

Working Title:

Shy streets

V0. 5

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Episodes

EPISODE 1: Lady Lagavulin.....	3
EPISODE 2: Pour le travail.....	41
Episode 3: Culpa et circenses.....	84
Episode 4: Best of the best	122
Episode 5: Atari	156

EPISODE 1: Lady Lagavulin

Int. apartment. Dining table

Super close-up of a coffee cup, it is stirred fanatically. Close Up, high angle

A man in his 30s sits on an armchair and stirs a coffee on the dining table. He looks tired as he stares obsessively at a point behind the camera.

Super close up, frog's eye view, door frame on top

A hook is screwed into the door frame. It is shown for a few seconds. The scratching of the spoon is still unpleasantly penetrant.

Close Up, high angle

The man continues to look at the door frame, the stirring gets louder

Close up, of the coffee cub

The stirring comes to a stop

Wide angle shot

From the door frame we see the man sitting in the dining room. Behind him is the kitchen. There are children's toys everywhere. It's very messy. High heels toppled over at the entrance. A family man. He gets up and approaches the kitchen's window.

Total Shot

The kitchen window is shown from the outside. The man opens it, lights a cigarette, pulls out his cell phone and calls his wife.

Voicemail:

Hello, our office hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Fridays 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. please contact us during the opening hours. We are also happy to refer you to our website.

The man hangs up and calls another number

Voicemail:

Hello, here is Sabine's mailbox. I am quite busy and difficult to contact during weekdays, but you are

welcome to call the landline number 01 2121 256, my husband will be happy to forward the messages to me.

After the man hangs up, he breaks the cigarette in frustration. He calms himself down and reaches for his cigarette pack, softly shaking as he lights up another one. His gaze is distant, focused on another universe. Then, the babbling of a baby in the background. He reconnects with reality, extinguishes the cigarette and closes the window.

Int. One-room apartment

Super close-up (Introducing, Noémie)

On the left side of the picture (directly in front of the camera) is the blurred face of a woman in her mid-20s. Her face is completely blue from a computer screen. She doesn't blink once. Behind her in focus is the entrance door. On the wall next to the door is a shelf with dozens of PC screens and Computers, one older than the other. If it weren't for the small space, one would think it a warehouse for forgotten Stone Age tech. But they all seem to be running and connected with what feels like a thousand cables. VHS tapes are lying around everywhere. It would be comically caricaturist if the woman's stare wouldn't be so empty and penetrant. A fluctuating frequency from the old tech harmonizes up and down like a wave. The atmosphere is thick. The silence gets cut by a knock on the door. After a few seconds, the door opens, the woman does not react at all. It is the man from the previous scene. He stands there for a moment and waits. He knows better than to disturb her. Then he sits down in a chair, shaky, almost as if on withdrawal. He runs his fingers through his hair (*top down extreme close up*) and gets up again. He can't wait any longer

Husband: I've thought it over, ok? Give it to me!

Wide angle, elevated view

In frame is the other side of the room. A desk crammed full of screwdrivers, cables, a tempered VHS player and old computer screens. She seems to be working on multiple things, coding and engineering?.

Husband: I don't care about the risks.

Close-up of the woman, Profil

She raises one of her hands (*framed side view behind her face*) and holds up two fingers. Does she want a cigarette? No. Money.

Frog perspective, man, wide angle

The man seems relieved but nervous. He pulls out his wallet and takes out a few bills. Large bills. Lots of bills. He pushes them between her two fingers (*again in the close-up profile setting*)

Bird perspective

She starts counting the money, then she opens a drawer and takes out a USB stick.

Wide angle slightly increased

You can see both of them from behind. He takes the stick

Husband: You really did it huh…Thank you!…

He leaves the apartment. The room is shown for a few more seconds, the static sound of the computers fills the emptiness.

Man's Int. Apartment

The Husband sits at the dining table and opens up his laptop. He pushes the Stick into the USB slot and starts watching the file. Then he closes the laptop. A Collage follows of him vacuuming the apartment and doing some cleaning. He seems to be in a good mood. He also briefly holds his baby in his arm.

Mid Close-up

We see the dining table and the door to the living room, where the hook hangs in the door frame. The man drinks his coffee at the table, seemingly happy. This is underlined with a passionate "Ahhhhh" after a sip. He gets up and straightens the chair. Then he walks out of the picture. After some time, he comes back, putting on a tie and throwing on his jacket. He fetches a rope and a chair from another room. He places it under the door frame and the rope on the hook. He then knots a loop and sticks his head through. One last time he happily closes his eyes and jumps down from the chair. *Crack!*. His neck is immediately broken.

The Baby starts to cry for its father.

Main theme starts with credits. The intro plays, shots of Vienna and various characters are shown. Music is inspired by “keizoku”

Ext. night, Rain, In front of an apartment.

The camera pans into a window; someone is standing inside the apartment, watching the street, someone in his early 30' s.

Close-up, Interior, high-, wide angle

The man is called Stefan. He watches the streets nervously. He doesn't seem to get a lot of sleep, as his eyebags pull down his young face more than usual for his age. He watches a couple passing by his apartment, clearly having fun with the heavy rain. Laughter can be heard. Stefan's right hand is in focus, shaky. He forms a fist to stop his hand from having its own will. He takes a deep breath and brushes through his hair with both hands. This is very reminiscent to the guy who just killed himself.

Wide-angle, apartment.

The framing reveals the rest of the room, which is mostly empty. Just an older TV placed on some boxes, a very old but comfortable-looking chair, some beer cans lying next to it, and messy stacks of detective case files. Also, there are blankets in the corner, as well as a half-dead plant. The ashtray on the floor is stacked with buds to the brim. Not one more cigarette could fit. Some would call his living space filthy, but it has its charm. Stefan wears a wife-beater and long pants. He doesn't seem like he has cared much about his appearance lately. He walks away from the window and approaches the chair.

Frog-perspective, chair

As Stefan sits down, he reaches next to the chair, grabbing a bunch of Video Cassettes. They all have different labels. "Single space," "festival 2047," "and "Making it work," are just some of them. As he looks through his collection, he stops at "Sleepless". He opens the case, takes out the Cassette, and pushes it into his VHS player. He seems absolutely lost as he grabs the remote. As he is about to hit play, there is a knock on his door. He contemplates for a while, but eventually, he puts down the remote and approaches his apartment's entrance.

Shoulder perspective Stefan

Stefan opens the door, the moment a second sequence of knocks starts. In front of him stands a woman in her late 20s or early 30s. She is wearing a brown raincoat and a scarf. Her curly bright, brunette hair is wet from the rain. She looks at Stefan, then over his shoulder into his apartment. She hesitates to say anything. After shaking her umbrella to get rid of the excessive rainwater, she pushes herself to speak.

Lucy: He agreed.

She seems pleased with herself. The camera, for a moment, switches over to Lucy's shoulder perspective. Stefan looks surprised, but after a second switches to a serious demeanor.

Stefan: Then we have to go.

Camera switch to Stefan over shoulder perspective with pushback as lucy enters the apartment

Lucy: My thought exactly

After a few steps into the apartment, she stops and looks at Stefan's room. She seems a bit shocked. In her POV, we see how he is approaching a wardrobe to pull out a sweater, sunglasses, a gun, a knife and a coat. When he comes back to the entrance, he stops, as he sees Lucy's face.

Stefan: The fuck are you doing?

Lucy: I didn't think you still had it.

He follows her eyes, fixated on the TV and the VHS Player.

Stefan: I bought it back a couple of weeks ago. I told you I was on my way to the warehouse

Lucy: To get the tools for investigation! This is a bit much, especially...

She stops herself from starting this conversation; it's too early and definitely not the time. Stefan isn't dumb, though; he understands exactly

what she is implying. He would love to get defensive on her ve, but work is calling.

Stefan: I am fine. I am handling it.

Lucy looks worried. Her eyes lower to the floor as she nods in agreement, doubting what he was saying. He passes her on the way out. She lingers for a bit but snaps out of it. She leaves the apartment and closes the door.

Car. Heavy rain on the Hud, and the camera positioned outside.

As Stefan is driving the car, Lucy is looking at documents regarding a case.

Lucy: Constantin Schoeppler, 55 Years old, current appearance, bolt and a full beard. After he broke out of jail, he disappeared, but now he was sighted in the 5th district.

Stefan: So, I was right.

Lucy: You mean you guessed right.

Stefan: Doesn' t change the fact that I was right.

Lucy: Fine…you get your drink later.

Stefan: Its ok. We are square now.

Lucy: What are you talking about?

Stefan: I wasn' t expecting you to get him to agree. This is huge.

Lucy: What makes you think I wouldn' t manage?

Stefan: (Smiling) Just a guess.

Lucy: It wasn' t hard. I promised protection.

Stefan: You mean the protection program we don' t have anymore?

Lucy: Oh fuck! right.

Stefan: It doesn't matter now. Focus on the job. Repent later

Lucy: Sure.

As the car is approaching the 5th district, the city is shown in a collage with the car passing corners of what seems like homeless people and masses of people protesting with signs, saying: "Globals Lie and Locals Die" , "fuck FP, "bring back the internet" . Countless shops seem run down and closed for good. Finally, the car comes to a stop on a small street.

Int. car. Driver's seat view. Over shoulder perspective.

As both unplug the seatbelt, Stefan grabs Lucy's arm as she opens the door.

Stefan: Wait. Maybe you should let me speak this time.

Lucy: I am the one who closed the deal; I am the one speaking.

She shakes his hand off her arm and exits the vehicle. Stefan sighs and looks a bit on edge with her response, but what can he do?

Ext. Street, camera next to the entrance of an apartment house

As both exit the car the camera pans after them, entering the building.

Int. Hallway. camera paning down from the roof, as both Lucy and Stefan pass the camera, revealing a person waiting for them

The person is clothed in a black raincoat, revealing little of his face. The person is older and seemingly scared.

Lucy: Ok, what apartment?

Informant: First, the phone number.

Lucy seems confused

Informant: The number of the guy, we had an agreement!

Lucy: Right… The phone number…

Lucy starts being nervous and completely loses face.

Lucy: F…five… (clearly making up something)

Stefan: For fuck’ s sake, we will get you the info AFTER we are done here. We need the Apartment number! Now!

Informant: 7a, third floor!

The duo passes the informant, Stefan leading. Lucy turns around, looking guilty.

Lucy: It’ s not 5…

Int. 3rd floor, Camera pan from the stairway to the hallway as Lucy and Stefan arrive

Approaching the door, both take cover on both sides of the entrance. Stefan loads his gun and establishes eye contact with Lucy.

Stefan (whispering): Where the fuck is your gun?

Lucy: I forgot it at the briefing.

Stefan: Fuck me…I can’ t with you.

Stefan reaches inside his coat and offers Lucy his knife. She hesitates to take it.

Stefan: Come on, we don’ t have time for this.

Lucy takes the knife and looks at it with much respect. She doesn’ t seem to like them. She takes a deep breath; locking in. A dreadful silence; anything can happen now. With a forced nod, as Stefan was born for this, he kicked in the door and sweeps the apartment. Lucy follows.

Living room

Immediately, the apartment shows its inhabitants' lifestyle. Waste piling up in the corners of all rooms. Both react to the stench that rushes in their faces, the moment they enter. As they arrive in the living room, they immediately spot a man in his 30s lying flat on the floor. Next to him is an old Tv and a VHS player. Like an instinct, both look away, and Lucy quickly pulls the plug. Focusing on the Guy, his mouth is foaming and his muscles are twitching. He seems to be having a seizure. Lucy takes a last careful look around but trusts Stefan to secure the other rooms.

Lucy: I got this!

She kneels next to him and puts a pillow under his head. But it is already too late to do anything else, as the guy stops moving. She immediately takes off her coat and starts with CPR.

Stefan reenters the room after sweeping the rest of the apartment.

Stefan: He is not here. Must have known that we are coming.

Lucy: He is not breathing; his pulse is weak.

Stefan: Let him die. It doesn't matter

Lucy: Stefan! He might know something!

Stefan takes out his old flip phone. As he is about to call the ambulance, an emergency message pops up.

Stefan: "Incoming Stormfront." Nobody will come.

Lucy: Fuck!...

In this moment, both know this guy is dead. There is no ambulance coming for help in the next few hours. But Lucy is reluctant and keeps going. Stefan, without a word, accepts her decision.

Stefan: Nic still owes you...if we are lucky.

Lucy: Do it!

Stefan: You sure?

Lucy: NOW!

Stefan pulls out a book, filled with phonenumbers and names. He calls Nic as the camera is focused on the street, where a person in the distance is getting beaten up by a group of people. Stefan hangs up the phone and turns around to Lucy.

