - INES' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Ines pulls her cellphone from its charger. Winfried follows her uncertainly.

INES

I have four missed calls from them! You told me you were making something to eat.

WINFRIED

I thought you needed the sleep. Or that you'd set an alarm.

INES

Do you know what this could mean for me? I have a presentation on Monday that I've worked on for weeks... I'm not doing this for fun. I can't afford to just stand up someone like him.

Ines grabs the charisma book from Winfried and puts it away. She looks frantically at her cellphone. Winfried sits down at the table, which he has lovingly set for breakfast.

WINFRIED

I just don't know if you're always doing as well as you say you are.

INES

Dad, this is going to sound cruel, but... even if I wanted to jump out of the window, you and the cheese grater wouldn't be the combination to stop me.

WINFRIED

(quietly)

No, of course not.

INES

Do you have any plans in life other than slipping fart cushions under people?

WINFRIED

(quietly)

I don't own a fart cushion.

INES

I know men your age who still have ambitions. But who cares?

Ines slowly sits down at the table. Winfried pours coffee for her.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Winfried stands in his room, packing his suitcase. Ines comes and hands him a bottle of shampoo he left in the bathroom.

WINFRIED

(mumbling)

Anyway, it was still really nice. Now I know the kinds of things you do here.

INES

Yeah, and let's fix a date next time. Then I'll have time.

Ines turns away to fold up the sofa-bed. She shakes it because it's refusing to fold. Suddenly, she screams in pain and pulls the sofa abruptly upwards. She's caught her toe in it. Her pain is extreme. She looks at her toe in shock. Right away, a pool of blood forms underneath the toenail. Winfried inspects her foot.

WINFRIED

It's definitely not broken, though.

The doorbell rings.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

I could pierce it to release the pressure.

INES

No, I'll wait first...

She stands up and suppresses the pain. Whatever happens, she wants Winfried to leave.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - HALLWAY - ELEVATOR - DAY

Hobbling, Ines accompanies Winfried to the door, where his suitcase is waiting. He hangs a travel pouch around his neck with his plane ticket inside. Ines presses the elevator "call" button.

WINFRIED

But I can't leave you here like this.

INES

It's not that bad. Well, then... bye.

They hug briefly.

INES (CONT'D)

Call me if anything's wrong.

Winfried nods. Winfried and Ines stand in silence, waiting for the elevator to arrive. The elevator arrives and Winfried disappears into it.

INT./EXT. - INES' APARTMENT - HALLWAY - ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Ines hobbles onto her roof terrace and looks out over the edge. The building is tall, and her father is visible only as a tiny figure. He looks up and spots her. He stands still for a moment, as if he's forgotten something. Then he waves at her. She waves back. Suddenly, tears start streaming over her cheeks. Ines starts sobbing and watches tearfully as the taxi disappears around a corner.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's now gotten dark. Ines is wearing pajamas and drinking wine. With the concentration of an actress learning lines, she rehearses and refines her presentation. Her "performance" stands in stark contrast to the image she projects in her pajamas. She tweaks certain words and we notice that she's honing her intonation. As she murmurs about EU regulations and economic viability, she walks to the refrigerator. She tries to ignore her painful foot. She finds the leftover spaghetti that her father has carefully covered with plastic film. Next to it is the cheese grater. She takes a piece of parmesan, walks back to her laptop and starts to grate the parmesan onto the spaghetti. She coils the spaghetti absent-mindedly around her fork and eats hungrily while she surfs the internet.

EXT. - STREET IN FRONT OF INES' APARTMENT - DAY

Ines waits in front of her apartment block. She's wearing a suit and typing something on her Blackberry. We hear notification sounds as she sends emails. She takes off her shoe and puts her foot down on the asphalt. A WOMAN sits on the street opposite her, trying to sell two bunches of flowers. A CHILD approaches Ines and offers her a packet of kleenex. She gives the child a bill and explains to him that she won't give him something every day. There's a honk. Ines slips her shoe back on, hobbles towards a dark-colored sedan car and climbs into the back.

INT. - INES' CAR - JOURNEY FROM APARTMENT TO DACOIL - DAY

Ines' boss GERALD (late 40s) and TIM (late 20s), an athletic-looking young consultant, are already in the car. Ines sits next to Gerald.

GERALD

Bucuresti...

Tim turns around to Ines and smiles at her.

INES

Good morning. Were you on the same flight?

GERALD

No, I was in Zurich. And how was it with Henneberg?

INES

A bit annoying, because I had to go shopping with his wife for three hours. But we had dinner and I put out my feelers. My impression is that he's become more cautious of outsourcing, or that he has new opponents... That topic definitely caused tension.

GERALD

OK, that comes as a surprise.

INES

So I reworked the presentation, and I think we should definitely --

TIM

Use a softer touch?

Tim is keen to join in and score points with Gerald. Ines pauses and smiles at him.

INES

Can I finish what I was saying?

Tim bites his tongue.

INES (CONT'D)

I think we should go on the offensive. I think he's hoping we'll decide for him, that we'll emphatically order it. I think he can't be an active proponent. So I'd like to present three options. A full outsourcing in all assets - essentially a radical cut. Then our option in the middle which, in contrast, looks realistic and almost harmless. And a minimal solution in just one pilot asset that changes practically nothing.

GERALD

OK. I'm surprised. First of all, I think it's difficult to change the strategy so close to a meeting. Where did you eat?

INES

Da Vinci.

GERALD

Right now, I'm not convinced...

INES

Argument number two is Illiescu: We have to make the point that he's blocking us. At the end of the day, all the figures from Buzau are flawed. For a clear business case, we'd need much more from Illiescu. Every other table is incomplete.

(to Tim)

I'm not criticizing you, but we can't make a clear statement anyway, so that's why we need: three options.

TIM

OK.

It takes a while until Gerald answer.

GERALD

Illiescu isn't an issue for the steering committee. We'll put this in a comfort zone. The three options are OK if you really feel confident.

INES

Absolutely. The final point is Dascalu. Things are still difficult with him. I think we should involve him more. Also because of Illiescu. He has the best rapport with him. He'll definitely be our opponent.

GERALD

Is that little Anca going to be there today as well?

INES

Yes, she'll be clicking the PowerPoint.

EXT. - STREET IN FRONT OF DACOIL OFFICES - DAY

The car pulls up near Dacoil's office building. Gerald gets out.

TIM

Do you want me to be there?

INES

I think it's better if I do it alone. Let's talk about that in a minute...

TIM

OK.

Ines' foot is extremely painful when she stands on it.

INES

Everything's OK.

Ines nods. They walk towards the office building, adjusting their suits in preparation for a brief moment of performance. Ines makes an effort to walk normally despite the fact that her foot is still very sore.

INT. - DACOIL OFFICES - BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Ines kneels on the floor of a toilet stall. In front of her lies an open first aid kit. She takes out a syringe and pokes its needle aggressively into her toenail. With the pressure released, a fountain of blood shoots through the tiny hole. The blood sprays into her face and onto her light-colored blouse. Ines sits up and needs a moment to overcome her queasiness. She reaches for some bathroom tissue and wipes the blood from her face, then grabs her cellphone and dials a number.

INT. - DACOIL OFFICES - BATHROOM - DAY

Ines exits the toilet stall. She's now wearing an unfamiliar blouse with short sleeves and a floral pattern. She pulls her blazer on over it and looks at herself in the mirror. Anca exits another stall. She's now wearing Ines' blood-spattered blouse.

ANCA

Is it OK?

INES

Yes. Thank you.

ANCA

I am sorry. It's not my best.

INES

No, it's just because of the presentation.

(in German)

It's an unusual color.

Ines glances at the blood-stained blouse Anca now wears.

ANCA

I'll just put my hair over it.

Ines looks impatiently at her watch. They seem to be waiting for something.

ANCA (CONT'D)

She is coming.

(BEAT)

(in German)

I wanted to ask, are you pleased with my work in general?

INES

Absolutely, I think you've really improved. I just think you should try to speak more German.

ANCA

I know, but it's not enough for everyday use.

INES

One more minor thing: It's really silly, but I don't like those smilies in emails. I know what you mean without them.

ANCA

I know. I am a bit addicted.

They're silent for a moment.

ANCA

Why don't we go out, like all together... the whole team? To a club, or for dinner.

INES

OK.

ANCA

It could be nice, just for the team.

Ines looks impatiently at her watch.

INES

Thank you. I'll think about it.

The door opens and FLORA, a young consultant wearing very high-heeled shoes and a skirt suit, enters the bathroom. She appears to have run there. She takes off her jacket and shows Ines her blouse, which is very girly and exposes her back.

INES

No, this one is better.

INT. - DACOIL OFFICES - EXECUTIVE FLOOR - DAY

Ines follows INGRID across the tastefully-designed executive floor of the office building. They disappear into a conference room in which Gerald and Dascalu are already waiting. She greets them both.

INT. - DACOIL OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A modern conference room. Henneberg sits next to Gerald, Dascalu and two further ROMANIAN MANAGERS, all in leather chairs. Ines stands in front of a PowerPoint presentation. The tables on the slides create patterns on her face. She's alert, keeping an eye on everyone in the room, especially Henneberg. Ingrid sits silently in front of a laptop and loads the next slide for Ines.

INES

For option one we assume that it will take one year for the implementation. The implementation cost, internal and external, will be around five to six million euros. The advantage of a full outsourcing is the contractor rates. We will have a strong competition resulting in lower rates. That's why we will end with a ten-per-cent cost reduction in the first year.

DASCALU

I doubt very much that we will have such strong cost reduction so quickly. It takes years to transfer all our knowledge to the contractors.

Gerald nods in agreement towards Dascalu. It seems to be a tactical move. Henneberg is listening very attentively, but lets the others doing the talking.

INES

I totally agree with you. We surely need to go further into the details of each scenario.

(to Ingrid, in German)

Ingrid, switch to the next slide, please.

Ingrid loads a new slide.

INES (CONT'D)

Option two will take about ten months with significantly higher contractor rates. Option three takes eight months with even higher contractor rates.

DASCALU

There is no way in which you can outsource any maintenance services in only ten months. This is impossible. This is more than...

(addressing one of the Dacoil managers in Romanian)

How many employees? What do you think?

DACOIL MANAGER

Approximately two hundred workers.

DASCALU

Plus, you have to consider high costs for supervision and training from our side too. I don't see them there.

INES

What I also think what we should put into account is that Dacoil didn't even realize international HSSR standards in all assets. So we don't have a business case yet. But a very strong trend. You all agreed that the implementation of any option will not be done faster than one year, which is also in line with HR. So we know that the main driver is the contractor rates and I know them.

HENNEBERG

This is my experience, too.

GERALD

Absolutely.

INES

So as soon as I have realistic figures of the personnel we can guarantee a positive business case for option two and even for option one.

Dascalu shakes his head slightly.

DASCALU

Option one is not possible.

GERALD

OK, I absolutely agree with Mr. Dascalu that there are many open questions. There is a lot that needs to be analyzed in more detail. But I would like to support Ms. Conradi. From my point of view at least option 2 is necessary. The big picture will not change and is absolutely in line with my experiences from other countries. Thank you, Ines.

(addressing Henneberg)

So now we need directions, Titus.

HENNEBERG

Gents, we really need a waterproof and positive business case before we can start anything. What you are proposing, speaking of option one, would be a heavy change for our operations. Option two seems more realistic to me at the moment. That also needs to be verified legally. We all know how difficult this process will be regarding the unions.

Dascalu nods.

GERALD

Absolutely, Titus.

HENNEBERG

We have to think carefully and we need to go into more details. But it is a very interesting proposal.

GERALD

(to Henneberg)

At the end of this month, we should have all calculations done.

INES

Sorry, but I think we cannot promise anything as long as the cooperation with Buzau will not work better.

Gerald is briefly taken aback by Ines' frank interjection. Ines looks at Dascalu.

INES (CONT'D)

I would like to sit down with you, Mr. Dascalu, to discuss how we can work more closely together with Mr. Illiescu.

Dascalu waits a little too long before answering.

DASCALU

I will see what I can do.

HENNEBERG

OK, gents, get this solved. I think we are done. Thanks a lot.

Henneberg stands up and swiftly says goodbye. He was itching to leave, anyway. Gerald and Ines stay behind and Ingrid is also still in the room. The PowerPoint now displays the company's logo with the slogan "Performance delivered."

