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We didn't get a call sheet from Yotam—surely to hide that we're being overworked, cuz apparently today is shoot day 2, even tho it was our 3rd day shooting.

I was laying on the bed, about to deal with messages from Michael back in Berlin, when Yotam yells my name from the bottom of the grand wooden staircase, then Oskur's—apparently the producers just left a 6 pack of beer, but hurry cuz it'll be gone soon—While getting up Oskur grumbles in his thick Spanish accent that even our breaks, they are rushed. I pull my work jeans back on, stiff with dirt and sweat, and a burst green edding 3000 marker, they're very comfortable, I felt naked without them. Yotam continues—actually, James and Bruce and I have wine, so if the 3 art department people are there, plus you 2 light guys, then there's 1 beer left over ... so no rush.

Now Michael *and* Johannes are texting me—Oskur is also on his phone. My exhaustion gives way to the effects of beer, and I think out loud that I'm uncomfortable that we're sitting drinking while Henning and Izzy and what's-his-name—the art department guys—are preping for tomorrow's shoot. Why can't they relax while I'm relaxing, so that I can relax?—now Oskur's putting his phone away—I'm just a stereotypical self-important gaffer, complaining about anything I possibly can. Damn Henning stealing all our gaffer tape! I couldn't find my carpet knife earlier, and I shouted at Yotam about him being bad at his production-whatever job, blaming him for our 14-hour work day yesterday with 2 heavy light set ups, and today I shouted at him for the same thing ... and for the fact that we were fed leftovers for dinner. I'm an asshole. Poor Oskur, being my lighting technician / assistant / best boy / whatever, he's just politely listening.

Kita's bold American voice precedes her entrance, with some very acquainted-sounding banter with Henning—they know each other so well already?—I'm suddenly nervous—she radiates fame, she's so professional, she must know I'm overcompensating for being incredibly inexperienced at my job, she can see right thru me—she takes the chair beside me at the little wood stove in the corner of the kitchen. Ugh, I'm so cold! Aren't you cold? she asks. Even tho I've been looking her straight in the eye a lot the last 3 days—in order to see if she has an eye light, checking between James' monitor and the real-her across the room, following James' orders and watching her as I dim up and down the 2k, or to see if the Dedo hair light needs to be flagged off—this is our first real conversation. But this nonverbal dialog is familiar. Often while lighting a lead actress, I sense she senses that I'm looking at her, cuz I am, all day, for many days. I assume she likes it, and I usually misconstrue that as affection. Really tho, I only know Kita's character so far, a kind of sheepish girl, compelled to break the rules of her severely feminist commune—which somehow forces her to wear school-girls' clothes.

We talk about being Americans in Germany, she asks where in New York do you live? Oh, I don't anymore, I say I'm in Berlin now. She tells me she's with an agency in Berlin, she's always trying to get to Europe for jobs, acting ... and modeling. And Lina is a friend, and Til too, so she visits them—are those maybe other actors on set?—I tell her I write and direct films, when I'm not doing lighting gigs like this, and are you doing a lot of acting? I feel stupid for not knowing of her; for not looking her up.

She's too cold, so she leaves. Johannes texts me asking if I'll be back from the shoot a day earlier than I told Michael, so we can finally have a night together, a full night together—a month-old idea that now feels suffocating—and then Michael has also been texting, 'harmlessly' checking in, I don't think I told him a date when I'd be back. Luckily my phone dies.

I sleep in Kita's characters' bed (while Kita sleeps in a proper hotel across the road, the only other building around here) which has been staged under a huge print of Emma Goldman's Chicago Police Dept. mug shots. Henning must have come into the room during the day to hang it—did he go thru my stuff?—it stinks of toxic fumes as the print is off gassing, and the coal heater doesn't help. My bed is double wide, and so is Oskur's opposite mine, so we use half of each as side tables: all our snacks brought from home, and our dirty laundry, which H probably walked all over.

The next day I'm looking for that carpet knife, it's a grey one I borrowed (or stole rather) from work, that has the initials, "SW" etched into it. I don't know whose initials those are. I joke to Oskur that Henning is the culprit, not realizing he's in earshot, but maybe I knew he was. I was pretty much joking, but I heard it come out of my mouth a bit more salty than I would have said to H's face.

Having heard, H asks—What do I have? and without waiting for a reply he walks off. I follow him out to a bench in front of the huge house, and try to ham up my joke more, saying that I was just joking cuz he steals everything from me, obviously, like my tape the other day, and now my knife. He doesn't really react, just lites a cigarette, which makes me think that he just isn't into me, and I'm digging myself into a hole, so I go back inside, back to cutting Neutral Density gel to the size of the window panes in the main dining hall—sunglasses, James calls them—in 3 different intensities: .3, .6 and 1.2, as a precaution, cuz James is always saying fancy photography terminology that I don't get, like I don't exactly know how the f-stop relates to the ND gels so here I am wasting ND gel, which is expensive, but an anticipated expense sort of, and I rationalize that the pieces are large enough that they can be repurposed for other windows next week, after I clean off the Fanta I'll get Oskur to paste them up with.

I don't know why Oskur set up the gel cutting table in the busiest walkway, but being by the back door is nice—the sun is warm, and I stare out at the glowing grass in the backyard. My eyes adjust to see H emerging from the kitchen. He stops in front of me. Do you think I'm stealing your stuff? he asks.