Stefan: It will take time, but they are on their way.

Already out of breath, Lucy nods. As she keeps working on the heart massage, Stefan disappears into the neighboring room. Sounds of cramming through shelves, throwing over a vase and some furniture. He comes back with documents. Before sitting down on a sofa, he looks at Lucy.

Stefan: Should we switch?

Lucy: All good, lets rotate every 10 minutes.

Stefan: Sounds good. (Way too relaxed for the situation)

As he looks through his personals, his demeanor turns more serious.

Stefan: This one is not worth saving...he is a member.

Lucy, for a second, stops and looks at Stefan, but her thoughts go right back to saving the person's life. Stefan continues to investigate the personal stuff of the man.

Stefan: At least he used to be. I didn't see any cult sigils or...you know...the usual stuff.

Lucy: You think he was targeted by them?

Stefan points to the TV

Stefan: You wanna find out?

Lucy holds eye contact for a second, not appreciating the joke.

Stefan: Well, after decoding the tape, we will at least know if it's the same stuff we are assigned to. Btw, this is Nelson Beckerman. British, I guess. Born 2018.

Lucy: Anything of interest that isn't on a first date basis?

Stefan: Yeah, there is a lawsuit. He broke some kid's chin while being on this stuff (nodding to the tv) ...and cocaine... (flips the page) ...and meth.

Stefan puts aside the paper and scrolls through other documents. One seems to be of interest to him.

Stefan: Holy shit...

Lucy: What?

Stefan: We need to keep him alive.

Lucy: (sarcastically) Who needs an ethical reason when you can gain something from it, right?

Stefan: He was part of the WJK

Lucy looks at Stefan as if they had just discovered gold, about to sink into a bottomless pit. For a moment, silence fills the room, almost relaxing, if it weren't for the dying person on the floor.

Lucy: I didn't know they are still around.

Stefan: Sure, would be a pleasure to talk to him.

Lucy: Speaking of talk, how is your sleep lately?

Stefan: (half listening while looking at documents) hmm

Lucy: You shouldn't use the TV, you know.

Stefan almost instantly puts down the documents. His answer sounds Agitated and cocky

Stefan: Am I a good partner?

Lucy: What kind of question is that? You are the best rated detective in the Bureau.

Stefan: As long as it stays that way, don't you worry. If I can work, I am fine. If that changes, you can scold me all you want.

Lucy: As if you would listen.

Stefan: Hey...I am open to criticism.

Lucy looks at Stefan, exhausted but with half a smile. Stefan rolls his eyes, knowing that she is right

Stefan: Mind if I smoke?

Lucy: Be quick about it, I need a break.

Int. Livingroom, an hour later

Stefan is performing CPR on the man while Lucy lies next to him, completely soaked in sweat. The Wind is howling. Both seem to be at their limit, as suddenly there is a knock on the door.

As Lucy walks to the door to open it, she stops herself for a second. Maybe this isn't the help they are waiting for. She circles back to grab the knife.

Int. Entrance

Lucy approaches the door. She waits. After a couple of seconds, she can hear a knocking, like a password. The tension in her face drops, and she opens the door. It's 2 women with a face mask, dressed in black. As they enter, they tell Stefan he can stop as they put a defibrillator on him. Then they put him on a stretcher. As fast as they entered, they left. Silence fills the room. Lucy and Stefan are sitting on the floor and taking a breath. Then Stefan drops his line that is repeated over and over in this series.

Stefan: I have a hunch.

Lucy: Of course, you do

Stefan: Why would he seize right before we arrive...I didn't see any Seizure meds.

Lucy looks at Stefan, exhausted and with almost no strength left, she has no idea what he is talking about.

Lucy: AED' S?

Stefan: There was just a pipe next to the sink and some weed, but nothing officially labeled. This fucker overdosed on something, nothing out of the ordinary

Lucy: We have had this kind of incident more than once, Stefan!

Stefan: Yet our informant told us Constantin is here.

Lucy realizes what he is implying.

Lucy: Where did you find those documents?

Interior, Kitchen

As both enter the Kitchen, Lucy's gaze wanders over the molded food on the floor, the old, reeking clothes stacked on top of a hanger, and the broken dishes on the tabletop.

Lucy: Where did you find the documents?

Stefan: In this cabin.

Lucy approaches the cabin and opens it. It is filled with papers, documents, maps, and whatnot. She is throwing everything out.

Stefan: What are you doing?

She doesn't seem to find what she is looking for at first but she keeps investigating the cabinet. As she knocks against the cabin's flooring, it

seems hollow. She opens it up, revealing a hidden storage. There is a piece of paper inside. Stefan takes the paper and turns it around. On the other side is a specific sigil.

Stefan: Fuck!

Lucy, frustrated hits the wall with her fist.

Both look at each other, their world has been shattered. Stefan's phone starts ringing. He takes a look at it.

Stefan: It's the boss.

Lucy: ...great...

A high-angle, wide-angle shot with horizontal rotation and zoom out, followed with intense music underlines the devastation of the situation. They have been following a man with more influence than they can handle.

Apartment of the Boss, outside of Vienna: Weyregg

35mm shot

It is a beautiful apartment with a huge terrace. This is the home of a rich person. But not just any rich person. It's Lucy and Stefan's Boss.

Close up

He seems old-fashioned. As if he had watched too many film noir movies. Wearing clothes, one would expect to see when attending the opera. He sits at his desk, drinking coffee. Lucy and Stefan stand before him. Both wanting to sink into the floor. Slowly, the boss grabs the paper both just found. He holds it up as if he is teaching toddlers to read.

Boss: You know what this means?

Lucy: This is the sigil...

Stefan clears his throat, giving Lucy a clear sign to shut up. This is not her time to speak.

Boss: This is the sigil of the leader of the *Fidelis Patriae*. I don't quite remember ordering you to go after those people.

Lucy: We didn't know, sir. Our informant...

Boss: (loud) ...tricked you, which might cost us our neck!!

The boss stands up and leans against the desk, visually exhausted by the two. He had enough of this.

Boss: I am withdrawing you from this case.

Stefan: Boss...

Boss: As for the Video material you have gathered so far, I will assign it to Team B. They will use the discretion necessary to find the distributor.

Lucy: But what if the FP has something to do with it?

Boss: Then this is the end of the Road! I cannot risk the entire Firm for one case out of dozens! I might have been too rash trusting you with a case like this, Lucy. You have a brilliant mind, but for god sakes, I thought Stefan takes care of the networking.

Stefan: I am sorry, I take full responsibility.

Boss: You will! From now on you will be back at local distress calls in Vienna. Get your priorities straight again. I understand your loss, but I am not paying you to bring your grief into this work. Do I make myself clear?

Stefan: Yes Boss, Sorry Boss.

Boss: As for you Lucy, I put you back into the protocol division.

Lucy: But...

Boss: But chances are, after I cleaned up your mess, you need to stay low for a while. So don't get too comfortable.

Lucy: ...understood...

Boss: The only reason they haven't shut this firm down yet is because we stay out of this conflict! And I mean to keep it that way!

Exterior, parkinglot

Lucy walks to the car, very annoyed. Stefan follows.

Stefan: What did you expect would happen?! You can be lucky he didn't let us go on the spot.

Lucy: We have never been so close to solving the case! He should kiss our feet and not contemplate to cancel our current patronage!

Stefan: Well, things are more complicated than that Lucy! You are an Idealist and weirdly selfish with it. Someday it will kill you if you are not careful!

Lucy turns around and confronts Stefan

Lucy: Well now it's not your problem anymore, is it?! I applied for this work to make a difference, not to become part of the problem. This Firm used to have a spine! Now, it is repeating the same mistakes WJK did years ago. Ingratiating and slowly dying, too weak for the coup they tried to pull off.

Stefan: Lucy...listen to me. If you do as you are told you will be reassigned! But you need to be more patient. Why do you think he assigned you back to protocol? He is shielding you because you are one of his biggest assets.

Lucy: (getting emotional) ...I am sorry for putting you through this.

Stefan: Hey! We are partners. Maybe not on paper anymore but we are. Because we are the best.

Lucy: I know.

Lucy and Stefan share a little smile. As Lucy enters the car, Stefan hands over his phone to her.

Lucy: What are you doing?

Stefan: I told the boss I lost it. I did some tinkering so it's off the grid now. My new number is already in there.

Lucy: Why are you giving me this?

Stefan: So, we can keep working on the case. What, you thought I would give up that easily?

Stefan knocks on the hood of the car as a good luck gesture and walks off.

Lucy: Are you not going back to Vienna?

Stefan: There is something I need to do first. I will take the train back asap.

Lucy: Ok, take care!

As Lucy watches Stephan leave, she feels much gratitude. He truly is a friend for life. As she flips open the phone, a message from Nic appears. Yep, she keeps pursuing the case for sure.

Ext. Day, in front of Nic's villa.

Lucy gets out of the car and looks at the big caslte like mansion. This doctor makes an ungodly amount of money with his job. It is a estate with a private lake entry and a garden to big to fully take in from the entrance. Guards are in front of the Entrance Gate, watching Lucy's every move. In a wide-angle shot, we see them letting her enter premise.

Int: Villa entrance.

Like in a Hospital, people are sitting and waiting to be treated in the hallway. Some have bandages on them; others just straight-up bleed on the floor. Lucy sits there, awkwardly, knowing that this will take forever. She reaches inside her coat and takes out a small leather-bound book. As she

reads, the time skips, showing fewer and fewer people waiting. Finally, Nic opens the door when she is the last person left. He rubs his hands in a towel.

Nic: Lucy. Come in

Lucy gets up and approaches the doctor, who steps aside to let her in. Then he closes the door.

Int. Doctors room

The room also screams private business. While there are bookshelves, a vinyl player with records, and a bar in the corner, it is contrasted by a makeshift operation table in the middle of the room, surrounded by basic equipment. Is this even sanitary?

Nic: It's been a minute.

Lucy, still looking around the room while Nic is standing behind her, seems a bit awkward about this statement. There might be history between them.

Lucy: It has. I see you made some changes to your workstation.

Nic: Only minor changes; the heart of it all is still right here.

Nicolas passes by Lucy and stops at the operating table as he speaks, implying that it is all he needs.

Lucy: You know that this is bullshit.

Nicolas: Well...nobody is perfect.

Nicolas approaches the bar to fix himself a drink. One of his traits Lucy shares.

Lucy: You called me.

Nicolas: The patient you brought me, Bastian Albert, unusual last name by the way, was not easy on me you know.

Lucy: Is he alive?

Nicolas finishes his drink and takes a sip.

Nic: He is.

Lucy takes a breath of relief

Nic: But not awake. He fell in a coma, and it is unforeseeable when he will wake up.

Lucy: shit…

Nic: That is not all. I had to cut him open.

Int. Patients room

On the upper floor, Bastian is lying in a single-sized bed. Nic and Lucy approach him. Nic lifts the blanket and reveals a stitched cut across his Belly. Nicolas elaborates as Lucy examines it further.

Nic: I took a look at his record and did some tests. There are no exhibitions of any metabolic or structural abnormalities that could account for his condition. He has no prior history of epilepsy, no congenital or acquired neurodegenerative disorders, and no known channelopathies or metabolic encephalopathies that could predispose him to seizure activity.

Lucy: So, no underlying epileptogenic foci, no history of febrile seizures in childhood, no prior episodes suggestive of idiopathic or symptomatic epilepsy?

Nic: Impressive, you remember my late-night rants over my patients

Lucy: I remember what's important. External factors?

Nic: Toxicology screening was negative, cranial imaging showed no evidence of cerebrovascular insult, neoplasm, or traumatic injury. No drugs were involved in this incident.

It has to be a neurological trigger, fully externally induced.

Lucy: a multisensory-induced reflex seizure. So, it has to be the tape.

Nic: Still, while conducting my screenings, I made an X-ray, just to be sure. And what I found in his belly was this.

Nic approaches a shelf stuffed with boxes. He opens the lid of one and takes out a plastic zip bag. Inside is a videotape.

Lucy: This was inside of him?

Nic: Astonishing really, one would think it should influence the tests I made on him. Whoever did this is an exceptional surgent.

Int, Hallway

Lucy, holding the tape in her hand, walks towards the entrance door. Nic is following her.

Lucy: You call me when he wakes up.

Nic: Am I supposed to keep him here? Do you know how much revenue one of those rooms makes? I have bills to pay

Lucy: To me it looks like you are doing fine. Besides, after this we are square.

Nic: ...fine. After this, all favors are over. You are just another patient to me.

Lucy looks at him, knowing that it is a lie. But she is glad to hear it out of his mouth.

Lucy: Good.

As Lucy leaves, Nic watches her. There is still something inside of him, but it's either too late or too complicated. Maybe both.