INES

So?

GERALD

I don't like that you don't stick to the plan. The Illiescu thing wasn't exactly elegant. The next steps are clear. But please inform me if there are any more problems.

INES

OK, I will.

GERALD

But otherwise... well done. You're an animal, Ines.

INES

Thanks.

INGRID

Can I pull up the screen?

INES

Yeah, sure.

INT. - DACOIL OFFICES - KITCHENETTE - DAY

Ines walks through a modern, open office. She finds Tim in a little Kitchenette. Tim fumbles with a coffee machine. Ines leans next to him.

INES

Come on, don't be offended. Be happy you weren't there.

TIM

I'm not offended.

INES

To quote Gerald: It's all included in your price.

TIM

Yes, but Gerald's prices are different to mine. What are you doing tonight?

INES

I'm meeting Steph de Boer and Tatjana.

TIM

Women's group?

INES

Yeah, exactly. We talk about gender quotas, sexual harassment at work, things like that.

EXT. - DA VINCI LAKESIDE RESTAURANT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ines gets out of a taxi and walks through a landscaped garden towards a well-lit restaurant. Expensive cars crowd the private parking lot. Guests come and go. The restaurant appears to be popular. Ines has applied heavier make-up and is wearing high-heeled shoes.

INT. - DA VINCI LAKESIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ines enters the lakeside restaurant in which she previously had dinner with Henneberg. Two female FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF ask her for her reservation. The restaurant's decor is clearly intended to exude an air of luxury. People sit at tables or wait at the packed bar for their reservations: Foreign businesspeople mix with rich Romanians clad in polo shirts and gold chains with their skinny girlfriends in high heels. Ines spots two women who have already snagged bar stools: Tatjana (38), the Dutchwoman we met at the embassy reception, and STEPH (45), an American.

INES

Hello. Sorry I'm late, but I had to get changed after work.

TATJANA

You look great...

INES

Thanks you.

STEPH

You work way too much, Ines.

INES

I know, but it's really busy at the moment. I had a big thing today...

TATJANA

Wow. How did it go?

INES

I made a last-minute strategy change, but it went OK.

STEPH

Did you check out the caterers? I gave her Dariu's number...

INES

(to Tatjana)

I'm hosting a small party for my birthday. Next Saturday. Are you free?

TATJANA

How nice...

STEPH

Dariu is the best.

INES

(to Tatjana)

How was the night with the Chinese?

TATJANA

(to Steph)

After 30 minutes they were drunk and I sat there for five hours, listening to Mandarin. But I sold one flat, at least.

STEPH

We were just fighting over who had the most horrible weekend.

INES

Oh, how was Naples?

STEPH

Short version: Naples is even dirtier than Bucharest, and you can find much better Italian food here in town. Even the kids were dying to get back.

TATJANA

They should bring us a drink.

INES

Actually, your weekend sounds fun to me. I had the most horrible weekend of my entire life.

Ines sinks her voice dramatically.

INES (CONT'D)

My father visited me spontaneously, without any warning. Out of nowhere, he was there, waiting in my office. Pretending he wanted to bring me my birthday present. But actually he was having a crisis because his dog died.

Steph grimaces.

INES (CONT'D)

And Henneberg was there and wanted me to go out with him and his wife the whole time.

STEPH

Is Henneberg still in town? I should invite him to our relaunch.

Ines nods.

INES

And my father was sitting around making spaghetti and trying to talk with me about the meaning of life.

TATJANA

That's why I like Mondays.

Steph, too, has lost interest in Ines' story.

STEPH
How is the new wife?

INES
Very Russian, very skinny, very blond.

Ines looks around to make sure no one can hear her.

STEPH
Better be careful.

An older man sitting next to Tatjana has a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket. He adjusts it, then lifts the dripping bottle from the bucket and addresses the women.

TONI
Can I offer the ladies a glass of champagne?

Ines freezes as she recognizes the man. He has long, dark hair and the false teeth are firmly in place. He just lips slightly when he speaks. Tatjana looks questioningly at her friends.

TATJANA
Do we want champagne?

Tatjana looks at Steph and Ines.

TONI
Please, I can't drink all this alone.

TATJANA
Sure, why not...?

Toni beckons to the BARTENDER and asks for three glasses. Ines, who is standing diagonally behind him, has stopped breathing. He's wearing a dark blue iridescent suit jacket with a striped pocket square - it used to be his handkerchief. Toni looks at his watch and shakes his head. The teeth give him an outlandishly wild character. There's clearly something not entirely genuine about him but, overall, his outfit somehow works.

TONI
I'm waiting for Mr. Tiriatic for two hours now.

TATJANA
Ion Tiriatic?

TONI
Yes. I'm Toni, Toni Erdmann.

TATJANA

Tatjana... Nice to meet you, Toni.

He shakes hands with the women. For the first time, he makes direct eye contact with Ines. Toni takes the chair next to Tatjana. The waiter brings the glasses with the champagne.

TATJANA

Do you work here in Bucharest, Toni?

TONI

Yes, and no. I came here because of a famous dentist. He made all new. My teeth were too small. And always I wanted something more wild, more dangerous.

It's clear that he's inventing most of it on the spot. He smiles. Steph and Tatjana aren't sure whether to take the whole thing seriously.

STEPH

Who is this crazy dentist?

TONI

The International Dental Design Clinic.

STEPH

OK.

TONI

The doctor is Italian. Not a dentist. More an Italian architect.

TATJANA

So you are just friends with Tiriac?

TONI

We played tennis together in Germany.

TATJANA

Interesting.

Toni looks at his cellphone. Stuck to the back of it is a piece of paper with his own phone number.

TONI

But he not answers the phone. He has a crisis because his...

(mixing German and English)

His Schildkröte died.

He looks at Ines. She realizes he heard what she said about him earlier.

STEPH
What's a "schillgröde"?

INES
(quietly)
A turtle.

TONI
He is crying the whole day. The turtle was very old. They spent 45 years together.
(again mixing German and English)
And then Herzinfarkt.

TATJANA
I am sorry to hear that.

TONI
For me, it's just a turtle.

STEPH
May I ask what your profession is?

TONI
My what?

INES
(in German, catching herself mid-sentence and switching from the familiar to the formal "you")
Dein... Ihr Beruf (your profession).

TONI
I'm a businessman, consultant and coach.

TATJANA
What's your focus? If you say you're into coaching?

TONI
My focus is life and style.

The waiter arrives and speaks to Toni. He points at a nearby table which is set for one. On it is a plate with a large lobster. Winfried's grocery bag hangs from the back of the chair.

WAITER
Do you want to finish it?

TONI
(again mixing German and English)
Oh yes... my Hummer is waiting.

WAITER
(to the group)
Or do you want to sit together?

INES
(quickly)
Oh no, thank you.

The waiter points to an available table.

WAITER
So, your table is free, too.

The women say goodbye to Toni.

STEPH
Thanks for the champagne.

TATJANA
So nice meeting you... Toni.

They walk to their table. As soon as they're out of earshot, Tatjana and Steph start rolling their eyes.

TATJANA (CONT'D)
What was that?

STEPH
These teeth...

TATJANA
And the thing with the turtle.

Ines shrugs.

STEPH
Yeah, but some turtles can get really old.

They sit down and reach for the menus. Ines looks distractedly at Toni, who's inspecting the lobster through his reading glasses. Their eyes meet. He briefly raises his glass of beer.

TATJANA
(to Steph)
So who is coming to your relaunch?

STEPH

It's going to be a bizarre mix of guests. Gabriel really invited everybody. New clients, possible clients. Friends, supporters, all the people from our charity work... He even wanted all the drivers to be there.

TATJANA

That's nice.

STEPH

I hope they don't feel uncomfortable.

TATJANA

So you rented the whole Players Club?

Steph nods. She, too, looks at Toni, who is now trying to suck the meat out of a lobster leg through his teeth.

STEPH

Oh, God... That's really disgusting.

INES

What's disgusting?

STEPH

Just the way he eats. He is definitely not waiting for Tiriatic.

For a moment, Ines seems to be annoyed by the way Steph's talking about "her father".

INES

A lot of managers have strange gurus.

STEPH

Yeah, maybe...

TATJANA

You never know...

Steph starts typing something on her cellphone. Part of her still wonders whether Toni really might be someone important. Ines watches as an UNKNOWN MAN wearing a suit and a bowtie approaches Toni's table. Toni looks at his watch and invites him to sit down, but the man wants to leave. Toni struggles with the lobster for another moment, then gestures at the waiter to bring the check. Ines' and Tatjana's starters arrive. Toni stands up and raps his knuckles on the women's table (a departing gesture in Germany).

TONI
(mixing English and German)
Ich muss... My limousine waits.
(in German)
It was very nice to meet you.

He looks at Ines as he says it. Steph quickly whips out a business card and hands it with professional nonchalance to Toni.

STEPH
My husband runs a headhunting company. If there is anything we can do for you or Mr. Tiriac, we would be happy to.

Toni gratefully takes the card. Steph waits for him to reciprocate, but he doesn't. He leaves. Tatjana laughs at Steph.

TATJANA
You are really a pro...

INES
Excuse me.

Ines stands and picks up her handbag as if she's going to the bathroom.

EXT. - DA VINCI RESTAURANT - EXIT AREA - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ines walks to the restaurant's busy exit and stands hesitantly in the entrance area. A white stretch limo is parked in the lot. Toni stands next to it, undecided. Ines retreats behind a glass screen and watches as her father looks towards the restaurant. Then he pats the driver on the shoulder and really does climb into the limo. She steps out of the restaurant and watches him leave.

INT. - DA VINCI LAKESIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ines walks back to her table. The waiter arrives and brings her a rich chocolate cake decorated with lit sparklers. She turns it down, because she didn't order it.

WAITER
It's from the man who just left. He told me to send his dessert to you.

TATJANA
It seems like you have an admirer, Ines.

Even though she's being ironic, Tatjana still seems to be irritated that the dessert is intended for Ines. Steph receives an SMS.

STEPH

Shit, he didn't give me his card. Gabriel just texted.

(quoting the message)

"Tiriatic! Cool!" He wanted to invite him to the party.

Suddenly, Ines starts eagerly eating the chocolate cake.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ines cautiously opens her apartment door, as if there might be someone inside. She looks into all of the rooms. She walks around, unsettled. She dials her father's number again, but he doesn't pick up. She carefully opens a closet. The apartment is empty.

INT. - OFFICE BUILDING - MEETING ROOM - DAY

It's early morning. Ines has retreated into a glass-walled meeting room and is Skyping with a middle-aged man who seems to be some kind of COACH. He's having breakfast on the terrace of some lakeside hotel.

INES

The speaking went well. It doesn't need any more work. I made good use of the space. I spent time in the room beforehand, too.

COACH

And what about the breathing technique?

INES

I didn't need it this time. But I would like to do some more work on my body language. Sometimes I lose control of it...

A woman flits across the screen. The coach murmurs to her that he'll be with her shortly.

COACH

Do you have an example?

INES

It tends to be when I'm listening.

COACH

I suspect you're really listening in those moments. That's noble, of course, but maybe you

need to focus more on your own message. Did anything surprise you?

INES

Not in terms of the content... But maybe the tone... Dascalu argued very aggressively.

COACH

Did it affect you on a personal level?

INES

It might have done.

COACH

Maybe there's some kind of imbalance with regard to your identification. You're only good when you identify yourself. Identification is an important tool for you. But it's a tool that you need to be able to set aside.

Gerald knocks on the glass door. He gestures at Ines that he's in a hurry, then enters the room. He knows the man she's Skyping with and waves briefly at the screen.

GERALD

Can I grab you for a second?

EXT. - OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Gerald and Ines walk across the office building's broad roof terrace. They pass a seating area set in a small, artificially-landscaped garden.

GERALD

I have the feeling the team isn't so tight anymore. Tim thought the same. Think of something to boost the team spirit... to prevent a gulf opening up between the Romanians and us. They've lost their morale, somehow.

INES

Yeah, I thought so, too. That corresponds with my impression. I'm holding a brunch for my birthday, anyway, so I'll invite everyone then.

GERALD

Very nice, something personal. Good.