A group of the actresses walk past, with the soldier, laughing about blood—No, no, really it was a joke. I'm sorry, it came off the wrong way, I feel stupid. It's a knife that's not even mine, but I'm using another one now, it's just a good one, one that I actually stole from my day-job. No problem, it'll turn up. And anyway, I told you that you could use my things and told you that my tools are in the blue duffel bag behind the door in the costume room. Art department does keep taking our gaffer tape ... but it's all fine. It was just a joke—I think I've overreacted now. He says that making a joke about it doesn't just suddenly make it OK, and that he thinks we just have different attitudes about things. I think of this film as our project, and you think of it as your department lending stuff to my department.

I don't really follow his meaning, so I just apologise again, and Yotam interrupts us to ask if Sonja gave us call sheets? Do either of you need a call sheet for tomorrow? Yes and no ... no, yes I do thx.

H is staring at me. Well do you have a minute to talk about this actually? Cuz I have something else to say—I am, yes, of course, please, I'm doing nothing that important now, which was actually true, wasting ND gels can wait. H tells me that on the last films we've worked on together you've talked to me differently than you talk to ... the DoP or whatever, like you're very insecure with James and then over-the-top polite with me, and it just seems ... insincere, or Idontknow, sarcastic, like every time you thank me for something it seems like you're actually saying like oh thanks for finally helping me, like for finally doing anything at all, like I'm lazy or something.

Oh no—maybe cuz I’m American—this is really a recurring problem for me. People often think I’m sarcastic, when I’m being totally sincere—He looks down, in thought—Well that really changes things ... I was expecting something else would happen now. I ask if he thought I was a real asshole. He says he thought I really didn’t like him. No, no! I’m so embarrassed, blah blah we talk and placate and massage and make lots of eye contact that rebuilds our relationship—I extend my hand to shake on it, he frowns at me, so I go in for a hug, a very nice warm one.

In the afternoon, instead of sitting in the kitchen, I inhale my lunch on the smoking bench in front, hoping Henning will come out to smoke. Kita comes and sits next to me, under this huge old tree growing a bit too close to the building, surely that big overhanging branch is going to get cut off soon. She tells me that James told her that the paintings that cover the facade of the house are from when it was inhabited by an artist colony. The symbols and scenes are unified by the consistent inconsistency of painting styles of the former residents, some are done by children. I point at the writing over the main doorway, and ask if she knows what it means. She tells me she’d asked James that too, but he didn’t know. Guts-house? Goods-house?

Kita asks if you, like, ever take that hat off? I reply that I’ve not been waking up early enough to get in to have a shower in my bathroom, the bathroom upstairs, so my hair needs to stay hidden. She scoffs, your bathroom? No, that’s my bathroom! It’s where I am going to shower, and then the soldier sneaks in ... and I’m naked and he ... gives me a BJ. I tell her that I didn’t realize that scene was going to be so explicit. Kita continues—it’s complicated. Thinking of Henning, I look at her, trying to hit the right note of sincerity, oh? Complicated how?—Well, I’ve only recently started feeling comfortable talking about being trans. She’s been giving talks and stuff at Columbia, etcetera, talking about how she started transitioning really young, so she’s privileged in that she’s quite stealth. She was cast to play in this film because the director wanted a trans girl who hadn’t had bottom surgery.

I’m sure that’s not the only reason, I say. She replies(I think flirtatiously)—Oh you!—I’m immediately embarrassed by my cheesy attempt to flatter her—Stop flirting with me!—so I gave a knee-jerk apology. Anyway, she continues, I’m not sure if I want to be naked on camera now.

After shooting has finished, I go looking for wood to start the fire in the big old coal burning heater in Kita’s character’s room—I have no idea who has been managing the heater up till now—I ask Yotam if he knows where the wood is? He says that art dept is responsible for it, and so I (excitedly) go looking for Henning and co., and find his voice in the now very dark backyard, with Dezzi and Foxy—yes, that’s his name, Foxy. I catch H saying my name as I approach, and H turns—We’re just talking about you ... and our conversation.—Oh, ok ... well sorry to interrupt, please continue talking about me. H says that Dezzi was just asking what you and I were talking about cuz he saw us by the back door—Everything he’s saying feels slow and prickly and like a euphemism. Relishing in the flattery of being talked about behind my back, I wait to see if there’s more. Dezzi is silent, and Foxy too. Oh ok, easy. Well, Yotam said you all are responsible for the wood? The others let H reply, well, we’re not, we’ve just been cutting it. I can show you where it is. Dezzi starts asking Foxy about the prop eggs for tomorrow, if they’re all boiled very hard?

I follow as H walks slowly, in the dark—he’s stoned, maybe—around the back of the manor house to some structures I hadn’t noticed. I tell him I’ve never done it, lit one of these coal heater

things, so he explains that I have to start a little fire in the bottom side of the mammoth tile coated block, what size wood I need and that I don't need to chop any more because he already put the right sized pieces in the front of the woodshed. He twists the loose toggle on the shed doors, and they splay open for him. It's almost full with uniform, densely stacked firewood. As he loads up my outstretched arms, I hesitate about what to say other than thank you, something better than thank you ... nothing comes, so I stand there and he says guten abend, and my eyes are heavy, but I wait like an idiot while he walks off, then I go to bed.