Int. Café at Attersee.

Stefan sits on a window seat and uses a spoon to stir his coffee. The screeching sound on the porcelain reminds us of the first scene, another parallel to the guy killing himself. What could it mean? The door opens and a young, very slim person enters the Café. He wears all black and a hoodie. He stops in front of Stefan's table. But Stefan doesn't react to him. He just stirs his coffee. After a while, without a word spoken, the guy helps himself and sits down opposite Stefan. A waitress approaches.

Guy: Black coffee, please...with 2 sugars.

The Guy looks at Stefan but he is focused on his cup. Stefan seems to be pissed off.

Paul: How are you? I didn't expect you to visit so soon.

(pause)

Paul: How are you holding up in Vienna? That shit hole is getting shadier by the minute. I still don't understand how you can choose to work over there.

(pause)

Paul: I met with Dominik yesterday. He told me about your gig in the 5th. I have to vouch for him man, he is clean. He just left after some time because you didn't seem to come out of that apartment. I've been working with him for years now. You have my word!

(pause)

Paul: But he is still scared, you know, after everything that happened. Of course, his reliability seems fishy. And I can't blame you for thinking what you think. Hell, If I would be you, I for sure would want to have a word with him.

(pause)

Paul: But I know you don't go for half measures. And I can't risk a full-out clash between your firm and ours. We have a great collaboration, why mess that up for a stupid misunderstanding? I take full responsibility.

Stefan suddenly stops steering the coffee. He puts down the spoon and stares at Paul.

Stefan: Your informant knew that he wasn't there anymore. And even if that's not true, he didn't tell us that he wouldn't be alone. He has been working for someone else, and I want to know who it is.

Paul: Do you hear yourself? We have strict transparency policies with our partners. If there would be another interest group involved, I would tell you, Stefan.

(Pause)

Paul: I am sorry Stefan, that is all. I don't know what to...

Stefan reaches over the table, grabs Paul's head with both hands and smacks it down on the table counter. Paul, startled, raises his head high and holds his bleeding Nose.

(Pause)

The waitress approaches the table and serves the Black coffee with 2 sugars.

Guy: ...thank you...

He takes a sip, still startled. But after a while, he gets a grip over himself.

Paul: After I tell you this, our time together is done. Our business will be concluded permanently.

Stefan: Who bought you Paul.

Paul: You know who.

Stefan: How can you work for those people!? There is no long-term gain from this. They have no allegiance, no morals. For fuck's sake Paul, we are supposed to hold against groups like them!

Paul: Stefan. I am not in the business for very long anymore. And I need the money. Ooooh, the money Stefan, it's sickening how much they offer. I could work a year and wouldn't see the amounts I make with them within a month.

Stefan starts to realize what he is saying

Stefan: What did Nic tell you?

Paul: Prostate cancer. Stage 4. Spreads like hell. I got 2 weeks, maybe a month. It's funny, isn't it? A couple of months ago, I was planning on moving with my wife and kids. Finally, getting them the life they deserve. But I guess in the real world, good stories are only destined for the few. What morals are still left for me to uphold?

Paul chugs the coffee down, gets up and throws a bill on the table to pay for the drinks.

Paul: Farewell Stefan, I hope you can forget what has happened to her. Your life could still be a good story. Don't wait till it's too late.

Paul reaches out his hand for a last handshake. But Stefan keeps looking straight forward. He is done with him. Quietly, Paul leaves.

Stefan stare into the abyss. He seems to fight with his emotions. Anger and sadness burn within. After a long stare down at the wall, his phone starts ringing. He reaches for his phone and dials a number. The phone rings a couple of times.

Stefan: Yes? Ok, I am on my way back to Vienna now….

Int. Vienna, Bar

It's the usual underground music Bar, lucy goes to. On a stage, there is a jazz singer and a pianist, accompanying her. On the walls, there are flyers for a classical concert. "Diego Licht". We have seen it before on the streets. Seems to be a big name. As she sits on the counter, the bartender, Tim, stands in front of her.

Lucy: ...back to protocol, who does he think he is...I have been more lucrative to this Firm than any other person in the last 6 Quarters.

Tim (while fixing her a drink):

What about your partner?

Lucy: Well, he doesn't count. Besides, he is unstable these days. He should have taken a paid vacation to recover.

Tim: here is your drink. (whiskey)

Lucy: Thank you Tim...how was the wedding?

Tim: Well, you know me. I am not much of a crowd person. But it was nice.

Lucy: I haven't seen you out and about in years. It's hard to imagine you not behind the bar.

Tim: Hey! I am "out and about", just not that often anymore. Besides, organizing these music nights is quite a lot of prep work.

Lucy: I can't argue with that one.

Lucy looks over her shoulder at the singer. They find eye contact. The singer's looks are both elegant and seductive. She seems interested in Lucy. But Lucy, awkward as she is at times, doesn't know how to deal with that tension and takes out her little book to start reading. Tim noticed

Tim: How long has it been that YOU have been "out and about" girl?

Lucy: Hey, when was the last time we played a game together? It must have been months by now.

Tim: Because you humble me every time. It would be nice to win once in a while.

Lucy: You know it's not about winning.

Tim: Yeah yeah," It's about finding a middle ground, like in a Conversation". But sometimes it's nice to win an argument.

Lucy: Tell you what, next time we play, you get a three stone Handicap advantage.

Tim: Make it four and a 20-Bucks stake and you got yourself a deal.

As the last sung note softly fades out into the room, the crowd starts clapping for the performer. The singer leaves the stage and sits next to Lucy.

Marlene: A Gin Tonic, please.

Marlene takes off her gloves and looks over Lucy. Lucy is still locked in on her book. Marlene observes Lucy's drink. It's whiskey, neat.

Marlene: No ice or water? You don't strike me as a purist.

Lucy: Tim is very particular with his hard liquor. I don't think he would let me have this one any other way.

Tim: A 16-year-old Lagavulin.

Marlene: Ah...you know, my favorite whiskeys work best with a drop of water. Something to break up the complexity and open up the aromas. It's like lighting a well-made scented candle. The potential is compressed into a passive state. You can smell it without lighting it of course, but it's going to be very intense and basic. But when lit, it opens up all those extra smells and complexities. It's softness... showing its true potential.

Lucy is blushing in awkwardness. But she sure enjoys the company. Marlene keeps looking at Lucy with a big, childlike smile. She is enjoying this too.

Marlene: Tim, forget the Gin. Get me a bottle of Aberlour A' Bunadh, with water on the side.

Tim: You do know your Liquors.

Tim, who just finished her drink, puts the bottle in front of them, a glass and water on the side. Marlene reaches over to the pure whiskey Lucy ordered.

Marlene: I will have a taste of yours.

Marlene takes a sip and shuts her eyes.

Marlene: Smokey…peaty…and…salty?… I like it!

Lucy looks over and starts laughing. This is so random.

Marlene: Now you will try mine.

She pours some water into Lucy's glass.

As Lucy takes a sip, she closes her eyes and takes a moment to let the taste of the whiskey penetrate her taste buds (profile shot). The lights in the room slowly dim down. It's just Lucy now.

Marlene: Take your time.

Suddenly a young woman's face appears from behind, whispering into Lucy's ear. We are inside Lucy's head.

Lia: a sweet beginning.

Lucy: I taste…dry dates?

Lia : Spices.

Lucy: There is a peppery note

Mia: and a smokey sweetness

Lucy: and…a little bit of a leathery, honey taste.

Mia: It reminds you of the time you spent in Rome.

Lucy: I have had this before. It was in Via Gregoriana a couple of years ago.

Mia: You loved that place so much.

Lucy: I remember ordering it, right before the band started to play. The guitarist played a melody that is still in my head. Every time I hum it, it throws me back to that night. There is a certain feeling that is connected to this taste.

Mia: Saudade

Lucy: Nostalgia... and Melancholy

The woman disappears as fast as she appeared. The room is lit normally now, as if time starts running again. As she opens her eyes, she looks over to Marlene, who seems a bit surprised by Lucy's complex answer. But she still has a smile on her face.

Lucy: I am sorry, that was a bit much, wasn't it?

Woman: No...no. I loved it. I guess I was right after all. The water reveals the complexity.

Lucy grins with a sense of embarrassment.

Suddenly there are loud steps that can be heard from the stairway that leads downstairs to the bar. Tim recognized the penetrant, unapologetic force of the boots, hitting the old wood beneath their feet.

Tim: The district warden!

He waves to the stage, where the sound crew is just about to work on the stage for the next performance. Within seconds, they are covering up the instruments with blankets. Everybody gets very quiet. Three men enter the Bar in dark blue shirts and brown jeans. They are wearing ornaments that look very similar to the symbol Lucy and Stefan found in the apartment. As they

enter, they spread out in the bar. One of them, the biggest of them all, gets behind the bar and approaches Tim, who cleans a glass like nothing happened.

Warden: Your license.

Tim: I showed it to your college last week. I am good for another year.

Warden: That wasn't a question.

He looks suggestively to the other wardens in the room. One of them smashes a glass.

Warden: Take it easy Josef. We are just here for the usual. Nothing to worry about. Now...the license.

Tim turns to the Warden; he is not scared at all of this guy. Quite the opposite.

Tim: You will pay for that glass.

Tim's voice changed completely from a very caring person to someone you do not want to have on the opposite team. He stares down the warden, letting him know that his next action better be an apologetic one.

Warden: Who do you think...

Tim: I think...

Tim takes out a cheap-looking whiskey bottle from under the counter.

Tim ...this needs a tasting.

He opens up the bottle with immense force, as if he is twisting someone's neck.

He slides the bottle under his nose.

Tim: Ah yes...this is typical for bad whiskey. Aggressive on the senses, usually a burning sensation. But no smoothness that should follow.

Without the necessary complexity and depth. This one doesn't even need a glass pouring to break it down.

He puts the bottle on his lips and drinks it. His elegant demeanor now looks more like he came straight out of a gangster film. He puts the bottle down, right between the warden and himself.

Tim: See, this one is mass-produced. If it wasn't for the label already warning us, the off-balanced color and watery body would not be noticeable. But when you taste it, it gets worse. The lack of depth and musty taste reveals its weakness against far superior whiskeys. It's all about the natural aging you know. While this one is bitter in the aftertaste, a real whiskey shows its strength in the long run. That's what makes it so elegant, persistent, and appreciated by its patrons.

The warden glances over into the room. Everybody's eyes are fixated on him. This might be a community ready to fight. He didn't anticipate this.

Tim: Without a trusted product, there is no quality of support. And it will, eventually, just drown by its equally shitty competitors. So, warden, I understand you don't have an understanding of what a glass does to a fine distillate, but all of us here know it is as much a part of the enjoyment as the drink itself. And we protect even the most brittle and minor-looking parts of the process. So, I am telling you again. You are paying for that glass.

The warden and Tim have an intense stare-down. The jazz club, with its slight sexual tension turned into a western saloon, about to let hell loose. This tension however, is short-lived. The warden takes out his wallet, grabs a bill and slams it on the counter.

Warden: We will meet again very soon.

With a very condescending "Yeah" from Tim, the warden and his followers leave the bar. The intense atmosphere lifts within an instant, as the entire bar starts cheering and screaming like Animals in a zoo. The instruments are unveiled again and the lighthearted atmosphere fully returns. Lucy and Marlene also laugh and share a deep, longing look.

Int, Night, Lucys Bedroom

Close up/ wide angle

Lucy lets out a big sigh as she climaxes. Marlene, who went down on her, crawls into Lucy's arm from under her blanket. They rest next to each other, happy.

Int. Morning, Lucy' s Bedroom

Top down/ side 35mm/ wide angle room

Lucy wakes up next to Marlene who is still asleep. Without waking her, she crawls out of bed and gets ready for her day of work.

Int, Livingroom

As Lucy drinks her morning café, she approaches a Go-Board on the table. A middle game has been lying there for days now. She was very reluctant to play the next move for white, as she was confronted with multiple options. As she stares down at the game, Marlene passes her, dressed in her dress from the night before, heels held over her shoulders and her hair as messy as it was when she was still asleep.

Marlene: See you next time, Lady Lagavulin.

She leaves the apartment, Lucy looking after her as she closes the door. Lucy puts her hand on her forehead, smiling and shaking her head in disbelief. This night was fun. She grabs a white stone from the Go-Bowl and places it on the board.

Int, Morning: Café

Lucy smacks a folder on the table and places a coffee next to it. Opposite to her sits a young man.

Lucy: Sorry I kept you waiting.

Case 1: Yeah...I'm sorry, what is this for again?