Gerald walks away from the building, as if he's purposefully looking for a secluded spot.

GERALD (CONT'D)

We'll work with the numbers we have and won't make a fuss about them.

INES

Why?

GERALD

Your idea of building up pressure through Dascalu backfired. He and Illiescu won't be discussing our project.

INES

OK. Why not?

GERALD

Dascalu trusts Illiescu and sees no need to act. And Henneberg wants to keep Dascalu out of it so he can negotiate with the unions.

Suddenly, Ines notices as her father, or rather Toni, appears some distance away and walks towards her holding a cup of coffee and a newspaper.

INES

So on what basis should I continue my work? The transport data is all wrong. Many more people work there. You can't cut enough staff here.

GERALD

Everyone agrees with you on that one. The good news is: Henneberg wants you to do the radical cut.

INES

But that was totally unfounded. Surely you realized it was all on the verge of speculation. Above all, to sell such a big restructuring, now I really do need precise figures.

GERALD

This will annoy the feminist in you. But, to quote Henneberg: "Ms. Conradi has enough charm to manage Illiescu by herself."

INES

I'm not a feminist, Gerald. Otherwise I wouldn't tolerate guys like you.

GERALD

I'll take that as a compliment.

Ines watches tensely as Toni comes closer. He holds his cellphone to his ear. He's wearing the same iridescent jacket.

TONI

(quietly, into phone)

Mom, I'm working here. I can't talk to you on the phone the whole time. Yes, I'm taking my meds. And fruit. Yeah, bye.

He puts the newspaper down on a bench opposite him and hides something underneath it. Then he sits down on the paper, apparently by chance. Nothing happens. Gerald looks at him with bemusement, but then continues.

GERALD

By the way, Henneberg wants to keep you here. He really believes in you.

INES

And what did you say to him?

GERALD

That I'd talk to you. But that I think you'll finish the project.

INES

And our deal?

GERALD

I know, of course. But we're talking one year max. Then you can start at a whole new level in Shanghai or somewhere else.

INES

I've heard that a few times before. I can manage Bucharest just as well from Shanghai.

GERALD

That's not realistic. This is your partner case. Then you can choose where you want to go.

INES

Can we continue this conversation somewhere else?

GERALD

The alternative would be to hand over to Tim.

INES

Right.

In the background, Toni sits down again on the suspicious newspaper, and an unnaturally drawn-out farting noise is heard. Dissatisfied, Toni stands up and does something underneath the newspaper.

TONI

(muttering)

That wasn't funny, though.

INES

I'll think about it. Now I'd just like a coffee. Can we maybe go back inside?

Ines is about to leave when Toni addresses her.

TONI

(to Ines)

I was just wondering where we met? What are you doing here?

With Gerald there, Ines has no choice but to answer.

INES

I work here. We're discussing something. We're about to have a meeting.

Ines walks towards the building. Toni walks alongside them.

TONI

I have to go inside, too. I'm about to have a supervision with Mr. Henneberg.

They pause at the entrance to the building.

TONI (CONT'D)

(to Ines)

I hope he's a bit less stubborn today. He's unbelievably frightened of the Romanians and worried that his wife spends too much money.

Ines tries to laugh. Gerald looks expectantly at her, waiting for her to introduce him to Toni, but she doesn't.

GERALD

Marburger.

TONI

Erdmann. Do you use hand lotion?

Gerald shakes his head, bewildered.

TONI (CONT'D)

Then it's probably me.

Ines owes Gerald an explanation of who this guy is.

INES

Mr. Erdmann is... a freelance coach.

Gerald is still bemused, but it seems to be an explanation.

INES (CONT'D)

So I'll be in touch with you again later, about the... workshop.

TONI

OK.

GERALD

(to Ines)

A workshop for us?

INES

Yes, it's being considered. The idea was floated...

TONI

(in German-inflected English)

We see. If you willing?

GERALD

Pardon?

TONI

Willing? You are willing?

(in German)

Oh, let's drop the English. It's not going so well today, after all.

Again, Ines tries to take control of the situation.

INES

That came from Dacoil. It still needs to be discussed.

TONI

Yes, I invented a program together with Lothar Matthäus. Title: "Shoes and Belt should fit together".

Ines gives Toni a firm and decisive handshake.

INES (CONT'D)

Goodbye.

INT. - OFFICE BUILDING - BY ELEVATOR NEAR ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Ines walks so speedily to the elevator that Gerald has to hurry to keep up.

GERALD

What kind of a freak is that?

INES

I'll explain when we have more time.

The elevator arrives and Gerald steps into it. Ines turns around and takes her cellphone from her bag, as if it's ringing.

INES (CONT'D)

I'll be there in a minute.

EXT. - OFFICE BUILDING - ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Ines runs back and looks out onto the roof terrace. Toni is no longer there.

INT. - OFFICE BUILDING - BY ELEVATOR NEAR ROOF TERRACE - DAY

Ines runs through a series of corridors, searching. Company employees walk pass her. She spots Toni, stops him just before he gets into an elevator and forces him into a corner. Winfried immediately adopts his Toni pose and quickly puts in his false teeth.

INES

Listen, are you insane? Are you trying to ruin me or what? Dad, I'm talking to you.

Toni looks down and, for a moment, it seems like he might relent, but then he fishes a business card from his jacket. He puts on his sunglasses.

TONI

Well, if this is about your father, I'm not the right man. But if you want to work on your charisma, or if you notice you're talking to no-one on the phone, you're welcome to contact me at any time.

Before Ines can say anything, he turns around and gestures at a MAN in a suit who's getting into the elevator.

TONI (CONT'D)

Oh, there's my man.

Toni greets the man and pats him on the shoulder. From the man's reaction, however, it's clear that he has no idea who Toni is. The elevator doors close. Ines looks at the hand-drawn business card. All it says is "T. E. - Toni Erdmann" and his phone number. Employees walk pass her. Ines turns and walks back into the open-plan office.

INT. - MARRIOTT HOTEL - STAIRCASE - DAY

Ines walks up the stairs in the Marriott Hotel. She's wearing a tight-fitting dress and has tied her hair up.

INT. - MARRIOTT HOTEL - CORRIDOR AND ENTRANCE TO ROOM - DAY

She continues along a broad corridor with a blue carpet. As she walks, she re-applies her lipstick. She stops by a door, tiredly straightens up and knocks. Tim opens the door. He's shirtless and speaking on his cellphone.

INT. - MARRIOTT HOTEL - BEDROOM - DAY

Ines enters the room and puts down her bag. Tim comes over to her, kisses her and pays her a silent compliment as he continues listening to someone on the phone.

TIM

But a two-masted boat is a lot of work. I'm not doing that with a five-man crew. You can forget Daniel. He has to mix the cocktails. Yeah, send some pics.

He finishes the conversation, puts his phone on silent and comes over to Ines, who has flopped down on a couch in the spacious hotel room.

TIM (CONT'D)

This'll be such a stupid sailing trip. Ludwig now wants to take a two-masted boat.

He takes off one of Ines' high-heeled shoes and starts massaging her foot. After a brief moment, he guides her foot between his legs.

INES

Oh, so the maid hasn't come yet?

TIM

No. Only Timidri... Romanian lover for you.

Ines laughs. He kisses her and, if he had his way, he'd undress her right there and then. There's a knock at the door and a quiet voice says, "Room service". Tim goes to the door and opens it. A hotel employee carries in a cake stand and a bottle of white wine. Tim puts the cake stand on the floor next to Ines and uncorks the bottle.

INES

Wow...

TIM

Gerald found out about us, by the way.

INES

So what?

TIM

He told me not to fuck you too much so you don't lose your bite.

INES

Aha.

TIM

I told him that's why I fuck you. And today I'm going to sleep with you in every corner of this room.

Tim comes over to Ines and tries to undress her. They kiss, but Ines suddenly isn't in the mood.

TIM (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

INES

I'll just watch you first... I'll try to catch up.

TIM

Hurry up, then.

Tim unfastens his pants and tries to undress Ines. She flops back onto the couch and takes a gulp of her white wine.

INES

I don't want to lose my bite.

TIM

Come on, don't be so serious. I'll fuck you real strong. My sperm has superpowers.

Ines can't help but smile at his nonsense.

INES

No, my bite is really more important to me. I'd rather just watch you.

Tim takes her foot and massages his crotch with it. Ines pulls it back. Tim grabs her breasts, kisses her and tries to ignore the fact that she's not joining in.

INES (CONT'D)

I want you to try to hit one of the petit fours. I'll eat it afterwards.

Ines can't help but laugh. Tim is irritated, but too aroused to stop. He approaches her again and kisses her, but she remains resolute and won't let him undress her.

TIM

You're being serious? Yeah, OK.

Tim starts pleasuring himself.

TIM (CONT'D)

And which one, exactly? OK, I'm going to come now.

Tim drops to his knees in front of her, really does ejaculate over the cake stand and then falls onto his back.

TIM (CONT'D)

You're stupid.

Ines takes one of the dripping petit fours and bites into it. Tim looks at her in disgust and pulls up his pants. He stands up and disappears into the bathroom. Ines stays there, musing. She digs in her handbag for her cellphone and dials a number.

INES

(into phone)

Hello Steph, it's Ines. Sorry to disturb you, but I've got the number of the Tiriatic coach. Yeah, I met him again. It's up to you... but why not? Yes! I am already getting dressed. I will text you. See you later.

Tim returns. He sits down on the hotel bed with his laptop and starts scrolling through Facebook. Ines flops down next to him.

TIM

Take a look at Gerald's lady. What a mama. No wonder he's fucking his way around this place. How can he be stupid enough to post photos of himself barbecuing?

Tim clicks on a photo of Gerald, his wife and their two children. It's a family barbecue in front of a modern house with the table set, a dog and children's toys strewn across the garden.

INES

Men can really have a lot of fun.

TIM

How come? You fuck around, too.

INES

Yeah, but I don't have a wife waiting for me somewhere... buying these salads, getting my kids dressed and taking our dog to the vet.

Tim takes a closer look at the photo and spots the dog. One of its paws is bandaged.

INES (CONT'D)

He just has this house somewhere and he can always go there. Look closely... Have you ever seen him looking like that here?

TIM

I think he looks frustrated.

Gerald's facial features are like the Mona Lisa's. It's difficult to say whether he looks serious or is smiling.

INES

Let's get going...

EXT. - CLUB - OUTDOOR AREA - NIGHT

The outdoor area of a nightclub. A pool is illuminated with kitschy lights and surrounded by curved seating areas, fake palm trees and pseudo-Greek frescoes. The reception is already busy. Aperitifs are being served. Tatjana's husband's headhunting company seems to be throwing money around. Ines and Tim greet Tatjana and a couple of people we don't yet know. In the background, the hosts are being photographed with their guests in front of a curved backdrop. Ines looks around. Suddenly she spots her father or, rather, Toni. He takes a beer from a tray and also looks around. When he spies Ines, he raises his glass to her from afar. From a bar table, he takes a bowl of nuts and empties it into his jacket pocket. Ines pulls herself together and approaches him.

INES

Hello, Mr. Erdmann.

TONI

Good evening.

Suddenly, both fall silent. Toni gives Ines a couple of nuts from his jacket pocket. She takes them.

TONI (CONT'D)

So, have you calmed down a bit?

INES

Is Tiriatic still coming?

TONI

He said he was, yes. But today was the funeral...
for Angelina.

INES

His turtle.

TONI

Exactly.

Tim looks over at them.

TONI (CONT'D)

Am I supposed to do something in particular
here?

INES

I wanted to give you a bigger audience...

Tim strolls over to them with a drink for Ines. He clearly feels obliged to rescue Ines from her current conversation.

TONI

(to Ines)

Let's do it this way: If you say "Rocky", I'll hit him.

Toni shakes hands with Tim.

TONI (CONT'D)

Erdmann, pleased to meet you.

Toni pulls his hand away as if in pain.

TIM

Everything OK?

Tim laughs and Toni pats him on the shoulder.

TONI

Friends, right?

Toni offers Tim a couple of nuts from his jacket pocket, and Tim takes them. From the way Tim positions himself next to Ines and briefly puts his hand on her back, Toni realizes that they have more than a professional relationship.

TONI (CONT'D)

And what do your parents do for a living?

TIM

We have a car dealership. BMWs.