We had a seriously heavy start today, with putting all the lights into the dining hall, setting up what I now understand to be—after James casually mentioned it, and I had to look it up on my phone in the toilet—“high-key” lighting: lots of soft lamps hung from metal truss in the ceiling, like in theatre, but no hard shadows, very low contrast, so you can shoot a whole scene without moving much, like in a sit-com. Oskur and I had this extra lighting person with us even, Tina, but I wasn't managing things well and we worked slowly. I set up this huge lamp, at the bottom of the grand staircase. James kept excitedly referred to it as The Pan Aura. It's an HMI lamp, so it was expensive to rent, it has 2 different bulb fixtures, for daylight and tungsten, and each requires different power ... situations. I had the rental house explain how to hook it up correctly, and once I had the Chimera velcroed in, and switched it on, it was like James psychically sensed it and he emerged from behind me to walk into its soft, diffused beam. Oskur confirmed all James' comments on what a gorgeous light it is, how natural, how soft and supple, how lovely, how beautiful it will make the next scene look, how fantastic Oskur's skin is.

I've been very aware of H all day, but neither of us have made any successful effort to talk. Actually, I've almost been avoiding him. Oskur told me that he has a boy waiting for him at home, and an actress suggested that someone on set has a huge one and he'll wreck you, and Bruce thanked me for the hard work, Anke's mother is some well known film producer in Babelsberg, and James and I fought about his idea of imitating candle light.

While shooting in the afternoon we helped each other in casual unpronounced ways—and I put a wedge under a prop table to level it out, because he wasn't around, I made sure to tell him about it, and to apologize for meddling in art dept, and he says no, please, my point was that I like you meddling!, which sends my mind spinning. During the long takes where I sit looking at Kita and the monitor for lighting issues that never come, I look at him helping Kembra with her shoes, and then getting her water, and I realized what his point was before, that he basically doesn't care about division of labor. Kembra crawls into the cellar thru a door in the floor, in 1 take.

Later we moved the big dining hall table together with Dezzi and Oskur.

H and Dezzi installed huge wallpaper prints yesterday, and became faint and unwell from the prints off gassing, and I told him that the Emma Goldman print was pretty powerful, he said Maybe I'll come up later to take it down before you guys sleep in there again.

I have had a couple of breaks during the shoot today, where I couldn't really hang around in the fumes for long and H was outside wearing sunglasses to somehow protect his eyes I guess. I almost tried to talk with him, to casualize things, but I couldn't see where he was looking, so I didn't say anything.

This morning we had to bring down all the beds to use as props, and H and I moved 3 together. As the sound recordist Manuela and Oskur carried one in front of us, they tipped it a bit too straight up and all the wooden slats fell out, I said Good job, guys, Manuela says she's not a guy, and noticing that I had been sarcastic, I turned to H to say Well, that was sarcasm. With the glasses I couldn't really make out his response.

In the corridor I was tidying up some cables, a big knot of them collected from tearing down the last set up. I heard Kita in the costume room talking about how the director aimed to produce a very particular acting style, however conscious or not. Another actress explained that he does this taboo thing of acting out the dialog for the actor, so they can imitate him, which is oddly intriguing as it is so controversial but he just does it. Kita adds that the writing style is also particular. Someone else wonders out loud, if this film will be seen at all, and then if the role will be seen by trans people—how will this role and the film read as written for a cis audience? Kita responds, of course there isn't ever just 1 point of view, I want to see complex, well-written and well-acted characters who are trans, who are dealing with more than ... maybe dealing with finding hormones. Someone asks if there is a lot of that? Yes, there are lots of texts about hormones. Kita continues that she wants more ideas for what living life as a trans person can be, not just the low-hanging fruit, but what it can look like, what different parts of transitioning can be—the arts should be used to give options for people, how to see their futures, dreams—I'm specifically interested in looking back at love, how past love changes thru transitioning—How many cables will we need for tomorrow? I check my little notebook for my floor plan sketch of the lighting set up that James and I decided on, and worry that I misunderstood what 'we' planned. I have to search online later for what some term means that James used—Visibility! Some trans people have this issue as a central part of their life, and there are others who do not. Another voice chimes in, oh right, like the concept of Foley in sound design—Ah, it's Manuela in there—like a trans character in film doesn't need to be treated like how we treat a computer or an animal, where if the cat is on screen it must also be making some typical cat noise, to make sure the audience knows that this is a cat and not a goat or something. Kita agrees enthusiastically, give the audience more credit! But I mean even that cat, right? Just let it be!

A bit later on I went out front, it felt busy but like everyone was milling around—H and Dezzi and Kita, and Anke and Max, were there talking about Kita's upcoming genital reassignment surgery which she was very ready for, to be a real girl, she said, without a cock. But now, having worked on this film, people will know much more about me. She explained that she'd gone on a date with this guy who asked, out of the blue, how her parents felt about her being trans, and how she'd been surprised, she didn't know how he found out, and he explained that he'd looked her up online. It's fine, it's fine, but I was like: why didn't he bring this up before?