A collage sequence starts

Lucy: Well, as you applied for undercover services we need to put down some personal information of yours. This helps us understand your issues, ranking them in the waiting list according to urgency, as well as expand our internal database so we can scale it more efficiently.

Another person now sits opposite to Lucy:

Case 2: I don't know man; I don't really trust corps with my personal stuff.

Lucy: We are fully aware of your concerns about privacy issues. There is no official law protecting citizens from reusing it for profit margins, but we have an in-house policy that forbids us from sharing or selling any potential, pending, or ongoing cases.

Lucy to different people with every sentence while looking at documents:

Lucy: It says here you think you are being stalked by the bartender?

You are saying you believe that your husband has an affair?

The neighbor drives you crazy for...playing the flute after 10 PM?

Case 3 (overdressed rich old woman): I really think they need to fire him; I fear for my safety every time I go there.

Case4 (old man): I lost her 10 years ago, how we laughed together.
Back in the day...

Case 5 (young man): ...which is why I want to know how I can find her. She was so sexy in the nightclub.

Case 6 (woman with baby and crazy eyes) I think it's the Jews.

As the cases go on and the requests for private investigations get sillier and sillier, Lucy's expression turns more and more frustrated and annoyed. She was in such a great position with this case, and now she is back to

square one. As she takes notes, it is a repetition of the usual verdict at the urgency rating, as she continues to write her verdicts: low urgency, low urgency, low urgency.

Lucy rubs the side of her head, experiencing a headache from those people. In front of her sits a frail-looking woman. As she scrapes the skin under her fingernail, her eyes are deadlocked on the window next to the table. She looks at her reflection.

Katherin: What day is it?

Lucy: Monday.

Katherine: Hugh… I love writing on Wednesdays, its soothing.

Lucy; Mhm…

Katherine: I went to see multiple medical stations about my headaches. None of them could explain my forgetfulness or the constant nausea. It went so far that I wasn't able to meet the quota in my company, which got me fired. So, without income and not in a state to find a job soon, I moved in with my boyfriend. Ever since, it has gotten worse.

Lucy: How long have you been together?

Katherine: Who knows.

Lucy starts paying attention. Her headache seemed to disappear.

Katherine: I would find myself in an unconscious state for hours. One moment, I make breakfast in the morning, and the next I am standing in the bathroom brushing my teeth. And the more time I spend in this apartment, the more frequently it happens.

Lucy: And those episodes, how would you describe the moments right before and after?

Katherine, without moving her head, now stares into Lucy's eyes. They reveal the pure horror of her experience. As she continues speaking her voice is now close to whispering, as she hisses the phrases in absolute fear.

Katherine: Like being dragged out of my own body and locked into a dark room, shackled into a prison corner. It feels cold and wet. As if all the good in my life had vanished within an instant. My heart starts racing, and my vision turns blurry. And I feel watched. A constant stare that runs up and down my body, piercing through my clothes and adding to the already helpless feeling. Then I am gone.

Tears run down her face

And when I come back, I am disoriented. I observe my surroundings because this used to help with panic attacks, but when I do it now...

Katherine is startled for a moment, scaring herself with the story

Katherine: I don't recognize the books next to the bed, or the kitchenware I use every day. I know it is the same apartment but I am no longer myself. And then pain shoots down my arms and legs. Paralyzing me. Because even when I wake up, I am still trapped.

Lucy: How does your boyfriend react to it?

Katherine: At first, I tried to talk to him about it. But with every episode, he seemed to be more distant than before. And...

Lucy: And?

Katherine: ...I don't remember how we met. I don't know who I am living with. I don't know who that person is.

Lucy digests the information for a second

Lucy: You said you write?

Interior Café, afternoon.

Lucy sits at the same table all by herself, getting served yet another coffee. She analyses the documents of the woman. Katherine Bogel, 22 years old, brown eyes and brown hair, used to be an accountant for a small business that sells paper sheets. Fired 8 months ago. She moved in with her boyfriend right after. She hasn't sent out any applications since. Lucy puts aside the papers and focuses on copies of Katherine's writings. One of them catches her attention.

The sinking ship

*Eight weeks on the sea,
Swaying ship and bitter wine,
Sailors sing of doom.
I sit with them still,
Thoughts of him and her entwined,
A cold, quiet game.
His hand upon hers,
A secret I know too well,
Yet I do not speak.*

*Jacob, once so warm,
Now distant, silent, and strange,
Misses supper's call.*

*Through withered decks I search,
Behind the barrels, there he crouches,
A rat in his hand.
Its belly torn wide,
His eyes dark as the depths,
Madness in his soul.*

*Yet through his decay,
A cruel glint of loving gaze,
Shackled to my heart.*

*And in that moment,
I know the ship's fate is sealed,
Sinking in the night.*

While the words of the poem echo through Lucy's head, the café is twisting and shadows spread over the floor. The glasses are clinking and the room is swaying. A thick and dark atmosphere spreads through the room. Sounds of the ocean can be heard as if the Café itself turned into the very ship of the story. And then, when the poem is finished. A woman, sitting on the bar counter, appears out of thin air. She is young and tall, with blond flat hair and a beautiful white dress. Is this a dream? No. We are inside Lucy's head.

Mia: The metaphysical beauty of this ruined abstraction testifies to a pride equal to an Empire and rotting like a carcass, returning to the substance of the soil, a bit as the double ends by being confused with the real through aging. The most beautiful allegory of simulation.

Lucy doesn't look at the woman, not able to hide a little grin.

Lucy: "The precession of simulacra" by Jean Baudrillard.

Mia: It is fitting, isn't it? A story to convey the abstraction of her helplessness, deconstructing the reality of her pain through a made-up function created by herself. Making her own truth and devaluing the experience that overpowers her. That was a smart subversion on her part, I must say.

Lucy: But to take that allegory into account, wouldn't you have to base the experience itself on a simulacrum? That would imply her lying about it.

Mia: Well, let's see. Baudrillard DOES write about the weaponization of categorizing psychoanalytical cases. If we assume that all crazy people simulate, it kills the universal truth.

Lucy: I don't think she is crazy.

Mia: Ok then, what else is there... He ALSO writes about God as a visual theological concept, making the idea of belief itself a self-producing simulacrum, constantly copying itself, constantly manufacturing truth.

Lucy: When I separate her perception of the condition from the medical records, there is an indication that with each episode, she increasingly believes she is losing her mind, thus intensifying the psychological drain. But that only explains the effect and not the cause

Mia: Yes, but that STORY!

Mia jumps from the countertop and walks towards Lucy.

Mia: This is pure emotion. I'd rather believe the melodramatic story of her boyfriend shagging another woman and her guilt-tripping herself into a toxic relationship than her losing her mind.

Lucy turns the poem around; there is something written on the back. Lucy reads it out loud

“Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe”

Suddenly, like on a stage, a spotlight on the floor, now there are two women. They look the same. Lia wears white shirt and black trousers, kneeling on the floor and holding Mia who plays dead in her arms. Lia cites an Edgar Allan Poe poem, playingly overacting it.

*The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes! — that was the reason as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
chilling and killing my Annabel Lee!!!!*

Lucy (grinning): Yeah, ok, I do see the similarities. But when she truly believes her story, who am I to judge her reality on the assumption that nothing is real in the first place? We cannot solve factual distress with existential philosophy.

Mia: That is not the point. There is a truth within that story that applies to her experience. Simulacra always derive from something real, don't they?

Lucy (to herself): ...what do those poems share.....death...

Lucy stares into the abyss, thinking.

Lucy: “Madness in his soul” ...

Lucy keeps citing a paragraph from Baudrillard

Lucy: For if any symptom can be produced and can no longer be taken as a fact of nature, then every illness can be considered as simulatable...simulations at the gate of the unconscious, as dreams always are...possibly produced in the same way as any medicine.

There it is, a possible reason for Katherine's state. Lucy's eyes open wide. She looks over to the twins, now sitting opposite to her at the table. Mia wears jeans and a leather jacket. Her hair is now in a ponytail; Lia wears an overall.

Lucy: Drugs!

Lia: It would explain her nausea.

Mia: And emotional state.

Lucy: And many substances used by sex traffickers don't show up in routine blood tests.

Lucy takes another look at the Poem. A close-up reveals one line again

Now distant, silent, and strange

Lucy: If he drugs her...I need to see the apartment. The firm will make sure she is safe for the time being...Baudrillard...of all the allegories...

Mia: There is a reason so many accomplished movies got made based on his texts.

Lia: Truly inspiring.

Suddenly the weirdness of the environment disappears, as well as the 2 Women. We are back in the real world. Lucy grabs her bag and pulls out the two videotapes. She is thinking. Then her phone rings. It's Stefan. Lucy picks up the phone.

Lucy: Good, I was about to call you! I need to talk to you!

Int. Apartment:

Stefan is with 2 colleagues of Team B inside a flat. We have seen it before. He wears gloves. Walking through the kitchen, holding a USB stick.

Stefan: Likewise. I need you to come over to a case in the 2nd district. There is something I need to show you.

Stefan looks up. The camera reveals the man who hanged himself at the beginning of the episode.

Stefan: It's worse than we thought.

End of episode 1.

EPISODE 2: Pour le travail

Int. One room apartment

Static noise as the black screen jump-cuts to a room filled with old computers. It is the same apartment we saw at the beginning of episode 1. Close-up shots reveal more detail. Old motherboards stacked on top of each other in a corner, some of them half ripped apart for spare parts.

Take-out food containers on the floor, sharing its space with bowls containing screws and bolts. At the Desk sits the woman. The camera is positioned behind her (light frog perspective, half portrait). The PC screen emits a blue light on her face. She solds computer parts and wears headphones, listening to music. As she is doing her work, the song comes to an end. She puts down the soldering iron and opens up a CD player to switch out the Album. She approaches a shelf next to the entrance, stacked with cables and old pc screens. As she pushes aside some of the cables, a small but very carefully selected collection of CDs is revealed. She takes out one of her favorite ones and admires the covers. Then, her attention shifts. Is that laughter in the Hallway? A woman and a man seem to have a lighthearted discussion. But the content of the conversation is inaudible. Still, the woman seems to be interested. She thinks. After some consideration and a dramatic slow zoom to the back of her head, she opens the entrance door.

Int. Hallway.

In frame the corridor, an old, but warm and atmospheric building for sure. The woman grabs the door frame and slowly peeks outside the apartment towards the camera, where the conversation continues. Only half her face is revealed. The conversation, now audible, devolves into a drunken mess.

Veronica: You idiot, I don't believe for a second that you did it!

Theodor: Biggest anxiety moment of my life. He chased me like 4 blocks before giving up.

Veronica: OMG! I would have DIED girl.

Theodor: I was so scared he was still around, so I didn't want to go home. Imagine him finding out and then hebreaks into our apartment.

Veronica: More like breaking your skull! HAHAHA

Int. Hallway.

Theodor, a handsome guy in his late 30s leans against the wall while Veronica stands in front of him with a stretched-out hand against the wall, helping her to keep her balance. They seem to be very close.

Theodor: So...thihihih...I called Simone and asked her if I could swing by.

Veronica: Yeah, that's true, she moved into that area! You are so lucky!

Theodor: Right? I ran to her place and what followed were a few hours of the best escapism of my life. I was so on edge when I arrived, so we kept drinking, well, I kept drinking, she just started, and we played card games and talked about what we would do if we were rich.

Veronica: Fuck I love Simone so much! I should really give her a call but I always forget. I feel bad.

Theodor: You should! We were talking about you, you know. She misses you!

Veronica: I miss her too!

Theodor: I think you guys just need to sit down and hash it out once and for all.

Veronica: Uuuuh, I knooooooow. Why are friendships always so complicated man? It's not even like we wanted to be mad at each other, and it's so stupid and unnecessary...I am going to call her.

Veronica takes out her flip phone. The woman from the apartment looks a bit in awe of them both. True human connection. Something she has longed for quite some time. Her awe turns into sadness real fast.

Theodor: No Girl, do it tomorrow. You are way to drunk.

Veronica: SSSSH!

Theodor: Just call her tomorr...

Veronica: SHHH! OK..., I'm calling her!

Veronica puts the phone on her ear and starts walking away. Theodor is sticking to his principles but at the same time he doesn't care enough to stop her. It's not ideal but it won't blow up in her face either so.

Theodor: Go get her!

Veronica: HEEEEEY GIIIIRL, HOW ARE YOU????

Theodor glanced over to the Woman in the Doorframe, called Noémie. She is startled. Theodor starts smiling at her. It is a warm and comforting smile. Like a spontaneous invitation to brunch on a Sunday morning with your best friends. He waves at her, interested in his neighbor. But Noémie can't handle the social pressure and retreats into her apartment.