TONI

And do you call home now and again?

TIM

Ah, yes.

TONI

That's good. You get another nut for that. Only one. I need to save the other one for Mr. Marburger.

Toni gestures towards Gerald, who appears in the background with two women. Ines stands up straight. One of the women is the receptionist from the office lobby. Tim bemusedly takes a second nut from Toni's hand.

TONI (CONT'D)

You can learn a lot from your parents. For example, I learned from my father how to use a

cheese grater. We pass this down from generation to generation.

TIM

Is it a special cheese grater?

Tim, who is practiced in smalltalk, is trying to take his conversational partner seriously.

TONI

No, no, a very ordinary little cheese grater.
Question is: How you hold the cheese, the speed at which you grate.

Tim can't help but laugh.

TONI (CONT'D)

Don't believe me, then.
(to Ines)
Do you like grating cheese?

INES

Sadly, I don't have the time.

TONI

Yes, you have to be incredibly relaxed to handle a cheese grater right. Tense people often have difficulties.

He mimes a tense hand.

INES

(to Tim)
Mr. Erdmann is a freelance coach. We met through his work with Henneberg.

TIM

OK.

Gerald strolls over to them with two young Romanian women. He greets Tim and Ines.

GERALD

They're putting on quite a show here...

TIM

No expense spared.

Toni greets Gerald as if they know each other, and Tim stares at them. Ines allows the situation to continue. Toni taps the knot in Gerald's necktie. Suddenly, Ines sees Natalja. She quickly turns to Gerald.

INES
Is Henneberg still here?

GERALD
Yeah, yeah. We just had dinner.

At that moment, Ines spots Henneberg. Accompanied by Steph, he's moving in their direction while shaking hands with a few guests. Toni follows her gaze and, for a moment, he shrinks back to Winfried size.

TONI
(muttering)
Hopefully he won't drink so much today.

Then he sets off, deliberately walking towards Henneberg and patting him on the shoulder as he passes. At first, the executive doesn't recognize Winfried at all. Toni mutters to him.

TONI (CONT'D)
I'm here incognito today.

Henneberg reacts confused.

HENNEBERG
Oh, right.

TONI
We'll speak tomorrow.

He grips Henneberg's neck. Gerald and Tim watch the interaction closely. As she passes him, Steph speaks to Toni.

STEPH
You have to meet my husband.

TONI
Yes, I just have to call my mother.

Ines takes another glass from a WAITER and turns away to avoid Natalja and Henneberg. Toni walks on and ends up next to two women (ANA and FLAVIA) who are struggling to hold their champagne glasses and eat from their plates. Toni spontaneously takes the plates from them. The women laugh and try to take the plates back. Toni looks at Ines, who's watching him from a distance. While Toni

holds the plates, he exchanges business cards with the women. Toni glances towards Ines again. Tim is bobbing around her, ready to party. Tatjana approaches them both.

TATJANA

Car party?

TIM

Absolutely...

INES

(in German)

I'm not sure. I'll come later.

(in English)

I will join you in a minute...

Ines walks over to Toni, who's still holding the women's plates. He gestures encouragingly at some remaining salad.

TONI

(to Ines, in German)

I was just learning a bit about Romanian traditions.

INES

(in German)

Mr. Erdmann, we're going to the club and would love you to join us.

FLAVIA

And which embassy do you work at?

TONI

(to Ines, in German)

Translation, please.

INES

(bemused, in German)

In which embassy you work.

TONI

(in German)

In the German one...

(to Flavia)

In the German. I am Ambassador Erdmann... and this is my secretary, Ms. Schnuck.

FLAVIA

I work in the parliament. I am something like a secretary too.

TONI

Romania has a parliament? I didn't know that.

FLAVIA

Sometimes it feels like this.

Ines looks over at Tatjana and Tim, who are leaving the club. Toni stacks the women's empty plates on top of each other.

TONI

Je voudrais... excusé.

He pronounces it like "I have to go". Flavia and her friend Ana nod. Toni gives them one of his business cards and gets one from Flavia in return. Ines has already walked a couple of meters away. Steph passes her and, playing the hostess, touches her shoulder briefly.

TONI (CONT'D)

On telephone a causa des oeufs!

INES

You just told them you'll call them about the eggs.

TONI

That's exactly right.

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE CLUB - NIGHT

Toni and Ines leave the poolside area and walk down a set of steps towards a parking lot surrounded by nature. Toni follows a little behind Ines. Ines looks around, looking for something, and Toni follows her without knowing where they're going. They approach an SUV which is parked at the edge of a small forest. Tatjana and Tim are already waiting there.

EXT. - PARKING LOT OUTSIDE CLUB - NIGHT

The distant boom of a bass line competes with the chirping of crickets. The club is like a UFO landed in a wasteland. Where the parking lot ends, dense undergrowth begins. Tatjana has opened the doors to her dark-colored SUV with its light-colored seats and, for a moment, a question hangs in the air: What happens next?

TIM
(quietly, to Ines)
What are you doing with that guy?

INES
I think it's fun.

Toni sits down on the back seat of the car, in the open door. Tatjana silently questions Ines. Ines nods, and Tatjana starts preparing cocaine on a city map. She snorts a line then hands the map to Tim. After Tim has snorted his line, it's Ines' turn, but she first offers it to Toni. He declines.

TONI
Thanks. My heart...

Ines quickly snorts her line. Toni looks at the scenery. For a moment, everyone stands around, wrinkling their itchy noses and waiting for the drug to take effect. Tatjana starts putting make-up on. Toni points to some leftover cocaine that Ines has missed. She doesn't want to scrape it up, so he dips his finger in it briefly and rubs the cocaine into his gums.

INES
(to Tim)
I told him you're looking for a coach.

TIM
Sure, I have so many problems with my boss, and I'd like to become more successful with women.

TONI
You can't even pay for that.

Toni points at an imaginary spot on Tim's shirt. Tim looks down and, at that moment, Toni taps him on the nose.

TIM
Haha.

A moment later, Toni does the same thing again, and Tim can only laugh half as much. Ines has now also started applying make-up. Toni reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a new little cheese grater and a piece of parmesan. He grates a little cheese onto his head. He shakes himself. Tim laughs bemusedly.

TONI
So, time to go inside, you make-up babes! I'm a public official. I don't want to get arrested here.

As Toni walks past Tim, he once again taps his shirt and then his nose. This time, it seems more like an attack.

TIM
Enough already!

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE CLUB - NIGHT

The group walks back towards the club. Toni walks next to Tim.

TONI
(quieter)
How are your bowel movements at the moment?

TIM
What does it have to do with you?

TONI
I work a lot with bowel movements. It's like reading tea leaves.

TIM
Creamy.

TONI
That's good. This morning, mine glittered like gold.

He pats Tim on the shoulder. They walk up some steps covered in a red carpet. The bass gets steadily louder, guiding them into the club - the venue's indoor section. It becomes clear that the poolside area where the reception was being held was merely the outdoor section.

INT. - CLUB - DISCO - NIGHT

The club that now reveals itself is several times larger than the outdoor area. It has an aggressive lightshow, dancers, kitschy decor: It's the kind of club you only find in Eastern Europe. They're led to a plush seating area next to a runway. A couple of other guests from the reception are already sitting in this VIP area. Tim takes a bottle of vodka from an ice bucket and starts pouring. The dance version of Bob Marley's "No Woman, No Cry" booms from the loudspeakers. The lightshow gets more dramatic and the room goes pitch dark apart from a few laser beams which shoot aggressively through the darkness. Tatjana shrieks and Ines whistles coolly through her fingers. They seem to know what's about to happen. A dwarf climbs out of an oversized cake, carrying a larger-than-life lollipop on his shoulders. He's followed by a line of dancers whose legs appear even longer in his presence. Tim pulls out his iPhone and starts filming. The dwarf whips the crowd into a frenzy and

the new girls start dancing. The old dancers disappear into the cake. Ines pours vodka for Toni as if she's challenging him.

INES

Everything OK?

Toni shrugs and tries to seem unfazed. Gerald arrives at the VIP area with the receptionist and another woman. He makes a "party" gesture towards Ines, and she reciprocates. Her movements are self-conscious. Toni observes her from the side. She's like a stranger to him. Tim films Ines. She shifts closer to Toni and makes a "victory" sign. Toni copies her. Ines laughs into the camera as if she's posing with an amusing animal. Everyone starts dancing. Ines looks at Toni. She knows she's showing her father something that's new to him. Toni starts to move. For a moment, he seems young and agile. He copies the others' movements, but the irony falls flat in the midst of the overall excess.

INT. - CLUB - DISCO - NIGHT

The VIP lounge has now filled up. Tatjana, Tim and Ines are still bobbing around the champagne bucket. The dancers on the stage make acrobatic movements. The show has become more lavish. A WAITER arrives with a fresh bottle of champagne.

TONI

I'll pay for that.

The waiter produces an electronic card reader and Toni rummages for his credit card in his tattered leather wallet. Tim starts tearing paper napkins from a holder and throwing them in the air. Tatjana demands that he unbutton his shirt further.

TATJANA

It's unfair. Only women and a Lilliputian.

Tim briefly fends her off, then starts to enjoy showing off his six-pack. A new song starts. Toni sits down on one of the sofas and wipes sweat from his forehead with his handkerchief. He watches his daughter. He doesn't recognize her. Tim has grabbed the champagne bottle and is holding it between his legs while he dances from glass to glass. He comes to Toni, who lets him "pee" into his glass. Tim watches as Toni re-inserts his false teeth and stands up. Toni pulls out the cheese grater and starts to "help" Tim by grating cheese into the champagne. Tatjana pulls her glass away. Ines topples, swaying, onto one of the plush sofas. Only now do we realize how drunk she is: The effect of the cocaine has worn off. Tim dances onwards to Ines, who suddenly seems very distant. Toni grates a little cheese onto her hair. Tim approaches and dances around with the bottle at her mouth. Ines digs in her handbag and takes out two pills. Tim wants her to open her mouth and wash down the pills with champagne. She pushes the neck of the bottle away. The joke's going down so well that Tim carries on. He starts to mime an orgasm.

TIM

It's a really expensive vintage.

Toni grabs the bottle from his hand.

TONI

That's enough now.

Ines stands up, swaying.

INES

(to Tim)

I'm going. I have to go to Buzau tomorrow.

TIM

(quietly)

Come on, stay here a while longer. It was just a joke. Should I come with you?

Ines weakly raises her hand in farewell and then swiftly disappears into the crowd. It takes Toni a moment to realize she's gone.

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE CLUB - NIGHT

Toni runs hurriedly out of the club. Outside, several taxis are waiting. Party guests are still coming and going. Toni spots Ines just as she's getting into a taxi. The driver holds the door open for her. She sways as she gets in. Toni runs towards her, but the taxi pulls away. He, too, hurriedly looks for a taxi. He fishes a small piece of paper from his wallet and gives it to the driver.

INT. - BUCHAREST - TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi travels swiftly through night-time Bucharest. Wide, empty avenues are flanked by imposing socialist-era buildings from which huge, illuminated advertising billboards shine. Toni sits in the back seat and looks out of the window.

INT./EXT. - STREET IN FRONT OF WINFRIED'S HOTEL - TAXI - DAWN

The taxi pulls up on a broad street in front of a hotel. It's already getting light. Toni gets out and walks towards the building. A few people are already making their way to work. He takes out the false teeth and puts them in his pocket.

INT. - WINFRIED'S HOTEL - BEDROOM - DAY

Winfried stands in a small hotel room. His things are lying on the unused half of a double bed. He stands there for a moment, bewildered, then he leaves the hotel again.

EXT. - BUCHAREST STREETS - DAY

It's morning in Bucharest. Winfried walks through the city. He seems uncertain about what he should do. He takes his phone from his pocket and dials a number. No-one picks up. He watches as commuters get onto buses.

EXT. - STREET BY BAKERY - DAY

Winfried stops by a bakery which sells its wares through a glass window. He joins the line and points at a couple of soft pretzels. Then he sits down in a doorway and eats. Once again, he takes his phone from his pocket and dials. No-one picks up. An elderly woman passes by and begs at him. Winfried quickly stands up.