Dezzi talked about how a character, in a reality TV show I hadn't heard of, got married after bottom surgery and hadn't told her husband. I'm not that kind of girl, Kita said, like, if he (pointing at H) and I were together, then I would be like, going thru some big emotional thing that related to transitioning or something, and I'm all acting crazy, then maybe he wouldn't really be able to understand me without knowing this part of my emotional makeup, and that would suck. H responded, yeah, I would want to go thru things with you—I just stood a couple meters away, like at a party, not sure if I wanted to join the conversation, or if I was even invited, like half listening to a married couple hashing

out their relationship issues in the safe space of the public gaze.

Manuela comes out, and asks me to hold her big plastic cup half full of coke while she rolls a cigarette. I take it at the bottom and then shift my hand to the empty top section, trying to avoid both warming up the soda, and touching the mouth with my extra dirty working hands. It might be better on the ground, my hands are disgusting, I keep forgetting my gloves all over the place. I don't think she's listening to me. As Manuela is mute with a paper on her lip searching for a filter I turn to the conversation on the bench again. I feel like I'm spying on everyone. Luckily Manuela pipes up, she's remembered an idea that we talked about for a film we'd do together, where we take the concept of foreshadowing literally, where there is a kind of consequentiality for things, and the resulting feeling is that there is a premise of destiny or causality, or whatever the philosophical term is for that, oh pre-destiny? Like we do something where we see someone thru a window and they have a shadow on their face and that a character is seen by another character before something happens ... I tell her I vaguely remember.

One of the actresses, Susanne, walks out of the house looking for somewhere to continue her phone call, while reprimanding someone on the other end. Manuela points out how absurd and—whats the word, not ironic, contradictory or something, it is for a male director to be making a film about extreme feminists, becau—paradoxical, that's the word—how paradoxical it is for a male director to be directing a bunch of hetero women in the roles of feminist extremists. Manuela and the producers and 2 of the actresses are lesbians, but everyone else is a straight woman or a man. I say something like the way the film is being made is not reflecting the ethics of the characters? Yes, she answers, so it feels more like a satire than an honest hypothetical version of the past, or whatever he's trying to do. I bring up Manuela's point about the bourgeois positioning of 'giving aid' to people who are supposedly worse off, not realizing that their help isn't needed. But, I ask, is there a non-paradoxical approach of filmmaking? There is always an inherent conflict in people and their issues, that drama and conflict are always present. Drama and storytelling rely on tensions like this. She responds that the ethics behind the scenes of the production aren't where the drama should be.

Manuela goes inside to get a beer, and picks up a red carpet knife off the window sill, and asks if it's mine. Nope, it's not, Oskur asked me already. It's not the one I'm missing. Mine is blue-grey. I go inside too. I close the door behind me cuz it causes a draft otherwise and windows break. Feeling the beer wash over me, I try to tip-toe thru all the lamps I had sort of organized along the sides of the hallway, to the back door and I misjudge where the window is and I run my wool-hat covered forehead against the beveled window pane. I try to see thru it into the dark backyard. I can only see the glass. H then comes up behind me, asking would you like some?, tapping the back of my leg with a bottle of whiskey. Digesting the proposition, and say yes, and follow him into the kitchen, where Kita, and James and Dezzi are all sitting too, and H pours us all shots—I might not have said yes to *this*, but here I am—I sidestep the situation and find some chocolate and a banana in the catering boxes from Aldi, and I fish around looking for my knife, thinking maybe I set it down in the boxes on 1 of many many visits here. I stand around peering out the windows pretending to still be interested in whatever was out in the dark backyard, but I really can't see anything nor can I remember why I'd initially looked, so I go to the whiskey H had poured for me, which he'd set on the table in front of an empty white Monobloc chair, like he was telling me where to sit. Yotam comes in and is also offered whiskey and we all cheers, not prost.

Ending some private exchange with H, Dezzi asks if we want coke, a number of yes's respond, so he leaves. H is sitting across from me, and James gets up and moves to the head of the table. I keep pulling my chair in and out for people to pass behind me. Kita goes to the wood stove to warm up, Dezzi returns, H gets up and to sort out money with him, in out in out in out.

There are 6 of us and H cuts up the coke into 6 lines with a credit card from Kita that I joke is such a fancy black card, that she's showing off, and the board is passed around. H rolls up a crisp 5 euro note, does a line and Dezzi does 1, and James asks if there have been any show-mances, the table goes silent. H asks what that is. Kita explains that on reality TV when 2 of the people start a romance that's what it's called. No one really responds. I feel majorly out of the loop—have we been here long enough for anything to have already developed?—like I was working the whole time so I wouldn't even know if there was anything happening, but I'm comforted that James doesn't seem to know either. Dez says he's stuck with the actresses all the time, and that's fiine for him. Kita says she finds the affection of gay men offensive. Dez asks why, and she explains that she thinks they are attracted to her masculine side. I'm not queer, Kita says, not like ... Susanne or something.

The board with the coke is passed to James who passes and then Dizzy takes it and talks about how Susanne is actually straight, and has kids, but that she and Tam Bin, her make-up artist, are often a package deal. Apparently, Tam Bin was in a thrupple, and the 3rd one died a few years ago—It's passed to Yotam who does a line—when this person died, she, well, she had gone on this big retreat—the 2 lines sit there—where she opened her head chakra prematurely. I ask what that means, if that's bad? Dez says that James knows, he should explain it.