Static noise dominates the atmosphere as she stands in front of her entrance door, disappointed in herself. This could have been a change for an interaction. But then again, does it matter? She doesn't know it any differently anyway. In this calm moment of self-reflection, her phone starts ringing. She pulls out a flip phone to read the message.

Boss: New inquiry: double dosage of IBD-3.

The Woman looks at her clock on the desk. It is 2.30 PM, enough time to finish the product. She approaches the desk and picks up all the cassettes and CD,s, puts them into a box and stuffs it into a corner. She sits down and puts the soldering iron aside. She opens a shelf filled with VHS tapes. She takes one out, shoves it into a player connected to her computer and starts working. The static silence is cut with the clicking sounds of her keyboard. (High angle wide shot).

Main theme starts with credits. The intro plays, shots of Vienna and various characters are shown. Music is inspired by "keizoku"

Int. afternoon, apartment of the suicide case.

The camera climbs upwards, following the back of the hanged man in the doorframe. It comes to a hold on ear's height, panning down to Stefan and Lucy, standing next to each other, looking at the man's lifeless face. Lucy looks a bit chilled. Stefan's demeanor is cool as a cucumber.

Lucy: When did this happen?

Stefan: This morning.

In the kitchen are two men, the detectives from Team B, Richard and Ben. Richard is a somewhat short but handsome guy with a beard, black curly hair, and a recognizable face. Ben is quite the opposite. Tall, normal central European looking. A mute. Both are wearing gloves and a full-body safety suit. Richard holds a clipboard in his hand and conducts all the basic procedures.

Richard: Viktor Schmidt, 42 years old. Time of Death: 12:40 AM, Death by hanging, No immediate signs of a fight or any sort of third-party-involvement. The wife was at work when it happened. The neighbor, an elderly woman, got worried because the baby wouldn't stop screaming and called our department. We arrived around 2:30 PM. The kid is with her for now.

Lucy: Where is the wife?

Richard: We tried to contact her but she didn't pick up the phone.

Lucy: And when were you planning on getting that corpse off the ceiling?

Richard: We are not done yet with the forensics.

Lucy turns to Stefan, a bit confused as to why she got called here.

Lucy: So, pretty straightforward case, why do you want me here?

Stefan: We found this in his laptop.

Stefan hands over the USB Stick.

Stefan: He watched the file minutes before he killed himself. We suspect it might be the same source of distribution as the tapes we are after.

Lucy is shaken to the core.

Lucy: A digital version?!

Stefan: If this is mass producible it could lead to an epidemic of whatnot. People jumping down from rooftops? Killing people in a frenzy? Turning into sleeper assassins?

Richard: We are already looking into it as we speak but retracing the digital footprint of this software without endangering the crew is going to be difficult. It could take us weeks just to decode this USB stick, and if their software is algorithmic…

Lucy starts thinking. She is looking at the dead man, his dead eyes staring right back at hers.

Lucy: …then we are chasing clouds on a stormy night… A friend of mine knows a guy who might know how to crack this. But it's a long shot. If the source of the influence was physical on those tapes, it is unlikely that a codec is responsible for its effects, so, that's a start…

Stefan: Tapes? As in plural?

Lucy: Another one was inside the seizing guy. Nic cut him open.

Stefan: Yikes.

Lucy and Stefan keep staring at the corpse. After a while, Stefan uses his phrase, Lucy has heard 100s of times by now

Stefan: I have a hunch.

Lucy: Of course, you do…

Stefan: Give me the tapes

Lucy does so.

Stefan: I will try to figure out who made these.

Lucy: You think that will help us with this? (Holding up the USB stick)

Lucy: That was our case anyways. Besides, what other leads do we have?

Stefan: Right…

Stefan leans over to Lucy in a serious manner.

Stefan: I need you on this case with me, Lucy. I don't care what the boss is saying.

Lucy: First there is another case I need to look into. I think a woman is drugged by her boyfriend. It could be a sex trafficking ring. I need to check out the apartment before I can officially send the case to the Bureau. When I have proof, I can send it to the boss, and someone else will take over.

Stefan: I thought you hate small cases.

Lucy: This one isn't.

Stefan: Well, I need a report on the tapes asap.

Lucy: On it. What will you tell the Boss?

Stefan: I think it would be best to tell him about the USB Stick. But let us keep the tapes under a closed lid for now. I don't want him to cut us off from this case.

Lucy: Ok.

As Lucy walks down the corridor, she stops before opening the entrance door. She looks at Stefan, standing there, thinking. His hand is shaky.

Lucy: Stefan!

Stefan turns around.

Lucy: This is a serious case. Once we start investigating this further, there is no way to know who is out to get us. Please be careful with what you watch in your free time.

Stefan looks at Lucy, understanding her fear for him. At the same time This is the last thing he wants to hear right now.

Stefan: It's just feel-good stuff. Minor effects. No Biggy.

Lucy forces a smile on her face, then she leaves.

Stefan turns to Team B.

Stefan: Ok boys, let's get to work.

A collage of Stefan, Richard and Ben looking through cabinets, reading documents and taking fingerprints of the corpse.

The documents reveal some information. The wife is a medical masseuse, 29 years old, Brunette hair.

In the collage Richard explains some context to the case.

Richard: According to the neighbor, she has a close relationship with the family. They told me, the wife, Sarah Schmidt, works night and day to provide for the family, while the husband is, or rather, was a stay-at-home dad.

Jump Cut to Richard talking to the elderly neighbor lady, Siglinde

Siglinde: She always seems so exhausted when I see her leave the apartment early in the morning. To be honest, I didn't

think he was the one struggling. But then again, He did seem off in the last couple of weeks. More..., oh, how can I put it...reserved. Confused even.

Jump-cut back to a collage of investigative measures in the apartment, looking under the bed, taking DNA samples of the environment, taking down the corpse.

Richard: While the neighbor told us the wifes second job is a runner position in a restaurant, we didn't find any evidence that links her to any cafés or restaurants in the Vienna area. We suspect she had a more lucrative night job to keep the family afloat. This would also make sense, given that this household is a 3 Person-1 income constellation. No close relatives on either side, either. No Inheritance that covers the costs for them. The area is freaking expensive too.

Stefan opens a drawer in the bedroom, revealing a stack of unpaid bills. Underneath, a bunch of Tapes. Stefan takes photos with a camera and takes one out of the drawer. He holds it up high to inspect the VHS closer.

Stefan: Richard, do you see what I am seeing?

Richard snuggles up behind Stefan, trying to find anything unusual on the tape.

Richard: Not really.

Int. Apartment Kitchen

Stefan and Richard stand next to each other. Both tapes from the case as well as the one Stefan pulled out of the drawer, lay on the kitchen counter next to each other.

Stefan: Reinforced corners suggest that these two are produced in Europe. But on all three of them, there is a "PAL VHS" engraving.

Richard: So?

Stefan: While other European VHS shells are typically in Stereo, the “PAL VHS” versions are Dual-Mono. Those are typically found outside of Europe, like Australia, parts of Asia, and the Middle East. The only country in Europe that has this system is Italy. If we open up the case, we could decipher the framerate manually, which would also be different from other formats, running slightly slower on a 25 FPS while the European version uses a common NTSC format of 29.97.

Ben walks up to both Richard and Stefan

Ben: look what if found.

Stefan takes a business card out of Ben’s hand. Christaan Barnard, VHS shelling distribution and film development. Contractor.

Stefan: Christaan Barnard…I didn’t know the world’s first heart transplant surgeon decided to jump out of his grave and make a change in his career. Thanks, gentlemen.

Stefan takes a photo of the card and hands it over to Ben.

Stefan: Find out where I can find this guy. I need to make some calls.

Ext. afternoon Apartment complex.

Low angle wide shot

A thick fog spreads over the street that separates Lucy from the apartment of Katherine’s boyfriend. Lucy looks up at one of the windows. There is a woman in her undergown, smoking a cigarette. She looks like she just crawled out of bed, as if still asleep. A guy appears behind her and hugs her. Then he takes the cigarette out of her mouth, puts it out, and drags her away from the window. She doesn’t seem to like it, but she is not in a state to fight it either. As they disappear inside the apartment, Lucy approaches the complex.

Int. Corridor. A camera placed next to the apartment entrance.

Lucy climbs the staircase and walks towards the camera. Loud music from inside. Lucy stops in front of the apartment. She slowly reaches for the handle and tries to open the door. It’s locked. She takes out a lock pick,

gets on her knees, and starts to break in. After some time, a click, and the door springs open.

Int. Apartment.

Lucy slowly opens the door. The music, now unbearably loud, overshadows the creaking of the door. As Lucy takes a look inside, she seems safe enough to make her way in, crawling on all 4.

K' s Boyfriend: You like that don' t you?

Woman: ...I don' t want to...

K' s Boyfriend: Come on, I will be good to you, now spread your legs.

Bald guy: I am telling you man; the movie was a waste of time.
Not worth the ticket price at all.

Lucy crawls towards the Bedroom. It is a boy' s apartment, littered with clothes. Lucy, hiding behind the door frame, looks around in search of medication that would confirm her theory. In bed, Katherine' s Boyfriend lies on top of the woman she saw in the window. She is clearly under some sort of influence, clueless about what' s happening. Next to the bed, behind a table, is a sofa. A bald man sits there, cutting up cocaine. Next to him, a sleeping young androgynous-looking man, just wearing his underwear. Is he drugged up, too? The table, besides the cocaine, stacked with Marijuana and an overflowing ashtray. A butterfly knife sticks inside the tabletop, as well as a gun, lying next to it.

Bald guy: And there was no consistency in the story either. The movie started as a horror film, and then it ended up being a super pretentious drama that made no sense. Like, I expected a different movie from the advertisement. Respect the audience' s expectations, man, you know what I mean?

He snorts a line

Bald Guy: And in the end, there is no resolution to anything. All the characters are miserable except for the protagonist. But then again, He doesn' t do anything.

Just sits around, being in his head all the time. That's the problem with people, bro. Everybody is overthinking everything and not doing anything anymore. No wonder the world turned to shit. Hey, Baby boy, you want some?

The guy next to him is nonresponsive. The bald guy grabs his chin and shakes his head around until he wakes up. In a barely awoken state, the young guy leans forward to snort a line.

Bald Guy: Don't overdo it like last time, though.

The young man immediately passes out again.

K. Boyfriend: Hold still

Woman: ...no...

Bald Guy: Hey, you sure you don't want a piece of his ass? He is very tame and submissive. (Slaps his behind)

K. Boyfriend: Fuck off, I don't like men. Just bring me more of the stuff so she stops moving.

Making a mocking face, the bald guy gets up. Immediately, Lucy retreats, crawling into the kitchen. As she is hiding there, the bald Guy passes the kitchen entrance and walks into the bathroom, opening up the cabinet, looking through the meds. stock.

Bald guy: If I were to make a movie, it would be like the best thing ever, dude. None of this boring character development-based crap. It would be about this cop driving a tuned Ferrari. Spitting flames like a dragon. Like a Bond movie, just with more special effects and less gay shit love. REAL gangster-type shit, caping whoever annoys him. It's a real narrative. He would also wear the coolest uniform. Like a Gestapo fashion-like outfit...(grinning). Showing off his tight little ass and big arm muscles.

As he grabs a little pill container, he turns to the toilet and starts pissing. Lucy slowly gets up and approaches him. She reaches inside her coat and takes out a pistol. She holds the shaft to use it like a hammer.

Bald Guy Like a fucking Anime character punching the shit out of the people. Sending them into the 5-dimensional level power. And getting all the bitches in the world, getting sucked off by everybody... what a life...fuck man, I think I need therapy.

Lucy smacks the pistol on his head. As he goes down, Lucy catches his fall, clearly struggling to hold his weight. Slowly, she lets him sink on the floor.

K. Boyfriend: There you go, be a good girl and AH, that bitch bit me!

He slaps her

K. Boyfriend: Fuck that bitch.

He gets up and walks towards the window to smoke a cigarette.

Lucy takes a look at the meds; the guy was holding in his hand. Definitely what she was looking for. She makes her way to the exit but stops herself. She can't leave the woman behind. She slowly turns around and walks towards the room. The young man is completely gone, so she focuses on K.s Boyfriend, looking outside the window, still unaware of Lucy' s presence. She points the Weapon at him.

Lucy: Don't mo...