EXT. - STREET IN FRONT OF INES' APARTMENT - DAY

Winfried turns onto Ines' street.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT BLOCK - STAIRWELL - DAY

Winfried, now half-Toni, stands with a bag from the bakery in the darkened stairwell in front of Ines' door. He hesitantly rings the bell. She doesn't answer. He rings again and listens. He pulls Ines' apartment key from his pocket and unlocks the door.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - DAY

It's quiet in the apartment. He peers into Ines' bedroom - the bed is empty. Suddenly, he hears a noise from the bathroom. He opens the door of a large, built-in closet in the hallway and wedges himself in, still holding the bag from the bakery. Ines exits the bathroom. She's wearing her work clothes again. She walks past the closet, notices that the door is slightly ajar and tries to close it. Something's in the way. She opens the closet and screams in mortal terror as she sees there's a person inside. Toni peels himself out of the closet. He is wearing his teeth but not the wig.

TONI

Sorry, I was just checking in on you.

Ines gasps for air. She's speechless. She runs at him and hits him with all her strength. He lets her do it for a moment, then she flees into the kitchen. Ines tries to calm herself down, but Toni follows her. She reaches into a pot and throws the remains of the old, leftover spaghetti at Toni. Suddenly, Toni springs forward, grabs Ines' wrist and fastens a handcuff to it.

TONI

Ms. Conradi, you're under arrest.

They're now chained together. Ines tugs and pulls at her hand, then, very suddenly, she changes tack.

INES

Open them up, please. I have an appointment. I'm about to be picked up.

TONI

It's too risky.

Toni takes his handkerchief from his pants pocket and wipes the sweat from his forehead. He sits down on a chair and Ines has no choice but to go with him. He stalls a little longer, then reaches into his pocket to get the key. He searches but can't find it. He carries on rummaging in his pockets.

TONI (CONT'D)

I don't have the key.

Ines stares at him. He looks at the handcuffs and confirms that they really are locked.

INES

Open them up right now.

TONI

I really can't find it.

Ines looks down at herself. She's not fully dressed and her hair is wet. She walks away, pulling on the handcuffs. Toni has to hurry to keep up with her and, suddenly, he seems like her captive.

EXT. - STREET IN FRONT OF INES' APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

Still handcuffed together, Ines and Toni leave the house. Bogdan, the driver, is waiting for them.

INES

Bogdan, my father made a stupid joke. We have to solve this problem.

Bogdan looks at the handcuffs and then nods. Ines gets into the car. Toni refuses.

TONI

I am not her father, but OK. Where are you bringing me?

INT. - INES' CAR - STREET NEAR MARKET - DAY

Toni and Ines sit on the back seat of the comfortable S-class car as Bogdan drives them out of the city. Ines tries to ignore Toni. Both are still visibly feeling the effects of the previous night. Even though their hands are so close together, they're making an effort not to touch. The traffic edges tightly past run-down housing blocks.

EXT. - BUCHAREST MARKET - DAY

Ines and Toni follow Bogdan through the darkened halls of a sprawling market. Toni looks around, but Ines forces him to hurry up. At a stand selling household goods, a young ROMANIAN wearing a hoodie comes to their aid. Discreetly and with confident movements, he separates the handcuffs. Toni screams. The Romanian laughs. Bogdan gives him some money.

INT. - INES' CAR - FREEWAY - DAY

Using tape from the first-aid kit, Ines sticks the handcuff to her arm so it's not visible under her blazer. Toni looks out of the window. The car hurtles along a freeway. The landscape is flat and empty. In the distance, an industrial area is visible. Cattle stand under hoardings advertising German companies. Ines closes her eyes.

INT. - INES' CAR - RURAL AREA - DAY

The landscape has changed. Ines is asleep. It's a poor, rural region. They drive across a bridge and overtake a horse-drawn cart. Toni looks at it as they pass. The car turns onto an unpaved road. Bogdan turns around towards the back seat.

BOGDAN

(to Toni)

Please wake her up...

Ines wakes up immediately and starts applying make-up.

INT./EXT. - INES' CAR - IN FRONT OF OILFIELD OFFICE - DAY

The car passes through a security checkpoint and drives into a fenced-off area. They pull up in front of the main building of an oilfield installation. Ines gets out. Toni stretches, planning to stay in the car. Ines looks tensely at the building.

INES

Come with me. Take that off..

Toni puts the toupee in his bag and follows her.

INT. - OILFIELD - LOBBY - ILLIESCU'S OFFICE - DAY

Ines and Toni enter an office lobby. Ines greets a SECRETARY.

INES

Good morning. Conradi from Morrisons...

SECRETARY

Please wait a minute...

The secretary disappears and a moment later she opens the door to a large office. Ines ushers Toni in ahead of her.

INT. - OILFIELD - ILLIESCU'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is spacious and some effort has been made to mask the fact that it's in the sticks. Toni has no choice but to follow Ines. ILLIESCU, a Romanian manager aged around 50, greets Ines. He's surprised to see she's arrived with company. Ines introduces him to Toni.

INES

Mr. Illiescu, Mr. Erdmann.

The two men shake hands.

INES (CONT'D)

I am sorry for not getting in touch with you earlier. Mr. Erdmann just joined NWG and as he is on a visit together with Mr. Henneberg he wanted to get a personal impression of our project...

Ines looks at Toni, who has no choice but to nod. The secretary puts a couple of cans of cola down on the table. In his short-sleeved shirt, Illiescu seems more like a labor union type. As an adversary, he's difficult to read: He and Ines come from different worlds.

INES (CONT'D)

Mr. Erdmann implemented a similar project in one of the major Russian oil companies...

Toni nods at Illiescu and starts to feel his way into his role. He leans back.

ILLESICU

So, please have a seat. How can I help you?

INES

He just wants to listen... get a feeling for how we work together on this project...

Ines takes some out some papers and lays them in front of Illiescu.

INES (CONT'D)

So, first of all, I am looking forward that the project is going to continue...

ILLIESCU

So am I, so am I...

INES

And that we will work together much closer than we have so far.

ILLIESCU

Which is a pleasure...

INES

As you know, I presented your figures in our last steering committee. Unfortunately, a lot of questions came up about some of the data you provided.

She looks at Toni, seeking his agreement. He nods.

INES (CONT'D)

I defended your work since I know that the things we ask you to deliver are complicated, considering the fact that you are a very busy man.

ILLIESCU

I'm surprised to hear that there are problems. Mr. Tamaric is in Bucharest today.

Every now and again, Illiescu looks at Toni. He is equally unable to read him. Ines' polished self-presentation is also something he doesn't encounter every day. Toni

senses that Illiescu is being put under pressure. The more he grasps the situation, the more uncomfortable he, too, feels.

INES

It doesn't matter. I wanted to talk to you personally. It's a complicated business case. Because of that we have to decide if you have the capacity to work closer with us. Or, if you prefer, we can send some of our consultants to work here in your office.

ILLIESCU

No, I don't think that is necessary.

Ines turns to Toni.

INES

I'd also prefer to try it this way, Mr. Erdmann. Mr. Illiescu and I have known each other for some time now, and I think we will find a very good solution.

She's acting as if it's Toni who's been piling on the pressure, and she's now the one defending their collaboration with Illiescu. For a moment, no-one speaks...

TONI

(in German)

OK. If you think so.

ILLIESCU

Just tell me what you need.

He looks more closely at the list.

INES

We particularly need the monthly personnel costs in logistics by the end of next week. Plus, we should think about doing a new future manpower plan.

ILLIESCU

I have to check... I don't know why you don't have that already. I will take care of it personally.

INES

Thank you so much.

ILLIESCU

(to Toni)

Anything more you want to know or see?

INES

Maybe Mr. Erdmann could get a personal impression of the production...

INT. - ILLIESCU'S CAR - VILLAGE STREET NEAR OILFIELD - DAY

Toni sits next to Illiescu in his spacious company SUV. The car drives through a village, turns onto an unpaved road and slowly struggles up the hill. The landscape becomes more barren. There are houses, a graveyard and an old orthodox church; Behind them, oil pumps appear. The oilfield extends right to the edge of the village.

INT. - ILLIESCU'S CAR - ROAD TO OILFIELD BOREHOLE - DAY

The car drives slowly across the rough terrain. Goats walk around between the oil pumps. Toni looks out of the window.

TONI

Same like in Russia.

Outside, a chaotic array of oil pumps stretches as far as the eye can see. The drilling seems like an infestation of the otherwise beautiful, hilly landscape. Illiescu makes a detour to take them past a new oil pump.

ILLIESCU

This is one of our newest pumps.

Toni nods. Illiescu pulls up in front of a small hut. Filthy dogs lie in the shade. Two sunburned SECURITY GUARDS come outside. Illiescu rolls down his window and shakes hands with them.

ILLESICU

(in Romanian)

Alo, alo! Avem nevoie de casti. Avem ceva musafiri de la Bucuresti. (Hello. We need hard hats. We have guests from Bucharest.)

Hard hats are passed into the car and Illiescu drives onwards towards a borehole.

ILLIESCU

This is a part of our maintenance crew. We are closing this drilling site...

EXT. - OILFIELD - BOREHOLE - DAY

A GROUP OF WORKERS is in the middle of repairing some part of a pump. Ines, Illiescu and Toni get out of the car. A couple of the workers approach them, curious about the visit. They seem to be glad of the change. Illiescu introduces Toni to a WORKER who is clearly in charge of the operation. Again, the word "Bucharest" is mentioned. Toni confidently shakes the man's hand and straightens his hard hat.

ILLIESCU

It's the last of the drill holes that we will close...
We use an artificial lift system and hope to finish
it by the end of the week.

Illiescu seems to be seizing the opportunity to demonstrate the quality of their maintenance work to Ines. Toni looks around and walks on towards the borehole. For a moment, he jokingly inspects an old pipe that's lying around, then he goes back to trying to make a professional impression. Illiescu has followed him to see what he's so interested in. A WORKER is busy repairing something with his bare hands. His lower arms are completely covered in oil. Toni shakes his head and points at the worker.

TONI

But this is not good.

Illiescu notices this right away, and angrily reprimands the worker.

ILLIESCU

(in Romanian)

Unde-ti sunt manusile de protectie?! Asta nu e
reparatie auto, ce faci tu aci. (Where are your
protective gloves? You're not repairing your car.)

WORKER

Nu pot lucra altfel. (I can't repair it any other
way.)

ILLIESCU

Atunci sa faca altul, care poate. (Then let
someone else do it who can.)

The worker defends himself. Toni can't understand the exchange.

TONI

(to Illiescu)

Please don't fire him.

ILLIESCU

I will, I will.

TONI
No, I said don't fire him.

ILLIESCU
But I will.
(to the worker, in Romanian)
Îți risti locu' de munca. M-ai înțeles? (You are
risking your job. Do you understand me?)

Toni turns to Ines.

TONI
(quietly)
Please, can you just tell him not to fire that man
or something?

INES
That's up to him. The more he fires, the fewer I
have to fire.
(BEAT)
Come on, that was pretty funny.

They look at each other.

TONI
(to Illiescu)
Please, it was just a joke.

ILLESICU
But you are right. He knows our security
standards.

Illiescu approaches the FOREMAN and talks to him in the background.

ILLIESCU
(in Romanian)
E raspunderea ta. (It's your responsibility.)

FOREMAN
(in Romanian)
Numai acum nu si le-a pus. Totdeauna își pune
manusi. Am eu grija... (It's just for this job. He
always wears gloves. I will take care of it...)

Ines watches Toni as he walks towards the car.

EXT. - OILFIELD - GARDEN - OUTSIDE HOUSE - DAY

Toni stands still next to the car. He is visibly exhausted. Some distance away, there's a rickety garden fence. He glances at Ines and Illiescu who are standing at the borehole, some distance away. He walks through a broken gate, looking for a place to pee. This part of the property is overgrown. A sudden calm descends. Crickets chirp. Just as Toni's about to unfasten his pants, he hears a voice and turns around.

An ELDERLY MAN walks towards him and greets him in Romanian. Toni lifts his arms apologetically. A TEENAGE BOY appears. The man gestures at Toni to go ahead and pee. Winfried refuses.

ELDERLY MAN

(in Romanian)

Haideti cu mine... Sunteti de la Dacoil? (Come with me... Are you from Dacoil?)