James describes things I do not understand at all, and Kita asks if there is a way that this person's whatever opened chakra situation, where she is so open and vulnerable, if that is something that you can see from the outside, like would she act in a particular way? James replies that you would think that she was insane. He explains that this premature opening is really damaging and apparently, Tam-Bin said that she'd been stuck with this chakra open for years, before she died.

Kita says that she might not think she was insane exactly, and asks him to explain it in more detail. James defers to a story about a military guy, who went on a 3 month retreat, like this friend of Tam Bin's did, and then he returned and quit the military, went into a big hole in the ground covered by corrugated steel and in advance he told people the exact time he'd come out, like 12 days later and 5 past 3 in the afternoon, and 1000's of people gathered to see him emerge—Sabina, 1 of the 3 production assistants, comes in with some guy I'd seen wandering around earlier reading, followed by Manuela who announces that she's drunk, and Sabina introduces the guy as Olivier, and we all shuffle to make room, I move round to the rickety beer bench against the wall. H is politely dislocated, so he opens the wood stove door, and using big metal tongs selects a piece of wood from a cardboard box, and puts it in, then another, then he nonchalantly sits beside me, even tho I'm sure he felt me watching him.

I think it's really good we spoke about my knife and all that, I say to H. Yeah, he replies, I have to rethink who you are now, it's very strange, then he looks at me and asks if I studied film? No, I studied art, well, and philosophy, but mainly art. He goes oh ok ... wait, you studied art? Where? Well, in the states, and then the UK, and then Rotter—H interrupts me to tell me that I have a different experience than most Oberbeleucher—What's the light person in English? Gaffa? I nod yes. I mean, I don't know so many gaffas but they all just seem to come at it from being best boy or some-

thing else technical. Yeah, I reply, or they are cinematographers who need more work, like Oskur.

James sneaks off. H is walking around again—I try to ignore him to be cool, but I want to be nice and ask what he studied—and then he sits and asks what Manuela is talking about. They are talking about the differences between the function of a programme vs. that of a plugin. H asks me what is a plug in? I whisper that I don't really know, and gesture to listen to Manuela who is explaining it, and she's a bit drunk and fumbling with her description and the others are confused, and Manuela says something about these free programmes that are really pro horizontal structures, and anti-capito, and Olivier, says they get co-opted like the way James Franco uses crowd-funding to raise money for his Palo Alto stories, and Sabina tells us that those are good, and I say but he doesn't need all that money from 'the masses,' he can surely accrue that from more standard means, like he's corrupting the alternative system of the crowd funding idea, or is that what you mean Oliver?

H turns to me, and in a strange deadpan way says that he loves James Franco, he's so hot, don't you agree?' I say, well, no I don't think he's hot, but I find him personable and H asks what's that supposed to mean? I say, charming, I find him charming—you know? Well, yeah, H says, that's it, I like him, but he's also hot, like sexy and I say, yeah, ok, but for me it's like I want to be his friend all the time. H asks but don't you find him attractive? And I say no. And then H changes his body language, leans in ever so slightly and says that he has a personal question for you. Everyone else is rather noisy and Manuela is talking with James about a film of mine which she did the sound design on, about how we did the dubbing and about how there are many filmmakers on set here, and I am distracted. I try to change my attention to H—yes, go ahead, what's the personal question? And H asks if I have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. What makes you think I have either? He stumbles, well, you know what I'm asking. I think that of course I know what he's asking, but why does he want to know? So I say do I actually know what you're asking? ... OK, I live with someone, and he's a guy, and I'm sort of seeing someone else too, who also has a dick, and that's romantic as well and he says huh ok yeah, we all were wondering about you, we couldn't figure you out; the signs aren't clear. I ask who is 'we all'? Well, we were looking at everyone, like the driver—Oh, Max? Yes, Max, like if he's gay, and H's body language is directed towards me now, he starts code shifting, becoming a bit more effeminate or just relaxed even, and I've been feeling his leg get more comfortable with maybe touching or resting against mine under the table and I'm a bit cautious of it, that he's done coke—I think about the rigidity of my interest in no rigidity, that if I want anything with H, I don't want just any old thing, it's got to be slow and—but nonetheless I'm feeling really flattered to be of interest, and like H is flirting with me, which I like.

Dezzy is on his phone as he laughs loudly and sits down between Kita and H, and H says I'm going to talk about you now, and I ask if he means Dezzy? H looks at me, no, you, and H continues to Dez: so, he's gay. He has a boyfriend and they live together and—I interrupt saying that I didn't say boyfriend, and H asks Really?—I don't identify as 'gay' either, it's not exactly about gender for me, you know? H says, yes, I'm like that too, and grabs my far knee with his hand, and sort of uses it to propel him back to talking with Dez. My jeans are so disgusting, I'd wash my hand if I were H, but they feel good, that idea of jeans really fitting, I have found it with this pair, while on this job.

I wonder if I'm making it up, or if H is actually telling me something provocative. I look at him while he talks to Dez, and think that if this conversation means anything then I would sort of want to bring that up with him later, alone, without coke. Or what can I do about it now?