Lucy stumbles over a bunch of clothes and goes down hard. The weapon falls out of her hand. The guy turns around, looking at Lucy. For a short moment, both just have eye contact. Each realizes the situation they are in now. They have to move fast. The guy rushes over to Lucy as she grabs the weapon. Before he can force himself on top of her, she manages to get off a shot, but it misses him. He towers over Lucy, fighting for the weapon. With one hand he pins her hand with the weapon on the floor. With the other one, he strangles Lucy. He is stronger than he looks. With the grab on her neck, he lifts her up and pushes her against the cabin behind him. Lucy loses the

Pistol as it falls to the floor. The guy kicks it away. Glasses and books on top of the cabin fall, hitting Lucy on the head. Lucy starts bleeding. With her free hand, she desperately pulls on his clothes, but she struggles to counter his strength. For a brief moment, she closes her eyes to focus. This isn't the first time she is in a tricky situation like this one. As she opens her eyes, Lia appears behind the guy, wearing sportswear.

Lia: punch on the eye, kick to the balls.

Lucy punches the guy's left eye. He stumbles backward, letting go of Lucy. She uses all her might to kick him in the groin. Unfortunately, she misses and hits his inner left thigh. It is still strong enough to make him go down on one knee.

Lia: You need to work on your precision.

Lucy: Fuck off!

Lucy swings her left leg, trying to hit the guy on the side of the head, but he stops it by grabbing her thigh.

Lia: stump, twist, neck.

Lucy stumps down her leg, pinning his hand between her upper and lower thigh, and twists her leg outwards, breaking his hand. She then closes in on him with her upper body and smacks the shit out of his side neck. She expected him to go down, but he just looks angrier than before.

Lia: Not good enough!

The guy uses his position to get underneath her and puts her on his shoulders. He stands up and runs towards the wall for her to smash into. On the way there, she keeps punching his head with her elbow. He succeeds with his sprint and Lucy's back gets completely blasted by the wall. She falls on the floor.

Lia: No time for pain, girl, get a knife in the kitchen.

Lia was right, even though her back is killing her, Lucy needs to stay vigilant. She is right in front of the corridor. The guy tries to tower over her again, but she kicks herself away from him into a backward somersault,

back on her feed. She rushes over to the kitchen, but the guy is faster than her. Before she can reach it, He pulls her hair and puts her in a headlock. He slowly drags her back into the room. He looks behind him at the table, where the knife and the gun are. Just a few steps left now.

Lia: counterweight and release!

Lucy, in one strong motion, leans forward to make him use as much force as possible towards his back, then, within a split second, throws all her weight into him. He loses balance and lands with his back on the table. Next to Lucy, lying on top of him, was the knife. A close-up of the knife and Lucy's eyes reveal her anxiety around knives. But there is no time for that. She pulls it out of the table and forces it into his arm, which makes him lose his grip on her.

K's Boyfriend: You fucking bitch!

She gets up and takes the gun from the table.

Lucy: Don't you fucking move!

The guy freezes, still lying on top of the table. The passed-out guy next to him might as well be dead at this point. If this didn't wake him up, nothing will.

Both are staring at each other, breathing heavily. Suddenly, the other guy makes noises inside the bathroom. He stumbles into the corridor, seeing what unfolded in the living room. He freezes, too.

Lucy: I will take the girl and leave this apartment. if one of you fucking dares to move an inch without any instructions, I will put a bullet in each of your fucking kneecaps, understood?

K's Boyfriend answers in a very calm tone. Almost too calm. Sure, of himself even. He finds eye contact with his friend who seems to be ready to jump at Lucy any second.

Lucy: Don't fucking look at him. Slowly turn around and put your hands on your head.

He does so. Lia, standing in the corner, looks very worried.

Lia: Careful!

With this, Lucy turns to the other guy. He stands closer to her now.

Lucy: Back up!

A close-up of Lucy's face, she is breathing heavily. Blood runs down her face. Her skin glistened with sweat. She looks around while pointing the gun at the guy in the corridor. She is pinned between those guys. Cut off from the entrance by one of them. The woman still lies in bed, unaware of her surroundings. What is her way out? She would rather not shoot them.

K's Boyfriend: Dude I think your friend is not breathing.

Bald guy: What?

Lucy: What?

Lia: What?

Bald guy: For fuck's sake help him!

K's Boyfriend: As you can see, I am not capable of moving right now!

Lucy: Calm down!

Lucy is saying this, not calm at all.

Lucy: Fuck ok...you!...

She points the gun at K's Boyfriend

Lucy: See what's wrong with him. But don't you dare try anything!

K's Boyfriend slowly leans over to the young man, Checking his pulse. There is a pulse, a loud heartbeat can be heard. As he leans over with his ear on

his face, we can hear him breath too. While doing so, his hand slowly wanders underneath the table. There is another gun.

Lia: He is playing you, girl.

Lucy holds her breath, points the gun at his ass, closes her eyes, and takes a shot. It hits him on the right Butt cheek. The passed-out guy shortly wakes up from the noise but passes out again. She immediately points the gun at his friend, who is way more passive now.

K' s Boyfriend: AAAAAAAAHHH MY FUCKING ASS!!!! YOU BITCH…YOU FUCKING BITCH.

Lucy: Shut the fuck up!

Bald Guy: Yo, I don' t even know what is going on. I didn' t even saw your face know what I' m saying?

As he is saying this he backs up into the bathroom and locks the door.

Bald Guy: I am chill! I am casually taking a shit, and nothing happened since I got in here!

As K' s boyfriend keeps screaming, Lucy lifts the woman on her back and drags her out of the apartment.

Int. Staircase.

2 floors down, Lucy sacks on the stairs. She needs a breather. There is a lot of blood on her. The woman seems to be able to sit there on her own. But as Lucy is looking at her, still breathing heavily, she concludes there is no point in engaging in a conversation with her. She pulls out her work phone and dials her boss' s number.

Lucy: Lucy here, connect me to the boss.

Ext. Balcony, Bosses apartment.

The Boss sits in a chair, drinking a pina colada. Next to him sits his wife, knitting. He wears sunglasses, which reflect the sun. It is beautiful there. Heaven on earth.

Boss: In his ass? Damn Lucy, that is ruthless. Well, I will send a team to pick you up and take care of the guys. They should arrive in 10 minutes. They will take it from there. Good job. Take a break for a day or two, you deserve it.

The Boss hangs up the phone and slurps on his Pina Colada.

Boss: His ass…unbelievable.

Int. Staircase.

Lucy hangs up the phone. She looks exhausted but also a bit proud of herself. Lia and Mia appear behind her.

Lia: Next time kick him in the balls. You could have avoided most of this mess.

Lucy: Fuck off…

Lucy wraps the woman’s arm over her shoulder and drags her down to the entrance.

Int. apartment of Noémie

Noémie writes some code on her computer while listening to a Documentary CD. It is the same eerie room with the same eerie static noise.

Documentary: In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Visegrád Group and the European Neighborhood Policy, Eastern European nationalist leaders distanced their nations from the European Union’s influence. Rejecting the post-war dynamics that had shaped the continent for decades, they forced the EU to take drastic measures to protect the security of its information networks. The ban of the Internet in 2036 marked a definitive step in curbing the spread of disinformation, as unchecked AI-generated fake news had become an uncontrollable threat to all societal stability around the globe. By 2038, the global landscape had shifted dramatically, banning global AI networks as a

whole. The collapse of the Chinese market and the United States' violent struggle against oligarchic power, which resulted in over 450,000 deaths that year alone, threw the world into further disarray. Against this backdrop, the formation of the Eurasia-Africa Pact (EAP) in 2039 emerged as a bold reinvention of the European Union, now extending partnerships into North Africa. This new alliance, built on principles of liberal stability, made an effort to fortify trade and military defense while countering the unchecked privatization of fundamental resources. However, extremist factions within the EAP, supported by politically sponsored organizations, began to undermine local governments and parliaments so that public institutions, including hospitals, schools, and law enforcement, were coerced into privatization. This destabilization overshadowed the progressive policies and political efforts of the union, leading to widespread dysfunction. Through uncertain landscapes like these, criminal syndicates and cults gained overwhelming power, challenging traditional state structures. Meanwhile, global investors advocating for a robust social market abandoned their already lost nations to pour resources into the EAP, desperately hoping to salvage some stability. Yet, with extreme weather events accelerating, restoring a free and safe alliance seems increasingly difficult…

Suddenly the doorbell rings. The woman looks up from her computer in confusion. She stops the CD player and takes out her earphones. Why would someone be at her apartment? Is she being investigated? But then, her boss would have let her know. She reaches under the desk and pulls out a baseball bat. She approaches the door and looks through the peephole. It's the neighbor, Theodor. Noémie is surprised but not relaxed as of yet. She hides the bat behind her back and opens the door just enough to show her face.

Theodor: Hey! Sorry to bother you, but the other day, I saw you for the first time, and I didn't realize someone new had moved into this apartment! I wanted to give you this as a welcome gift.

Theodor holds a plate with banana bread in his hand. It looks self-made. The woman takes the plate, hesitant of how to react to it.

Theodor: Listen, I am throwing a home party tonight. Just a few people. Nothing crazy. If you feel like it, you can always swing by. It's apartment 14, the one right next to yours. I would love to see you there! Sorry, I didn't even ask for your name.

A Name? That's right. Sooner or later people were bound to interact with her. Should she use a fake one? Or does it even matter? Nobody knows her anyway. And she is completely off the grid.

Noémie: Noémie.

Theodor: Noémie? Ah, vous êtes française ? C'est super ! On ne voit plus tellement de Français s'installer ici ces temps-ci. Qu'est-ce qui vous a donné envie de venir ? *[Oh you are french? That is exciting. These days not many people from France move here. So why did you decide to move here?]*

Noémie: pour le travail *[for work]*

Theodor: Travail, c'est-à-dire? *[Work as in?]*

Noémie doesn't answer

Theodor: Oups, désolée, je suis un peu curieuse, hein ? C'est vraiment pas mes affaires. Bref, comme je t'ai dit, ma porte est ouverte à partir de 21h. Passe quand tu veux, Noémie ! *[Oops, sorry, I'm a bit nosy, huh? It's really none of my business. Anyway, as I told you, my door is open from 9 PM. Come by whenever you want, Noémie!]*

As Theodor leaves, Noémie looks after him. He walks into his apartment and closes the door. Noémie does the same, leaning against the door. She lets go of the bat. It falls on the ground with a heavy bang. She slowly walks towards her computer and starts working again, listening to her documentary.

This time we cannot hear it. Noémie is very distracted. She finally had the interaction, she planned for. But she got invited to a party. Should she go? Is it risky?

After a while, Noémie gets up and opens her dresser. She takes out clothing options piece by piece, just to be dissatisfied with them, throwing them on the floor. Jeans, a tank top, an old dress, what even is the party about? Should she wear makeup? Or can she just show up in jogging pants? We haven't seen Noémie show this much emotion. She is invested and stressed about this party.

A collage of her deciding on basic pants and minimum makeup. She is barely satisfied with it, but good enough. Then, she is staring at the clock. 5 PM, 6:20 PM, 7:30 PM. She walks up and down the very small apartment, thinking about how her first impression should be. 7:40 PM, 7:50 PM, it is nearly time. Then the last minute goes by, 8: PM. She opens the door to leave, just to hold herself back. No, not in this outfit. She retreats and redoes her look. She puts on a yellow dress and a bolder makeup look. A final glance at the clock. 8:40 PM. Soon enough to have people there, but not too late for them to be split in groups already. She grabs a bag that matches her outfit and leaves the apartment.

Int. Apartments, hallway

Noémie opens the door and walks over to Theodor's apartment. There it is, number 14. The sound of laughter can already be heard through the door. She is hesitant to knock. She raises her hand and knocks on the door twice. Noémie closes her eyes, praying for it to be Theodor opening the door. Her phone rings. She looks at it. A message. 8:41PM, Boss. before she can open it, the door swings open.

Theodor: Hé! Tu es venue! *[Hey! You came!]*

Noémie quickly puts her phone away.

Noémie sighs in relieve. The fact that he is somewhat cute isn't even the reason.

Theodor: Entre, t'inquiète ! La salle de bains est là si tu en as besoin, et le salon est par là. Hey everybody, this is Noémie! *[Come in!, The bathroom is right here in case you need it.]*

Theodor shows Noémie around and introduces Noémie to some people. They all seem very friendly. The mood is light. A pretty sizable apartment. Around 15 people at this party. The lighting in the rooms is tasteful, moody, and there are a lot of plants. A big couch in the center of the living room. A group of people had already settled there. They have a drink. Veronica is there too. She waves Theodor and Noémie over.

Theodor: This is Veronica, my roommate.

Noémie: I am Noémie.

Veronica: Noémie? what a beautiful name! Where are you from?

Noémie: Ahm, Cancale.

Veronica: Cancale, never heard of it.

Theodor: Isn't that in Britanny?

Noémie: Next to Saint-Malo, yes. Famous for their oysters.

Veronica: Is that so.

Noémie tries to pivot the conversation away from her.