Toni doesn't understand him. The man beckons for Toni to follow him. They walk a short distance further into a beautiful garden. Flowers bloom. A very modest house appears. Parts of it are covered in tarpaulin and renovation work appears to have ground to a halt. The man opens a door and beckons Toni inside. Toni follows him up a small set of wooden steps.

INT. - OILFIELD - HOUSE - VESTIBULE - DAY

They're standing in a small vestibule full of clothes and buckets in which food is stored. Toni is about to walk further into the house when the man points to a toilet. He hands Toni a roll of toilet paper, and Toni realizes what's on offer. On the lid of the toilet is a picture of a tiger. Toni points at it and makes a hissing noise, as if the tiger's biting him. The man laughs. Toni nods gratefully and the man closes the door behind him. Exhausted, Toni sits down on the toilet lid in the semi-darkness. It has a seat, but it's really just a pit latrine.

EXT. - OILFIELD - OUTSIDE HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

Toni walks back through the garden to the fence, where the man now stands with the boy, Illiescu and Ines.

ELDERLY MAN

(in Romanian)

Germania? (Germany?)

ILLIESCU

(in Romanian)

Da, au venit pentru o modernizare. (Yes, they're going to modernize.)

(in English, to Ines and Toni)
I said you are going to modernize everything.

The man nods respectfully at Ines and Toni. Toni pulls out his wallet and holds a twenty-euro bill towards the man.

WINFRIED
Only euros...

The man refuses: He doesn't want to take the money. Winfried offers it to the teenager, who quickly puts the bill away.

TEENAGE BOY
Thank you.

ELDERLY MAN
(in Romanian)
Adu-i niste mere... (Get him a few apples...)

The boy disappears. Illiescu turns to leave, but the man starts talking to him. He also addresses Toni, even though he can't understand.

ELDERLY MAN (CONT'D)
(in Romanian)
Ar trebui sa platiti mai bine... Stiu cât îi dais lei Popescu. (You should pay much more... I know what you pay Popescu.)

ILLIESCU
(in Romanian)
Pai, pe terenul lui avem o sonda. Zi mersi ca-ti dam cât îti dam. (We have a drilling site on his land. Be happy that we pay as much as we do.)

Illiescu abruptly tries to end the discussion and again turns to leave. The boy returns with a bag full of apples and gives them to Winfried. One apple falls to the ground and the man puts it in Winfried's jacket pocket. Winfried laughs gratefully and gives the man a quick, friendly pat on the shoulder.

TONI
Don't lose humor.

The man looks questioningly at Illiescu.

TONI (CONT'D)
Please translate.

ILLIESCU

Nu va pierdeti umorul... (Don't lose your sense of humor.)

(in English)

I translated.

When it's repeated, the sentence suddenly just sounds empty. Ines is irritated by her father's philanthropy. The old man laughs, briefly revealing his few remaining teeth. They walk back to the car.

ILLIESCU (CONT'D)

We give him some money every month but he still complains. He wants a pump on his land. He doesn't understand that we don't need his ground. This area is mostly empty.

Illiescu shrugs, not without regret.

INT. - INES' CAR - RURAL AREA - ROAD TO FREEWAY - DAY

Toni and Ines sit in the back seat of her car. They drive through villages that have died out.

INES

Don't lose your sense of humor. I couldn't believe you told them not to lose their sense of humor. That's really cruel.

TONI

(quietly)

It wasn't about that. It was a nice encounter.

INES

He could really have used your teeth.

Ines opens the center console and takes out a beer. The car turns back onto the freeway to Bucharest and accelerates.

INES (CONT'D)

How can we modernize that whole place if you pee your pants when only one of them is fired?
(BEAT)

With every step you take, I can tell you how direct your economic connection is to these people. Your pseudo-green attitude won't help you there at all.

Ines takes a gulp of beer. Toni looks silently out of the window.

TONI
(quietly)
Take a short break, please.

He closes his eyes and after a moment he starts breathing very calmly. Suddenly, Ines no longer seems sure about what she just said. She rips off the tape she was using to hide the handcuff under her sleeve and leans back. She observes her father: His hand, gently clenched in a fist, encloses the case for his reading glasses. It already has some age spots. Ines slumps down and can no longer keep her eyes open.

INT. - INES' CAR - ROAD TO FLAVIA'S HOUSE - DAY

The car drives through the outskirts of Bucharest. Apartment blocks alternate with art nouveau buildings. The car turns onto a dark side street. Bogdan looks outside, searching. He turns around to Toni, who's also awake and looking out of the window. He's once again wearing the toupee with the long hair.

BOGDAN
It's here.

TONI
OK. Thank you.

He gropes for his reading glasses and looks at a business card. Ines is sleeping, slouched on the seat next to him.

BOGDAN
Shall I drive her home?

TONI
Yes.

EXT. - STREET BY FLAVIA'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE - DAY

Toni gets out of the car. He hesitates for a moment, then approaches the apartment block and looks for the correct buzzer. Suddenly, Ines appears next to him.

INES
What is this place?

Toni presses the buzzer. Bogdan joins them and gives Toni the bag of apples, which he'd left behind. A voice emanates from the intercom.

VOICE
(in Romanian)
Da, alo? (Yes, hello?)

TONI
Toni... Ambassador Erdmann.

There's a buzz, and Toni pushes the door open. Ines looks at him tiredly. Toni disappears into a darkened hallway. Just before the door swings closed, Ines reaches for it and follows Toni inside.

INT. - FLAVIA'S APARTMENT BLOCK - ELEVATOR - DAY

Toni notices that Ines has followed him. She hesitates again by the elevator.

INES
Let's stop this now, Dad.

Nonetheless, she gets into the elevator. The doors close and Toni presses a button. They travel upwards. Exhausted, Toni and Ines look at themselves in a small mirror.

INT. - FLAVIA'S APARTMENT BLOCK - LANDING - APARTMENT - DAY

The door to an apartment stands ajar. Noises drift out from within. A CHILD peers around the door and shortly afterwards DORINA, a pretty, elderly woman with curly red hair and a dramatic outfit, appears.

DORINA
Buna... (Hello...)

TONI
Hello... Erdmann... Ms. Schnuck, my secretary.

The woman beckons them inside. She gestures at a coat rack, but Toni and Ines have nothing to hang up. Toni holds the bag of apples like a gift.

DORINA
Flavia!

Dorina disappears along a long corridor. Toni and Ines stay behind. The sound of a family gathering reaches them.

INES
Please, let's go...

Flavia, the woman whose plate Toni held at the party, appears at the end of the corridor and walks towards them. Toni gives Ines the bag of apples to hold.

FLAVIA

Oh, hello. You really came...

She's genuinely surprised by the visitors.

TONI

Spontaneous decision... Only if we don't make problems?

FLAVIA

No... Sorry for my sister.

TONI

Ms. Schnuck... You already know her. Some apples from the embassy's garden.

Toni gestures at Ines, who has no choice but to offer the apples to Flavia.

FLAVIA

Thank you.

Flavia looks at Ines and Toni, trying to work out what's going on with them.

FLAVIA (CONT'D)

Please come in...

TONI

(mixing German and English)

I dreamed... I had diese Vision von einem Ei. How I would paint my egg. My Easter egg.

He turns to Ines.

TONI (CONT'D)

(to Ines)

Please translate.

INES

He had this vision of how he would paint an Easter egg.

FLAVIA

Oh, I see. Please come in.

Ines requires extra persuasion.

INT - FLAVIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Flavia leads the strange guests into a packed living room. Numerous family members are lounging with the children on a corner sofa, eating and watching TV. It's not clear whether it's a family party or the preparations for such a party. Flavia quickly beckons Ana over. She's the young woman who was with her at the headhunting company's party.

FLAVIA

(to Ana)

You remember Mr. Erdmann from the party.

ANA

Yes, hello...

Ana nods in surprise and looks at Toni a little warily. Suddenly, Winfried feels uncomfortable. Ines smiles politely at Ana and again resists the urge to leave.

FLAVIA

Do you want a coffee or a tea?

TONI

Oh yes, that would be great.

INES

Just a water.

FLAVIA

We didn't paint Bukowina eggs. But we can show you some...

TONI

OK.

Flavia beckons to her sister, Dorina, the woman who opened the apartment door for Ines and Toni.

FLAVIA

(in Romanian)

Dorina, dânsul este un amic care lucrează la Ambasada Germaniei, iar doamna Schnuck este secretara dânsului... Vor si ei sa învete tehnica încondeierii. Le arati tu, te rog? (Dorina, this is Mr. Erdmann. We met at Ana's company's party. He works in the German embassy and wants to know a bit about the Bukowina technique.)

DORINA

OK...

FLAVIA

(to Toni)

My sister will explain to you.

Flavia guides them to a table. On it lie some eggs which have been painted by children.

TONI

Wow, this is very beautiful.

ANA

No, no, we just did it with the children.

Flavia quickly fetches a box from a shelf and takes out a couple of eggs. Ana switches on a strange little oven.

ANA (CONT'D)

The wax should be hot soon.

Flavia comes over with the box. Dorina helps her; They take out a couple of very traditional-looking eggs. No-one really seems to know why the strange guests are specifically interested in the eggs, but Dorina explains in Romanian anyway, before Ana translates into English.

ANA (CONT'D)

(in English)

In the first step, you paint a pattern with wax on the egg. After that the egg will be put in the color bath. So under the wax it stays white.

TONI

Translation please, Ms. Schnuck.

INES

(in German)

The first step is to paint the egg with a wax pattern. Then it's dipped into a dye bath and colored. The bit under the wax remains white.

Flavia comes back carrying two aprons.

TONI

Shall I help in the kitchen?

FLAVIA

No, because of the colors. I thought you want to try...

TONI

(mixing German and English)

Yes, gerne...

Toni lets them tie the apron around him. Ines politely declines.

FLAVIA

Please... sit down.

Flavia points to two chairs. Amongst the children's eggs, Dorina and Ana find the one remaining white egg.

ANA

There is only one left.

Dorina checks the oven, which is now hot. Ines hides her impatience: There's no way she can escape from the situation without seeming impolite.

FLAVIA

I will bring the coffee.

Toni sits down. Dorina demonstrates painting something onto the egg using a pointed tool. Dorina continues in Romanian, handing the tool to Toni while Ana translates.

ANA

With this tool you put the wax on the egg. It's complicated.

TONI

Ms. Schnuck...

Ines translates unwillingly.

INES

(in German)

Now you use it to paint something on the egg.

Toni paints a crooked, dripping line of wax onto the egg. Flavia arrives with two cups of coffee and pieces of cake. Toni hands the egg to Ines along with the tool.

TONI

It's your turn now.

Ines reluctantly sits down.

TONI
(in German)
And take a few notes, please.

He takes the cake and follows Flavia into the living room.

TONI (CONT'D)
And Orthodox Easter is when?

FLAVIA
On Friday... But we come together before. On
Easter everybody is at their own home.

TONI
Thank you that we can be here... The cake is
good.

Toni looks at Ines, who's being shown how to dip the egg in the dye bath. She sits between the two women, exhausted and deep in thought, and lets the Romanian explanations wash over her.

TONI (CONT'D)
(to Flavia)
We just came from the countryside. We visited
an oilfield.

FLAVIA
Oh, really?

Ines looks at her father and Flavia. The latter is now reprimanding a YOUNG BOY for irksomely hitting the keys of a keyboard. All of a sudden, Ines stands up.

INES
(to Ana)
I am sorry. I really have to leave now. It was very
interesting.

She walks over to Toni and Flavia.

INES (CONT'D)
(in German)
I'm going now.
(to Flavia)
I have to go... I am so sorry.

TONI
Can we play a song for you, just to say thank
you? We always do that.

FLAVIA

OK, why not?

TONI

(in German)

For once, let's finish something politely.

He sits down at the keyboard and starts playing. He repeats an intro phrase...

TONI (CONT'D)

Mes dames et messieurs, mon secretary and I
want to play a song for you. Over twenty years
ago she started to force me to play this song...
over and over...

He looks at Ines. She shakes her head.

TONI (CONT'D)

Please give an applause... to the fantastic
Whitney Schnuck.

A few people clap. Toni repeats the intro again and again, as if he's waiting for her. We recognize it as the start of Whitney Houston's "The Greatest Love of All". The guests look expectantly at Ines. The pressure builds. Ines looks at Flavia, who gives her a friendly smile. She finds the courage to take a few steps forward. Once again, Toni starts playing "The Greatest Love of All." She starts to sing.