H asks if this guy I live with has a name? Ok, so H's interested in my life, but how can I respond to this without opening the black hole of doom that I've been avoiding, that I've been pointedly taking a break from thinking about, how can I not tell him that Michel is at home in agony because I told him I was in love with someone new, and this doesn't fit into our polyamory or whatever, and how can I tell Johannes that I'm not sure anymore about things with us having happened in these strained circumstances, if I'd be in love with him otherwise—Yes, of course he has a name. It's all influx at the moment, it's not easy for me to talk about. Dezzi says, like you need to work up the courage to end it? And I continue that we live in this tiny flat, and I realized I need my own space, I need secrecy ... I need privacy, and Dezzi says privacy yeah, but secrecy can be bad ... I ponder the distinction. No, I need secrecy too. Dezzi says he understands, and H looks at me as if I'd said something very interesting, and Dezzi is in his phone again, and I suddenly feel alone with H, and he looks at me and I look at him and it feels like things are very slow, and quiet, like I can hear the saliva pop as he parts his lips to say he feels like he's going thru the same thing now, and asks me if I think I'd be able to end it and still be friends with your ... roommate?, and I say we're not just roommates! And that I don't think us being friends is possible for him, he's a bit more cut and dry than I am, and actually I'm not sure we were ever really friends, maybe that has been the real issue. H's eyes are not blinking, he's thinking about that too, that he and his girlfriend are sort of dealing with the same thing, and I wait for more—Dezzi breaks in by offering H coke, and I become acutely aware that Sabina and Olivier are sitting opposite us, sort of smiling whenever I look over and that they really are wanting to be a part of any conversation. Manuela and Kita are not really engaging with them either. Were they witnessing this moment H and I just had? I'm suddenly disgusted by the vibe, how gross this kitchen is, how unsexy this situation is, how dull whiskey feels.

I talk with them about the hard day—Please! We have to stop talking about work! H says. Sabina asks if we ever worked together before, pointing at us all sort of.

Yotam and James recall when we worked on another film together and the wrap party, where the costume person wanted the costumes to go on to have lives as real clothes, so I tried them on. I laughed hysterically about trying on all these very flashy, very tight satin jester costumes and how I stretched them out, and H says I never knew you could laugh. I've never seen him laugh at all. Manuela says What are you saying? He's laughing all the time.

Manuela and I talk about feeling old and ugly like we were pretty when we were younger but now we're not and we have to figure out a bunch of new ways of socializing, and new ways of getting what we want, cuz now we can't use our looks, cuz we're old and ugly and have wrinkles. H asks how old we are, I say that we're both about 80. Manuela says she's 39 and I'm 29, but don't we look soooo much older? Yeah cuz we're soooo wrinkly! I have so many wrinkles. He says you're like a baby, and touches my face, he asks me in a whisper if Oliver's hair is naturally grey or died, cuz he's so old for Sabina. I say oh it's dyed, and I joke that my hair is grey and I've coloured it and he touches it and says no it's perfectly naturally coloured, it's perfect—His cold blue-grey eyes feel like the eyes of a coke-addict and someone who doesn't realize the vanity of their success, and how their looks are doing half the work. I remember the other film where they needed someone to moon the camera, and everyone shouted Henning Henning, they all wanted to see his butt. So I feel jealous of him being so confident and rolling with his job so easily, lovingly, I wonder what love means for him, if it means something different than what it means for me, maybe it's much easier for him, lighter for him.

Manuela starts playing with her drink, announcing that she's mixing water and wine, then she adds blue food colouring, and tries to pour her drink into H's whiskey, and he resists. Sabina and Oliver get up and go to bed—my attempt to include them wasn't successful it seems, which I'm actually happy about—they say that Manuela can come up whenever, and Manuela pulls my striped beanie off my head—No, I won't come up till you find me, I'm Where's Waldo—then manages to put a turd of yellow food colouring into H's drink, saying that after this victory she can go to bed, and gets up. I get up too, sheepishly saying I should go to bed too, but—H says you're not going to bed too are you? And I say no, I'll just get some water. And I sit back down and Manuela says she's going to their room and she's going to fuck them, have a 3-some, and on her way out she picks up a banana and a pair of scissors.

Dezzi and H seem to find talking about drugs much more interesting than I do. Maybe I'll pee, maybe I'll go to bed. Somehow James is back, and says that he feels like he's missing the real drama of the film: in the make-up room where all the actresses are getting down to business and bonding seriously. Kita says that older actresses are sort of guiding the younger women, and opening her eyes up to a kind of feminism she hadn't known before. I keep saying sort of pejorative things like: oh right, like the director is missing the real film, and that the actresses are all making him feel like his film is irrelevant cuz what they are doing is the real thing, and that that sort of thing is impossible to catch, with a scripted film, and Dezzi disagrees, arguing that what's on screen is always documentation of something that is actually happening, if it's a so-called documentary or fiction, it's still the same dynamics of photography. I ask if Kembra is a filmmaker. James says that she's an Icon and that she sewed up her vagina, and we're all in awe, and I'm still standing and H says sit down, that James says that he had his mouth sewn up 2 times for photo shoots, and that it was really painful, that people do it in movies like it's nothing. I'm really sensitive to that kind of thing, tho, like getting tattoos is like trauma for me.