Noémie: What about you Veronica?

Veronica: I am a Sagittarius.

Confused about the answer, Theodor tries to keep the flow going due to Veronicas specific humor.

Theodor: You want a drink?

Noémi: Sure.

Theodor leads the way to the kitchen.

Noémie: Nice talking to you!

As the camera moves backward into the direction of the kitchen and focuses on the couch, Veronica looks at Noémie with a big grin, taking a sip of her drink. Is she fun or a massive bitch?

Int. Kitchen

In the kitchen, 2 people are talking by the window, sharing a cigarette. Theodor opens the refrigerator.

Theodor: T'aimes le gin? [*You like gin?*]

Noémie: Moi, je préfère le whisky. [*I prefer whiskey*]

Theodor: Le whisky, hein ?... J'ai celui-là. [*Whiskey huh?... I have this one*]

Theodor hands her over a whiskey bottle. Noémie looks at the etiquette.

Theodor: Il est si mauvais que ça? [*Is it that bad?*]

Noémie: Non, Non, c'est bon. [*No, no, it's fine*]

Theodor: Donc, tu le veux pur ou...? [*So, you want it neat or?*]

Noémie: Celui-ci? Merci, je vais en prendre avec du coca. [*This one? Thanks, I will have some coke with it*]

Theodor: Bien, tu dis, hein? [*it's good, you say.*]

Noémie: Ça craint pas. [*it doesn't suck*]

Both share a laugh. Theodor passes her the finished drink.

Noémie: Franchement, le bon whisky, c'est surfait. Je veux juste ressentir quelque chose, pas en faire des tonnes. [*Honestly, fine whisky is overrated. I just want to feel something, not make a big deal out of it.*]

Theodor: C'est pas faux. Alors, quand est-ce que tu as emménagé exactement. [*That is fair. So, when did you move in exactly?*]

Noémie: Il y a quelques mois. [*A couple months ago.*]

Theodor: Des mois? Je n' ai jamais rien vu ni entendu. [*Months? I never saw or heard anything.*]

Noémie: Je travaille beaucoup. Est-ce que c'est à toi ? [*I work a lot. Is this yours?*]

Noémie points to a manuscript next to her on the kitchen counter. It's a bunch of printouts stapled together. The Name: *Universal Love*

Theodor: Ouais, c'est juste un projet à côté. C'est censé être un court roman, mais je n'en suis pas encore satisfait. [*Yeah, it's just a side project of mine. It's supposed to be a short novel, but I am not quite happy with it yet.*]

Noémie: Je peux ? [*Can I?*]

Theodor: Bien sûr. [*Sure.*]

Noémie grabs the papers and scans through the pages.

Theodor: À la surface, c'est juste une histoire d'amour typique, mais en dessous, il s'agit de deux personnes piégées dans un cycle de sur-analyse. L'un d'eux commence à douter même des émotions les plus simples, ce qui le pousse à aller à l'encontre de ses instincts, finissant par saper ses chances de véritable bonheur. [*At its surface, it's just a typical love story, but underneath, it's about two people trapped in a cycle of overthinking. One of them starts to doubt even the simplest emotions, which leads him to go against his best interests, ultimately undermining his chance at true happiness.*]

Noémie: Ça a l'air assez basique. [*Sounds pretty basic.*]

Theodor: C' est vrai. Mais je pense qu' en le racontant bien, ça peut transmettre la lutte que beaucoup d' entre nous ressentent aujourd' hui. *[It is. But I think if told right it can convey the struggle most of us feel these days.]*

Noémie: Je ne sais pas, je pense que se mettre dans une relation, c' est juste simuler la stabilité. C' est plus de l' évasion que d' affronter les problèmes qu' on a avec soi-même. Un endroit où déposer ses peines et fuir la réalité. Et au final, ça blesse la personne et soi-même. Ton personnage semble comprendre ça.
[I don't know, I think putting yourself into a relationship just simulates stability. It's more escapism than confronting the issues you have with yourself. A place to put your sorrows and run from reality. And ultimately hurting the person and yourself. Your character seems like he gets it.]

Theodor: Ah ouais ? Et qu' en est-il de l' amitié ? *[Oh yeah? And what about friendships?]*

Noémie: Est-ce que ce n' est pas la même chose? *[Isn't it all the same?]*

Theodor: Tu penses que l' amitié et les relations amoureuses sont équivalentes? *[You think friendships and romantic relationships are equal?]*

Noémie: Bien sûr que oui. Du moins, elles devraient l' être. Ce n' est pas pour ça que les gens ne baissent plus? Parce qu' ils soutiennent des valeurs relationnelles qui ne reflètent plus la société d' aujourd' hui ? *[Of course, they are. At least they should be. Isn't this why people don't fuck anymore? Because they hold up values of relationships that are just not reflective of today's society anymore?]*

Theodor: C' est ce que je disais aussi, mais ces derniers temps, je tends à croire que faire confiance à quelqu' un est une belle chose. Quand tu partages une connexion profonde avec quelqu' un, ça peut vraiment guérir ton âme. Si la personne est bonne pour toi, bien sûr. Et tu as raison, ce n' est pas une question de mettre quelqu' un sur un piédestal. *[That's what I used to say too, but these days I tend to believe that trusting in someone is a great thing. When you share a deep connection with someone, it can really heal your*

soul. If the person is good for you that is. And you are right, it's not about putting someone on a pedestal.]

Noémie: Eh bien, moi, j' ai fait confiance et ça m' a foutu en l' air, alors bonne chance avec ça. *[Well, I've been trusting and it fucked me over so, good luck with that.]*

Both share a laugh.

Noémie: Je peux l' emprunter ? Je veux le lire. *[Can I borrow this? I want to read it.]*

Theodor: Avec plaisir! Dis-moi ce que tu en penses. Peut-être que ça changera ta vision des choses. *[Please! Let me know what you think. Maybe it can change your view on things.]*

Int. Living room.

A slightly drunk Theodor talks to Tom, Veronica's boyfriend who is too drunk for his own good

Tom: I am telling you, dude, you should just kiss her!

Theodor: Shut up dude!

Tom: The way she looked at you when you guys entered, she wants your dick man. Slurp it aaaaaaaall night.

Theodor: Whatever man...you really think she likes me?

Tom: Her Face, your face...PAM.

Tom uses both his hands to suggest their heads kissing, failing miserably.

Theodor: You mean a concussion?

Tom: NO DUUDE, CHEMISTRY! Explosions, Fireworks!!!

Theodor turns away from him.

Theodor: Whatever you say.

He looks around the living room. People playing beer pong, a small group having a deep talk in the corner, Veronica gossiping over something that has most definitely something to do with herself, but no Noémie. Theodor wanders through the flat until he reaches his room. He opens the door.

Int. Theodor' s Room

Noémie is standing right there, in the middle of his room. She seems a bit shocked to see him.

Theodor: Qu' est-ce que tu fais ? *[What are you doing?]*

Noémie: Désolée, j' étais curieuse. *[I am sorry, I was curious.]*

Theodor is a bit thrown off. It seems a bit invasive, but then again, God does she look great. The way she looks at him makes his head spin.

Theodor: Ce n' est pas grave. *[It's ok.]*

Theodor realizes his cabinet is open, revealing his VHS collection. He visibly gets nervous. Noémie realizes.

Noémie: Oh…c' est pas grave. En fait, j' aime bien ce genre de trucs.
[Oh…it's ok. I actually like that stuff.]

Theodor: Vraiment ? *[You do?]*

Noémie: Mhm !

She approaches the cabinet and looks through the VHS tapes.

Theodor: Tu regardes aussi ? *[Are you watching too?]*

Noémie: Pas vraiment. Je trouve juste ça fascinant. *[Not really. It's just fascinating to me.]*

Theodor: Cool.

Noémie turns around and walks toward Theodor, who gets even more nervous now.

Noémie: Merci pour ce soir. C'est sympa. [*Thank you for tonight. This is fun.*]

Theodor: Euh…avec plaisir. [*Ahm…My pleasure.*]

Noémie walks by him and leaves the room. Theodor closes his eyes in disappointment. This could have been his chance. He stands there for a while. Alone.

Int. Living room. Dining table

Theodor, Noémie, Veronica and her boyfriend Tom sit at the table having a drink. In the background, some friends are waving goodbye. It must have been hours already. All four are in a lightheaded mood.

Tom: Especially when I look at the car industry, I am like, what the hell are they doing?

Veronica is grabbing his thigh.

Veronica: Enough with politics already, we run in circles anyway. Just more of the same. It sucks and we hate it. Meanwhile, we ate it, next.

All talk or cheer at once in approval or denial. Everyone has a big smile on their face.

Theodor: Yeeeah, let's play a game, shall we?

Tom: GREAT idea! I am getting more booze. Beer anyone?

Veronica: I am good thanks

Theodor: I will take one!

Noémie: I have my whiskey, thanks!

Veronica: What are we playing?

Noémie: You guys know reversed charades?

Tom reenters the room with a beer. He opens it up, and it overflows. He puts his lips on the lid to not make a complete mess.

Tom: mmm...no.

The rest looks like they haven't heard of it either.

Noémie: Soooo...

Noémie thinks for a second. How to explain this? She takes a piece of paper and a pen from the table.

Noémie (to Theodor): Get up.

Theodor does so. Noémie writes a word on the paper and hands it over to Veronica.

Noémie: Now tell him how to act out the word but you can only describe body movements. He has to get the word on his own.

Veronica: Oh, that sounds fun...ok...left hand on your hip, the other one on your head.

As she describes the movements there is a lively exchange within the group, laughing and making fun of Theodor looking ridiculous. Once he guesses the word, he sits down again.

Veronica: Look at you Noémie, you ARE fun!

This time, the backhanded compliment was loud and clear. Noémie smiles back at her, quite annoyed.

Int. Livingroom, Couch.

Veronica and Tom disappeared into their room. Candles are lit now. It is just Theodor and Noémie left. They sit on the couch close to each other.

Theodor: J' ai toujours voulu aller en Espagne. J' adore tellement la langue. Et la nourriture, n' en parlons même pas ! [*I always wanted to go to Spain. I love the language so much. And don't get me started on the food!*]

Noémie: J' y suis allée quand j' avais…12 ans, je crois. Mes parents m' ont emmenée rendre visite à de vieux amis. [*I went when I was like…12. My parents took me there to visit some old friends.*]

Theodor: Je suis trop jaloux ! C' était comment? [*Man, I'm so jealous! How was it?*]

Noémie: Je me souviens pas de tout, mais… haha… on est allés dans un bar le soir. J' étais probablement trop jeune pour être là. Mes parents ont commandé une carafe de sangria, et mon père a réussi à la renverser partout sur ma mère. Elle était furieuse. Surtout parce que le concert allait commencer et elle voulait tellement écouter la musique. Une femme qu' on connaissait même pas a donné son pull à ma mère, comme ça elle a pu rester. Je me souviens encore de l' odeur de la sangria. Oranges, miel et vin rouge. J' oublierai jamais cette soirée. J' ai jamais autant souri de ma vie.

[I don't remember much. But…haha…we went to this night bar. I was probably way too young to be there. My parents ordered a pitcher of sangria, and my dad managed to spill most of it on my mother. She was so furious. Especially because the live music was about to start, and she wanted to listen to them so badly. A random woman had a sweater with her that she gave my mother so she could stay. I can still smell the sangria. Oranges, honey, and red wine. I will never forget that night. I never smiled so much in my life.]

Noémie realized she might have overshared.

Noémie: Oh…désolée. [*Oh…I'm sorry.*]

Theodor: Non, t' inquiète. Ça avait l' air génial. [*Nah, don't worry. Sounds lovely.*]

Noémie: Oui…c' était vraiment magique. [*Yeah…it truly was.*]

Theodor: Écoute, ça peut paraître bizarre, mais… j’ ai une télé et un lecteur VHS. Si t’ aimes pas ce genre de trucs, je comprends, mais j’ ai une cassette incroyable qui te fait ressentir comme si tu retournais là où tu étais le plus heureux, comme ton souvenir. *[Hey, I know this might be a bit much, but…Let’s watch a VHS tape together. If you are not into that stuff, I totally get it, but I have this great cassette that makes you feel like you are right back where you felt the happiest, just like your memory.]*

The camera focuses in on Noémie. Her demeanor turns more serious.

Noémie: Pourquoi pas. *[Sure.]*

Theodor: Sérieux? *[Yeah?]*

Noémie: Oui. *[Yeah.]*

Theodor: Ok! Je vais la chercher! *[Ok! I'll get it!]*

As he brings out the TV and the cassette player, he takes out a plastic cassette holder, where the cassette is inside. Noémie rubs her legs. She is nervous.