INES

*I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside*

Ines deliberately starts warbling in a slightly exaggerated way.

INES (CONT'D)

*Give them a sense of pride to make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used
to be*

The guests, however, remain serious, and the song becomes too complicated for Ines' performance to stay ironic. She has to focus on staying in tune and remembering the lyrics. She's too ambitious to let herself sing badly. She's seized by her anger towards Toni, and she wants to show him she can do this.

INES (CONT'D)

*Everybody's searching for a hero
People need someone to look up to
I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs*

*A lonely place to be
And so I learned to depend on me*

Ines glances at her father. He's trying to accompany her well. Ines starts to sing louder.

INES (CONT'D)

*I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's
shadow
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I lived as I believed
No matter what they take from me They can't take
away my dignity
Because the greatest love of all
Is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all
Inside of me*

A couple of family members start to shout encouragement. They seem to think it's good that something unplanned is happening.

INES (CONT'D)

*The greatest love of all
Is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all*

She wants to bring the song to a close, but Toni keeps playing. She joins in again and sings even more intensively than before.

INES (CONT'D)

*I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride to make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used
to be*

The lyrics repeat at a more difficult pitch and the tempo picks up.

INES (CONT'D)

*I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's
shadow
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I lived as I believed
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity
Because the greatest love of all*

*Is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all
Inside of me*

She struggles with the difficult song, but rage carries her through. The guests have now fallen silent.

INES (CONT'D)

*The greatest love of all
Is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
Is the greatest love of all
And if by chance that special place
That you have been dreaming of Leads you to a
lonely place
Find your strength in love*

The song is over. Ines flees the room. The family of strangers claps. Toni gets up and follows her.

INT. - FLAVIA'S APARTMENT BLOCK - STAIRWELL - LANDING - DAY

Ines has already descended the stairs. For a moment, Toni thinks about going after her, but misses his chance. Exhausted, he sits down on the stairs. He takes out the false teeth. He's surrounded by several houseplants. The apartment has grown out into the hallway. He reaches into his grocery bag and pulls out his pillbox. He hasn't taken any pills for days. He puts the box away again. A mask on the wall catches his eye. It's a large, black, furry head with a colorful bauble. Flavia accompanies two FRIENDS to her door and sees Toni sitting alone in the hallway.

FLAVIA

Everything OK? You can play very well.

TONI

What is this?

FLAVIA

A mask from Bulgaria. Do you want to stay for dinner?

He looks at his watch.

TONI

(mixing German and English)

Oh yes, why not. The embassy is sowieso closed now.

He shrugs at his bad joke. Flavia sits down next to him. They sit calmly next to each other.

TONI (CONT'D)

You know I am not the German ambassador.

FLAVIA

Yes... I know the German ambassador.

Toni can't help but laugh.

TONI

I'm so sorry. All this was fun. I am on holidays. Visiting Ms. Schnuck... She is my daughter. I came to see how it is here, how she lives, but it was very complicated.

FLAVIA

I know... family.

Flavia nods her head towards the apartment. They look at each other.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT BLOCK - STAIRWELL - APARTMENT - DAY

Ines arrives at her apartment door. Three PARTY SERVICE EMPLOYEES have carried everything to the door. Ines lets them in and stands disorientated in her apartment. She watches as two men and a young woman from the party service company put together a round dinner table, hang up floral decorations and methodically load things into her refrigerator. Ines makes an effort to decide where everything should go.

PARTY SERVICE WOMAN

Please be careful with the flammable liquid, and we marked the wasabi sauce. It's super spicy.

INES

Thank you so much. It looks incredibly good.

PARTY SERVICE WOMAN

We will bring the rest tomorrow. And if you have any questions, this is our emergency hotline. Thank you for choosing Dariu's Catering.

The woman hands Ines a card.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ines lies motionless in her bed. Her cellphone beeps: She seems to be receiving birthday greetings. She listens to a voice message, and we hear faintly as her mother and Gerhard sing "Happy Birthday" and send her their best wishes. She hangs up before the message is finished.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ines walks from her bedroom into the kitchen. She's blow-dried her hair and pinned it up, and she's wearing a chic, tight-fitting dress. Its zipper isn't quite closed. She stands perplexed in front of the buffet, then adjusts a couple of items. She gropes for the label that's still hanging from her dress and rips it off. She takes out a fork, threads its prongs into the zipper on the back of her dress, and pulls it up. She takes a bowl of fruit from the refrigerator and walks into the living room. Everything's in place for a casual buffet party. The food looks very expensive. She adjusts a few things and then walks back into the hallway. She glances into the mirror in the guest bathroom. She fixes her hair. The overly-tight dress is irritating her.

INT. - APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LIVING ROOM - BEDROOM - DAY

Ines takes a pair of shoes from the closet in the hall and puts them on. She has to hitch up her tight dress before she can reach the shoes. Their straps are difficult to fasten. She walks back into the bedroom and looks at some other clothes that are laid out on the bed. She tries to take off the dress, but fails. She can no longer reach the zipper. She pulls the dress upwards, but that only works incrementally. The doorbell rings. Ines struggles to take off the dress. She pulls it aggressively upwards and gradually fights her way out - it envelops her like a straitjacket. The doorbell rings again. She walks into the hallway, hesitates briefly then goes ahead and opens the door. She's naked apart from a pair of flesh-colored underpants. Steph stands outside and looks at her with bemusement. Ines straightens up, surprised at her own courage.

STEPH

Am I too early?

INES

No, no, come in.

Steph gives Ines a gift, which she distractedly takes.

INES (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Steph walks into the living room. She's surprised by Ines' nakedness, but decides to ignore it. Instead, she comments on the buffet.

STEPH

Wow, this is really nice.

INES

Yes, I was very happy with Dariu's. They were really nice. I mean, it's a super small event.

STEPH

Yes, he is the best.

INES

(in German)

Do you want...

(switching to English)

Ah, do you want to drink? What do you want to drink? Crémant or a Sancerre?

STEPH

Sancerre...

Ines walks tensely to the refrigerator, fetches the Sancerre wine and pours Steph a glass.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Who is coming?

INES

Basically my team from the office.

STEPH

Great. New people.

Steph is now slowly starting to feel uncomfortable about the nudity. Ines tries to open the gift, but that doesn't work. She puts it down again. Steph picks up the gift and tries to open it herself. The doorbell rings.

STEPH (CONT'D)

I am also a last minute girl. Shall I help you choose something? I bet your closet is bursting.

INES

No, thank you...

She looks out of the window. She waits a little too long before she turns around. The doorbell rings again.

STEPH

OK, I open the door, and you get dressed.

INES

No, it's OK.

Ines takes off her underpants and walks to the door. Realizing that she's really going to open it, Steph quickly retreats into the living room. Gerald stands outside. It takes a moment for him to realize, with shock, that Ines is naked. He shrinks back. He's holding a bottle of champagne.

INES (CONT'D)

Nothing's wrong, Gerald. I just have nothing on.

GERALD

OK.

INES

It's a... a naked party.

Ines stands up straight. She's struggling to stick by her assertion. Gerald laughs nervously and tries to catch a glimpse into the apartment.

GERALD

Interesting, OK.

INES

It's part of the team building. Stupid idea, but I couldn't think of anything better off the top of my head.

GERALD

(uncertainly)

I know that kind of thing from college. Isn't it a bit childish?

INES

You don't have to join in. Ring the bell if you change your mind.

Ines reaches into the apartment and hands Gerald a paper bag for his clothes. Then she closes the door and turns to Steph, who's appeared behind her in the hallway. Ines walks back into the living room and gives Steph a questioning look. She's trying to hide the fact that she's not totally convinced, but instead she sticks with her assertion.

INES (CONT'D)

What are we going to do with you now?

STEPH

I'm definitely not undressing here.

INES

I am sorry, but then you have to go.

STEPH

You are kidding?

Ines shakes her head. Steph pointedly puts down her glass and slowly walks to the door. She appears to be re-considering. Ines follows her, still naked. It almost seems like she's throwing Steph out. Steph opens the door and, at that moment, Tim steps out of the elevator. Steph takes the stairs and mutters:

STEPH (CONT'D)

Have fun, you two.

Tim is surprised at first to see Ines naked. He glances bemusedly in Steph's direction.

TIM

Hey, am I early?

INES

No, it's a naked party.

TIM

OK.

INES

Gerald had the idea. He knows this kind of thing from college. To strengthen the team spirit...

TIM

Haha.

INES

I'm being serious.

TIM

And who's already here?

INES

No-one.

TIM

Yeah, I know for sure they're all in there, and I'll be the only one who walks in naked. Call me when the joke's over.

They look at each other a little too long, then Tim leaves and Ines closes the door. She walks into the bedroom, glances at her clothes once more and flops onto the

bed. She lies there quietly for what seems like forever. After a while, the doorbell rings. Ines can't bring herself to open it. Her cellphone rings. She looks at the caller ID and sees that it's Anca, but she doesn't answer. Someone knocks at the door, this time with more urgency. Ines looks through the spyhole and then hurriedly opens the door.

INT. - INES' APARTMENT - DAY

Anca, Ines' assistant, stands naked outside the door, clutching her clothes to her body and smiling shyly.

INES

Hello...

She quickly slips into the apartment.

ANCA

Happy birthday.

She shakes Ines' hand.

ANCA (CONT'D)

(quietly)

But it's not about sex?

Ines shakes her head and, for a moment, she's truly overwhelmed by her naked guest. Anca is skinny and has a girlish figure.

INES

No, no.

ANCA

OK. So it's just as a challenge...

Ines nods quickly and it dawns on her that she's still wearing a bathrobe. She takes it off. She beckons Anca into the living room.

ANCA (CONT'D)

Am I the first?

INES

Yes.

Anca relaxes a little, but finds it strange that there's no-one else there. She pulls Ines' blouse and a gift from her bag.

ANCA

(in German)

Unfortunately, it didn't completely wash out.

INES

Oh, thanks. That's no problem at all.

ANCA

Here's your present.

Ines unwraps the present and pulls out a cute little pocket calculator.

ANCA (CONT'D)

Because you always ask for mine.

INES

Thank you.

For a moment, Ines is moved by the gift.

ANCA

(in English)

Is everything OK?

INES

Yes.

ANCA

At the office you are always so stiff, and now you come up with this.

Even though Anca's playing along, she clearly finds the whole thing strange. She looks around the apartment.

ANCA (CONT'D)

You like it here?

INES

Yes.

ANCA

That's good.

INES

Why?

ANCA

Because I searched so long...

INES

Oh, I didn't know.

The doorbell rings. Anca straightens up nervously. Ines looks at her. Now she really has to hold a naked party. She walks to the door.

ANCA

Where is the bathroom?

Ines points to the guest bathroom in the hallway. Anca disappears. Ines hesitates for a moment at the door. The bell rings again and she opens up. She gets the fright of her life. A dark, animal-like figure, a KUKERI, stands outside. His whole body is covered in long, dark fur, and his head is like a tall, shaggy tower. In one hand he holds a flowering shrub that's been ripped from the ground. It's difficult to say whether he looks creepy or friendly. Ines hides behind the door. The creature hesitates for a moment, then shuffles clumsily into the apartment. It's not until he's halfway inside that he realizes Ines is naked. He stops and hesitates. He gives her the plant (a bouquet of artificial flowers) and doesn't know whether to continue into the apartment. Ines isn't sure who's inside the costume. Anca cautiously exits the guest bathroom, expecting to see a colleague. She screams and stares at the Kukeri. The Kukeri notices her with surprise. He's now in the company of two naked women. He makes as if to leave. He seems to find the situation suspicious. He moves towards Anca, who quickly retreats to safety.

ANCA (CONT'D)

What is this? Who is under it?

INES

I don't know.

ANCA

(in German)

But not Gerald?

INES

I don't know. Honest.

Anca doesn't really believe Ines, because it could be another part of the team-building exercise.

INES (CONT'D)

(in German)

Are you Gerald?