H turns to me Oh yeah, do you have any?—What? Tattoos?—Yeah—I have 1, I say and I realize I'm going to show them my tiny tattoo and that my scar will become a topic, but James beats me to it: Show us your huge scar! Pounds his fists on the table. Asks H if I've told him this crazy story? I know people like this story, it's like my main party trick, but it's very much a script to talk about it, so I don't stop James as he tells it.

He had a twin, but he ate it before they were born, and had to have it removed! And the twin was named James, like me. Dezzi brings up being 2-spirited, that to be queer or maybe even trans, is like this, to have a duality inside you, that someone can be 2 people. Kita says that's not the case for me, 1 spirit is enough for me thank you very much, but maybe he has 2. Dezzi says that it's only a term for Native American people, so no he isn't 2-spirited. I say that I don't think I'm Native American, and the conversation returns to drugs.

Has anyone seen a beat up old grey carpet knife? It has the initials "SW" carved into it. Kita asks if I mean the knife that she used to cut off the soldier's dick this afternoon? Dezzi says it's covered in fake blood, with all the props in the dining hall, why?

This morning I woke up and found H walking around in the hallway outside my room—I realized that his room is opposite mine.

He says that he can't find that bloody knife now, I've been using it for days and I thought you'd

found yours. I ask if he looked where Dezzi thought it was? He says he's been awake for hours, bored, waiting for everyone to get up, and he looked all around for it. I pretend I don't have to pee, and together we go down to the kitchen, where Yotam teaches me how to make banana-egg pancakes, and H asks if he's still up for a run?—Yotam says we should readdress that in an hour.

H disappears and finds me later in my room. Want to go for a run?—Now?—Yes, why not?—Ok, yes.—Ok.

It's hailing really hard, big hail. I put on shorts, and I meet H in the green, sunny backyard and stretch and jog in circles enjoying being pummelled by the hail. James comes out—I feel like we all bonded last night, and I shout that he should join us for a run, he declines. Yotam finally emerges, and we head off.

After 100meters Yotam drops back saying he thinks it's crazy to run in the hail, but H and I continue. Crazy how? Yotam mumbles something out of breath. H doesn't care what he's saying.

I think how anything can happen next. I pretend I'm more familiar with jogging than I am, I adjusted myself in my shorts. Noticing how self conscious I've become, I start to look at him run, I watch his body move in his track pants, the same t-shirt he was wearing last night. Now we're alone, surely the tension I felt between us last night should be returning, only stronger.

We jog along the unromantic German country road. On the left we find the puddle of a lake that I forgot was there. We decide to run around it. We say almost nothing at all, but that doesn't make room for any exciting nonverbal communication. I almost say something but think that if I talk too much I'll reveal that I'm out of breath, or maybe he doesn't like to talk while jogging. Not sure what I could do, or what I imagined would have been more possible while we were alone.

Eventually I ask him how doing coke makes him feel, and if he's hung over, sort of trying to get at some explanation of his flirtations with me last night, and he says, well it makes me more energetic and also more relaxed, and my inhibitions are easy to ignore. They are gone?—No, I can just ignore them—Oh right, and the hangover part?—Well I'm a bit lost for what to do today, so ... but it's our only break for the whole 2 week shoot, so I guess no plan is the best plan—I admit that I've never done coke. He doesn't seem to find this even slightly interesting, nor do I tbh.

I suggest that we go out onto this pier thing together, which is actually a piece of wood that goes out into the water about 2 meters, and he says yeah let's go on a ferris wheel together. In addition to seeing him as one of the unapproachable athletic jocks in high school, I realized then that I treat him a bit like a child or a younger sibling.

Thoughts of "making a move" crossed my mind as he pissed rather close to me—I tried to work up my own need to pee but it didn't come, and I thought why force it. We walked a bit, passed some other jogging people, I don't remember the rest.

We went to a field not far from the Gutshaus, to shoot some interaction between Kita and someone whose name I never really caught—I could have looked on the call sheets—where the 2 women topple each other over in the tall grasses with lust or something. I must admit I barely read the script, even after I complained to Yotam that production never sent it to me, and he went and printed me off a copy, I've been meaning to read it all shoot, but it just sits there on my second bed-cum-side-table. Maybe Kita and she make out in the grass.

I see Bruce about to hold the monitor to watch it, and feel obligated to take it around my neck

for him—You're looking into my heart—he looks up out of the monitor and says—Well, am I? ... a bit lower than that, please—Oh yeah, my intestines now ... I just ate some chocolate, can you see it? I'm really not funny. Oskur says he'll fetch a C-stand to hang the monitor on, and he walks off, leaving H in his place to hold a flag to keep the sun off the monitor for Bruce, over my head, so I watch H as the action unfolds behind me, trying to read what is going on through his face, unable to watch the action myself, nor the monitor like I'm meant to, and I turn to see the very different reactions of the makeup and costume people, Iris and Ann, who smile bearing their teeth, and I look back at H with his illegible expression, watching Kita perform whatever this scene is. Perhaps he's just tired.

Some scenes later, further along in the field, and next to the road, I'm looking towards the sun, saying we have little time left with cloud cover—my English is embarrassingly Germanified—we need to shoot, bald, jetzt, and the camera operator, Tobias, asks me where's your gaffer's glass? I didn't know what that is, and James says yeah you should have one, and Tobi explains that it's like a loop with dark glass in it which makes it so you can look at the sun, and that on set a few days ago when we used natural light, for the dining hall, I should have had 1 person on my light team outside just watching the movements in the sky, telling us when we could and couldn't shoot. I feel embarrassed and stupid, and then H and Dezzi arrive in a car and start saying goodbye to everyone. Kita says Oh god are they interrupting our shoot to say goodbye, it's not that big a deal I mean come on honey, I'm cold, move on. H says, while we are hugging, with some kind of sincerity, something something something but now I love you. I chuckle—Oh, I love you too—and he moves on to hug others, and I hug Dezzi, and they just leave.

Oskur takes over my useless stand-by role of holding a reflector, so I can go back to the house to deal with making sure we have our full equipment list, I actually didn't realize that today is our last day, and I wouldn't have thought to deal with the equipment list if it weren't for Oskur—I must have just been exhausted.

When I get back to the house, H and Dezi are still there, sitting around waiting for Sabine to return so that she can take them to the train. I go inside and the producers Sonja and Paula tell me while repainting the walls, that I need to fix all these lights back to the ceilings and walls, the ones that H had removed, cuz he said he couldn't figure it out.

But Henning removed them, I say, and he didn't talk to me about it. Paula says Yeah tell me about it, look at us repainting the walls, another thing they should be doing. I already discussed it with Dezzi about responsibilities, and didn't get anywhere, please just do it.

I go right back outfront, out to the smoking bench, and sort of shout at H and Dezzi and Foxy about now needing to add another thing to my to do list before I have to leave and that it's totally not OK for them to assume I was just going to take it on as my responsibility. This is where division of labor is helpful, but maybe you don't care about pissing me off. I avoid looking at H while saying this, then just go back into the hall, but Oskur is there already with one of these huge high-high-roller stands—Oskur please stop, I need to check everything still—He says that he can count the stands easily in the car, and I say no, I don't think that will be easy, and loading the equipment wont be so hard, so just wait, we're in the middle of a shooting day, what you can do now is to re-attach the wall lights that Henning took out and left for us to deal with, and he says no I can't cause I just cut my thumb and it would take me ages, and I'd bleed all over them, and I say well, then just sit down and chill. Then Sonja comes in and asks if there is any way we can please start loading the equipment

now to get a head start that they don't want to wait forever tonight, and Oskur can be working, and I explode—No, please, Oskur cut his finger, and I need to fix these lights before I can check the rental list properly, before Oskur can start loading up, I have an overview, I'm taking care of it, thank you. Oskur and she leave me alone.

I was standing up on a table, fixing the china balls back over the ceiling lights, thinking that this is actually basically my job, why was I so irate?—H comes in, to say goodbye again. I apologise for snapping at him and Dexxi, I'm not mad, I must just be tired. H says that if the shoot was just a bit slower then maybe we could have had better, clearer communication, that he couldn't figure out the fuse box and he didn't want to blow up the house. I said it's just hard to get a surprise like that, the end, and H said yes, exactly, I'm sorry tho and I understand your reaction, I would have done the same thing, point taken. I guess we hugged again, I can't remember.

He wouldn't have needed to do anything in the fuse box to put these lights back up.

On the drive back, while Oskur and I are getting lost, trying to go by the equipment van's Sat-Nav, which doesn't know that there's a big construction diversion and half the motorway is closed, we are both so frustrated, he mutters stuff I didn't understand, and I vent about how Paula asked me to come into the make-up room, for her to give me my contract to sign, like at the end of the shoot a bit late, no? I shout over the TomTom voice that Paula asked what I wanted to be called, 'Gaffer'? I said sure. Manuela took me aside and said that for the artist's insurance, KSK, I should maybe get them to write something else, cuz 'Gaffer' is a technical job. So I went back and told Paula this, and she asked if I had KSK, and I said no, but I'm going to try to get it this year. Then in a snide voice, I mock Paula saying that I can't get KSK, cuz you're a gaffer, and gaffer is not a creative role, you know—I grunt loudly—To be told what I am, that I'm a gaffer! Oskur says yeah cuz a gaffer is and should be a creative job if it's done right, and James just didn't allow you to do it properly, and I say no, no, what I mean is that I write and direct and it's so frustrating to feel like I'm being seen and identified and reduced to 1 thing, to being a gaffer, which is not specifically my interest, it's so frustrating and demeaning.

The TomTom is shouting at us—We must be out of the boonies cuz I have good reception and a backlog of messages from Michael and Johannes are showing up.

There's a long silence.

Oskur asks if I ever found my knife? No.

Zayne Armstrong – I was born in the US in the 80's, I live in the EU, and I mainly studied art. With my writing and films I use storytelling to question the singularity of identity and authorship, and keep returning to representations of artists and communities, looking at how they form, subsist, and collapse. Most of my work, in some way, is made through and deals with collaboration. I was half of the artist duo S/Z, with Elliott Elliott, from 2007-2013; I was part of the virtual identity Agatha Valkyrie Ice until that ended in 2017; and together with Ellinor Aurora Aasgaard, in 2018 we started the soap opera, 'Days'.

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