The Kukeri shakes his head uncertainly - as if he, too, is wondering who he is. Ines is also uncertain. The Kukeri's dark fur creates a sinister impression. The costume is striking. Nothing about it suggests that there's a person inside. Anca tries to use her handbag to cover herself a little. The doorbell rings again. Anca hides behind a column. Ines has no choice but to walk to the door again and open it. Gerald stands outside wearing an earnest expression. He's clutching his clothes to his crotch. He's still wearing his socks and shoes.

GERALD

Had a beer first.

He looks questioningly at Ines.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Come in?

INES

Ah, yes.

Gerald takes baby steps into the living room. He greets Anca with a nod. For her, Gerald's nakedness is far more difficult to deal with than her own. Gerald is still hiding his genitals with his clothes. The Kukeri has retreated into a corner right behind Gerald and stands there, motionless. Gerald doesn't notice him. He looks at Ines, awaiting further instructions.

GERALD

(to Ines)

And now? Totally naked? Or what's this about?

Ines nods vaguely. As if carrying out a dare, Gerald puts his clothes to one side. For a moment he just stands there, naked. He still doesn't notice the Kukeri standing behind him. Suddenly, the Kukeri puts its paw on Gerald's shoulder from behind. Gerald screams and fends it off. The Kukeri briefly throttles him, then lets him go.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Hard-core! Hard-core!

He turns around and stares at the monster that attacked him. He gives the Kukeri a friendly pat on the back, as if there's some coach inside the costume. As far as he's concerned, the whole thing was clearly pre-planned. Anca laughs with her hand in front of her mouth.

GERALD (CONT'D)

That's awesome... How did you come up with this kind of nonsense?

He walks to the Kukeri and gropes at it. The Kukeri playfully grabs Gerald's neck for a moment.

GERALD (CONT'D)

He can't take a joke.

Gerald walks to Anca and holds up his open hand. She doesn't understand at first, but then gives him a high-five. He does the same thing with Ines.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Where did you get it?

ANCA

I think it's Bulgarian. Something against the evil spirits.

GERALD

Good for the team.

(in German)

What a load of nonsense. Awesome.

Gerald reaches uncertainly for his underpants and hurriedly pulls them back on. Anca also disappears with relief into the bathroom. Gerald looks at the buffet. The Kukeri sits down weakly for a moment on the edge of the sofa. His head is crooked, giving him a sad appearance. He straightens it with his paws.

GERALD (CONT'D)

OK, now I've earned a bite to eat. Wow, you've really gone to town.

The Kukeri cumbersomely stands up and staggers to the door.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Now he's leaving already...

Ines watches him. The door swings closed. Ines looks distractedly at the brunch. Anca exits the bathroom, fully dressed.

INES

Yeah, and... this is salmon with lemon remoulade. Just serve yourselves. Guys, I have to pay that guy quickly.

Ines grabs a bathrobe, walks out of the apartment into the darkened hallway and runs down the stairs. Her colleagues, CORNELIU and DARIU, are just arriving. Ines excuses herself and points them towards her apartment.

EXT. - STREET BY INES' APARTMENT - NEAR UNIRII SQUARE - DAY

Ines sees the Kukeri turn a corner and runs after him. She spots him again. Still wearing the full costume, he simply walks on. A couple of PASSERS-BY turn around to look at him. Others pay him no heed. The sun hangs low and bathes the street in warm light. Ines follows the Kukeri in her bathrobe, expecting him to take off his head.

EXT. - PARK - UNIRII SQUARE - EVENING

The Kukeri crosses a large town square. Huge, illuminated advertising hoardings appear: We're in the middle of the city. The Kukeri stops and stands by a kiosk. He

makes as if to remove the head, but then doesn't. Ines catches up with him. She continues to follow him without him seeing her. Exhausted, the Kukeri briefly sits down on a bench. Two TEENAGERS take a photo of him. A YOUNG GIRL approaches him and strokes his fur. He briefly puts a paw on her head. Then he stands up. The attention is too much for him. He walks away through a few bushes into the center of the park. Ines watches as he moves further away. She can't stand it anymore. Suddenly, she starts running.

INES

Dad!

The Kukeri turns around. Ines sinks into his wiry fur and appears to shrink. The Kukeri returns the embrace and Ines holds onto him as if she never wants to let go again. The Kukeri holds her just as tightly, his head resting heavily on her shoulder. After a while, he lets go of her. They look at each other for a moment. Suddenly, he holds out his arms. Ines screams in shock. The Kukeri chases her for a few steps then doubles back on himself. For a moment, he appears wild and energetic; His fur wafts in the breeze. Then he tiredly raises his hand. Ines turns and walks back towards her apartment. The Kukeri watches her. Her bathrobe lifts in the wind and briefly flashes her bare behind before she disappears. As soon as she's gone, the Kukeri staggers behind a bush. He grabs at his head, but can't pull it off. He begins to lurch and slowly falls to his knees. Again, he grabs at his head, but then he lies down and breathes heavily. He really doesn't seem able to remove the head. For a long while, he stays lying there. Then, seemingly using up his last reserves of strength, he sits up.

EXT. - STREETS AROUND UNIRII SQUARE - EVENING

The Kukeri crosses a large intersection. For the first time, we really see something of the city. There are lots of people around, all going their own way. The Kukeri looks like a lonely alien.

EXT. - STREET BY WINFRIED'S HOTEL - NIGHT

The Kukeri turns onto a side street and disappears between a currency exchange and an open-fronted florist's into a small, low-budget hotel called "Ambassador."

INT. - WINFRIED'S HOTEL - RECEPTION - NIGHT

The Kukeri enters the hotel's reception area. A young CONCIERGE is absent-mindedly watching a soccer match. The Kukeri gestures at his head and mumbles something incomprehensible. The concierge understands what he means, leans over the reception desk and, with a great deal of strength, pulls off the Kukeri's head. Winfried is pale. His sweat-drenched hair sticks to his scalp. The man puts the head

down on the desk and puts Winfried's room key next to it. Winfried breathes heavily.

EXT. - FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Winfried stands in front of an old building. Through the entrance to a courtyard, a nondescript German street is visible. It's a clear, somewhat autumnal day in late summer. Winfried is wearing a dark suit and his beard has grown longer. WALTER, a man around the same age as Winfried, waits with his WIFE, who briefly straightens his necktie. IRMA, a woman also around Winfried's age, is talking in the background to two FUNERAL PARLOR EMPLOYEES.

UNDERTAKER

Just let us know when the private part of the ceremony is over.

IRMA

Could we use your parking lot afterwards to load up?

UNDERTAKER

Of course.

IRMA

Thanks. Roberto, could you take my bag for a minute?

She gives her handbag to ROBERTO, a man of Mediterranean appearance, and walks towards a dolled-up WOMAN who's approaching her.

IRMA (CONT'D)

Winfried, this is the singer.

Winfried nods at the singer and takes a few steps in the other direction. At the entrance, we see a taxi pull up. Winfried watches as Ines and Renate get out. They open the trunk and take out a floral arrangement. Winfried walks towards them. Ines approaches her father. They embrace as closely as the flowers allow.

WINFRIED

(mumbling)

A serious occasion...

INES

Yes.

WINFRIED

I'm glad you're here.

Winfried takes the flowers from her.

INES
How are you?

WINFRIED
Okay.

Winfried and Ines look at each other for a moment. It's clearly the first time they've seen each other again. Renate joins them and briefly embraces Winfried.

RENATE
My sincere condolences.

Renate briefly shakes hands with Walter and his wife. Ines does the same.

WINFRIED
The coffin is still open.

INES
Oh.

RENATE
I'll stay here.

Ines follows her father, surprised.

INT. - FUNERAL PARLOR/CHAPEL - DAY

A chapel is laid out with chairs. It's modern and quite small. Referring to a booklet, Irma is explaining the order of service to the singer. Winfried puts Ines' flowers down. He shakes hands with the singer and gestures at her and Irma to leave them alone for a moment. Ines walks to the coffin in which her grandmother lies. Irma is now decorating something at the other end of the room - she's trying not to bother them, but she is. For a moment, Winfried stays in the background, then he sits down next to Ines and looks at his mother. She looks much smaller and strangely wax-like.

INES
I'm sorry I didn't see her again.

WINFRIED
I think she understood that, somehow.

They sit there in silence.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)
You can touch her if you like.

Ines leans forward and touches Annegret's wrinkled hand. Winfried looks back at Irma, who's giving them a nagging look.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

We have to go. The line is long - they all still want money from her.

He stands up and briefly touches his mother's cheek. Irma turns to the funeral parlor employees.

IRMA

You can close the coffin now.

The employees walk to the coffin lid to close it.

INT. - FUNERAL PARLOR / CHAPEL - DAY

Ines sits in the chapel in the front row, next to her mother. Next to them are Winfried's sister Irma and a man, Walter, who appears to be Winfried's brother. A young, enthusiastic PASTOR brings his speech to a close. Ines glances furtively at her father. The SINGER and her ACCOMPANIST, step forward. They begin to perform an adapted, highly theatrical version of "Time to Say Goodbye" by Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli. Next to Winfried, Irma starts to sob. Winfried listens motionless. It's hard to say what he feels.

INT. - ANNEGRET'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/TERRACE - DAY

Ines walks through her grandmother's house. She peers into the kitchen in which some of her relatives are washing up the cake plates.

INES

Can I help you with anything?

TABEA

It's almost done, thanks.

Ines looks out through the terrace window. Outside, Winfried is talking with Walter and BENJAMIN. The men are holding bottles of beer. A couple of GRANDCHILDREN are doing gymnastics on a swing seat and being reprimanded by their MOTHER. Irma stands in front of an open sideboard.

IRMA

(to Ines)

If there's anything you're attached to, let us know. Benjamin's making a list.

INES

Yes, I'll think about it.

Ines walks outside and joins Winfried and Walter.

WALTER

And where are you these days? Budapest.

She ignores his mistake.

INES

Bucharest, but I just finished there. Now I'm going to Singapore for two years.

She looks at Winfried. It's news to him.

WALTER

They have the biggest whiskey bar in the world there. What are these companies called?

INES

You've probably heard of the new one, McKinsey. I used to be with Morrisons.

Irma appears at the terrace door.

IRMA

Winfried, can you come here?

Winfried walks to the door and glances into the living room.

WINFRIED (O.S.)

Just leave that there for now.

Ines looks at him and their eyes meet. Winfried gestures with his head for her to follow him, then disappears.

INT. - ANNEGRET'S HOUSE - CELLAR - GARDEN - DAY

Ines follows Winfried without understanding what he's looking for here. He switches on a light and we see a scene of chaos left undisturbed for several years - a dust-covered workbench, a collection of antlers, old guns, furniture and carpets. Winfried picks something up and puts it down again. He stands there, at a loss. He sits down for a moment.

WINFRIED

That song. Irma's crazy... They were supposed to play something by Harry Belafonte. She liked him, even though it was negro music to her...

He stands up and starts to rummage through the chaos and open up cupboards. He takes out old coats and puts them away again. From under the hood of a hair dryer, he pulls out a steel helmet. Ines watches him. He opens a door that leads to the garden.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

All the things she kept. No idea whose this is. All this stuff is genuine.

He gestures at an open cupboard.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Full of hats.

He takes out a suitcase which really is full of all kinds of hats. Ines looks at them. Most are unused; Some even still have the price tag. Ines takes out a summer hat with fruit ornaments. She looks at Winfried as if she's waiting for something from him. It's the first time they've been alone together since Bucharest. Winfried hesitates for a moment, then plucks up the courage to say something.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

About your question there, in Bucharest, about life. The problem is, it's so often about getting things done. And then you still have to do this, or that. And, in the meantime, life just passes by. But how are we supposed to hang on to moments? Now I sometimes sit there and remember how you learned to ride your bike or how I once found you at a bus stop. But you only realize that afterwards. In the moment itself, it's not possible.

He looks at her, unsure what she thinks about what he's said. They're silent for a moment, then Ines reaches out and checks the breast pocket of Winfried's shirt. She pulls out the false teeth and puts them into her mouth. Winfried looks at her, fascinated. Ines puts on the hat with the fruit. They look at each other.

WINFRIED (CONT'D)

Wait, I'll get my camera.

He walks out of the door. Ines follows him. She watches as he disappears around the corner of the house. Just before he's gone, he turns around once more. Ines waits at the wall, motionless. Her expression turns serious. She waits. It's taking too long. He's not coming back.

FADE OUT.