Noémie: Je vais vite aux toilettes, tu peux commencer sans moi. Je reviens tout de suite! *[I'll go to the toilet really quick; you can start without me. I'll be right back!]*

Theodor: T’ es sûre? *[You sure?]*

Noémie: Oui, oui, t’ inquiète. *[Yeah, yeah, no worries.]*

Int. Bathroom.

Noémie slams the door shut, she turns around and shakes off her nervousness. She looks at her mirror image. The dress, the make-up, her hair. She likes this. It has been way too long for her to have fun. She grabs her phone and looks at the Time. It’s 4.20 AM

With a jump cut, she sits on the lid-closed toilet, waiting. She takes out her phone and checks the time again. 4.30 PM. With a big sigh, she leaves the bathroom.

Int. Livingroom.

VHS Noises overshadow the silence. Noémie slowly walks into the room, making sure, Veronica is still in her bedroom with Tom. There sits Theodor, in front of the TV, with a Knife sticking in his throat, and blood all over the floor. Dead. Noémie pulls the plug of the TV out of the socket to not expose herself to the content of the VHS. She takes the VHS out of the Cassette Player. Reinforced corners and a PAL VHS engraving. The same cassette type we saw earlier. She reaches into her bag and takes out another VHS tape, which she puts back into the plastic VHS case holder. She must have swapped Toms Video out with this one when she was in his room. She takes her time to clean everything she has touched. Noémie suddenly can hear giggling from inside Veronica's room.

It sounds like someone is about to leave the room. Quickly, she kills the lights, grabs Theodor by the feet, and drags him behind the sofa, where she hides as well. The door opens. Veronica enters the room and walks directly to the hallway. The sofa and the blood are not too close to the hallway so the almost sleeping Veronica barely missed it. Noémie waits. Listening to the water sounds of the sink, as Veronica pours herself a glass. She waddles back to her room. This was too close. Slowly, Noémie makes her way to the entrance of the apartment.

Int. Hallway

Noémie peeks into the hallway to make sure nobody is there. Then, she carefully closes the door to the apartment, sighing in relief. She checks her phone once more, this time she opens the message she received earlier.

8:41 PM, Boss: Is it done?

Noémie replies: Yes.

She walks back to her apartment. Men wearing black have already put most of her stuff into boxes and carried them away from the apartment. As she enters, she takes a look around. Most of her stuff is gone. But without the mess, a GO-board got revealed, that was next to her computer. She seemed to be in the endgame. She approaches it, takes a black stone, and puts it on the Board. The game is over.

Int. Tim' s Bar.

Lucy sits on the music stage as Tim is tending to her wounds. The bar is empty. Next to them, each a glass of whiskey. In front of them, on a table, a Go-Board. They are in the middle of a game. Lucy places a white stone on the board. Tim puts medical skin glue on her head, where she got hit by the books and the glass. Tim himself doesn't look great either. His face was roughened up pretty badly. He has bruises and a blue eye. His knuckles are hurt as well.

Lucy: OUCH...

Tim: Almost there. Just need to squeeze for a bit.

He glances over to the board.

Tim: S 17

Lucy puts a black stone on the board for Tim.

Tim starts to giggle.

Lucy: What?

Tim: In his ass...hahaha

Lucy: He tried to shoot me.

Tim. It's still funny.

Lucy: When are we talking about you?

Tim: Oh...just an encounter with the warden. Jumped me on my way home.
You should see HIS face.

Lucy: You beat him up good?

Tim: No, they were 4 of them, so I only managed to get 2 hits in. But
still, you should see his face. Ugly bastard.

Lucy laughs but immediately squints her eyes in pain. She takes another stone and places it on the board.

Tim: I checked with my guy. There is nothing he can do about the USB stick.

Lucy: I figured.

Tim: I'm Sorry...T5

Lucy: T5?

Tim: T6 I mean.

Lucy places a black stone and grabs her drink. She takes a big sip.

Lucy: You should go talk to Nic. You look horrible.

Tim: Naah.

He lets go of the wound, wipes his hands with a towel, and gets up, very shaky, grabbing his glass in the process.

Tim: I'm good. Besides, the music night starts in 2 days. Nothing more revitalizing than pissing off those guys even more am I right?... You win. I can't beat you.

Lucy: We aren't even in the late game yet.

Tim: Yeah, but I am already behind. I know when I am defeated.

Tim leans on the bar, chucks down his drink, and pours himself another one.

Lucy looks at Tim as his gaze turns more frustrated. She has never seen him like this before.

Lucy: Things are not that great right now huh?

Tim: You think? (Sarcastically)

Tim sways around.

Tim: You know the saying “old habits die hard”. This place is the world to me. I will protect it till the day I die...or decide to move to Spain.

Lucy chuckles as a means of lifting Tim's spirit

Lucy: Don't kid yourself, you hate the heat. You wouldn't survive a month.

Tim: make it two.

They look at each other and share a smile.

Tim: I'll be fine, Lucy. Don't you worry about me? It's easy to split people apart, but it is impossible to silence them. There will always be music playing here, one way or the other. It scares them more than they could ever scare us.

Lucy: as long as this place has you how could it be any different?

Tim: exactly.

Tim walks behind the bar. Lucy forces her tired body to get up and drags herself to the counter.

Tim: This is why we are holding a big performance night next week. So big even this guy would be jealous.

Tim points to a poster on the wall that we have seen countless times by now. The biggest newcomer in the classical music scene. Composer Diego Licht. A young and handsome man who took the world by storm. Lucy nods and puckers her face to sarcastically approve of what Tim just said.

Lucy: (sarcastically) getting their buddy.

She takes another huge sip of the whiskey. She now puckers her face due to the strength of the drink.

Lucy: uuh… I think I am getting there.

Tim: As you should. Sorry that the guy wasn't of any help.

Lucy: Not your fault. Thanks for trying.

Footsteps cut through the silence of the room. Stefan enters the bar.

Stefan: Holy shit, what happened to you guys? You look like shit!

Tim: Always a pleasure, Stefan...

Lucy: This is what victory looks like. I finished the case.

Lucy chucks down the rest of the whiskey.

Stefan: I have news but maybe you should go home and rest!

Lucy: I am good. Tell me what's up.

Stefan sits next to Lucy.

Stefan: The usual (to Tim). First things first, we reached out to the wife. She is in shock but stable. She will move in with the neighbors for a while. We had to tickle it out of her but it turns out she works as a hostess on weekends to keep the expenses in check. That explains how we could find this. Names himself Christian Banaard, a regular client of hers. He works for big tech companies as a contractor for Tape shellings.

Stefan puts the Business Card on the counter.

Lucy: Christian Banaard…like the South African heart surgent?

Stefan: Exactly. I ran a background check and his real name is Banaard Bekler. He had already been detained for drug distribution 2 years ago. The bastard got thrown under the bus during a set up by his partners. He took the sole blame too. Hasn't shown up in the system ever since so, on paper, he seems clean. Conveniently, I found another tape in the apartment. Banaard seems to have

provided the wife with Tapes to calm her nerves. She didn't know her Husband watched them too though. Maybe he found the card and met this guy.

Tim puts a vodka shot in front of Stefan.

Stefan: Thank you.

Lucy: Where does the wife work?

Stefan takes a sip.

Stefan: The flight and bite Club.

Lucy: Great. So, we put our informants on the case.

Tim: We are no longer working with them. I am afraid we are on our own with this one.

Lucy: Why? What happened?

Tim: They are working with FP now, a conflict of interest.

Lucy: Motherfuckers! what happened to morals. They used to be the ones who gave us shit to be better.

Stefan remembers his conversation in the café, and his old friend and colleague dying soon. He chuckles down the drink and points to the glass for Tim to fill it up again.

Stefan: She says Bannard is a self-proclaimed VIP guest in that joint. He usually annoys guests with his stories about himself. Calls himself the "King of analog ". Loves collecting old stereos, TVs and whatnot. With his background, he could be knee deep in the distribution of those tapes. And if not, at least he can tell us where to look.

Lucy: Any idea when he will be at the club again?

Stefan: Tonight.

Lucy takes a look at the clock. It's 9.30 PM

Lucy: ... good job. Let's go then

Stefan: You don't have to come. Team B is coming with me.

Lucy: I am fine, Stefan. And I know you want me there.

Stefan: You sure?

Lucy: Yeah, that's the least I can do.

Stefan: Ok... anything new on the USB Stick yet?

Tim looks at Lucy, then to Stefan. Their faces echo a resounding "no"

Stefan puts on a cheerful face to lighten the mood.

Stefan: Baby steps then.

Ext. Club Flight and Bite, Night.

People are gathered outside the club, waiting to get in. On the opposite side of the street, A car pulls up. Richard sits in the driver's seat. Next to him, his colleague Ben, eating a croissant. In the backseat, Stefan and Lucy. Lucy wears a beautiful cocktail dress. She seems a bit out of her comfort zone with the outfit. She takes a hand mirror out of her pocket and puts on the final touches of lipstick. Stefan wears a colorful shirt and sunglasses on his head.

Camera, Front window placement

Richard: How come there are always two people teamed up as Detectives?
Such a cliché.

Lucy: There is a lot of literature about the Buddy-Cop genre. It is a pretty straightforward style to break down hard-boiled masculinity and the psychology behind authority complexes.

Richard turns around to Lucy (Lucy's POV perspective)

Richard: So...in real life. What does that make you two...or us?

Lucy finishes her lipstick, puts it back into her purse, and opens the car door.

Lucy: I can't speak for the two of you, but I would say there is always the possibility of subversion. Read Yvonne Taskers.

Lucy exits the car. Stefan follows.

Richard turns around and sinks into his seat. A bit ashamed of the stereotype.

Richard: Pass me that "Salzstangerl", will you...

Int. Club.

Stefan and Lucy enter the Club. They push themselves through the crowd to get a view of the entire room. It is crowded. Lucy and Stefan look at each other, then they split. The camera switches between the two of them, pushing through the crowd. Mia and Lia, both wearing a red dress, are dancing in the crowd. Suddenly, Stefan spots Bannard dancing with two girls. He eavesdrops into their conversation, dancing next to them.

Bannard: Of course, I can give you, his contact. You know me ladies, don't worry 'bout nothing. But everything has its price. And when I see you Poppies (dolls) swing your hips like that, I think I can lower the cost real good. Now if you excuse me, I need to freshen up a bit.

Bannard runs with his hand through one of the girl's hairs.

But don't worry Bokkie (little buck), I have more stories to tell and wisdom to share. Like the time I got kidnapped in Berea. They held me for 3 days. Took me that long to learn to dislocate my thumbs and escape the shackles. Thought they could hold the great Bannard like a dog. But they didn't see, those Moffies (weak little men) ...they tried to tame the lion.

Bannard walks to the Bathroom. Stefan finds Lucy with his eyes and points to the Bathroom. Lucy understands and walks to the bar, positioning herself next to the exit.

Int. Bathroom.

Stefan enters the bathroom. There is a line of people waiting in front of the toilet booth. The front man bangs against the cabin door.

Dunk Guy: Hurry up dude!! You are not the only one who wants a bump!

Bannard: Voetsek jou donner! [*Get lost, idiot!*]

Bannard takes a huge bump of cocaine.

Cabin Guy: Fuck yeah, God is goed, altyd. Altyd, God is goed. [*God is good, all the time, god is good*]

As Stefan waits in line, a hooded person behind enters the bathroom. They are out of focus so there is no way of telling who it is, but by the intense atmosphere, it is clear that this means danger. Bannard humms a song while taking a piss. Stefan grabs his batch, and taps the shoulder of the people in front of him one by one, giving them a sign to stay silent while showing his batch. They leave the bathroom. Except for the person behind Stefan. It's just Banaard, Stefan and the person left. Stefan approaches the cabin and knocks.

Stefan: Mr. Banaard. I am with the detective department. I have a couple of questions I need to ask you.

As soon as Stefan finishes his sentence, he looks to the right. In the mirror, he spots the hooded person behind him, who slowly creeps up on him. They hold a guitar string in their hands, ready to strangle Stefan.

Stefan immediately turns around and tries to hit the persons head with his elbow, but they dodge by taking a step back. They then sprint towards Stefan, and run by him while putting the string around his neck. Suddenly, Stefan is in a chokehold. The toilet-cabin door springs open and Bannard rushes out of the cabin, back to the dancefloor.

Bannard: Haybo! [*hell nah!*]

Stefan: Who the fuck..., (as he is turning red)

Int. Club, Dancefloor

Lucy, who sits at the Bar, spots Banaard rushing to the exit. She tries to cut off his way out but barely misses him.

Ext. Club front

Banaard rushes out the door and starts sprinting down the street. Lucy follows.

Lucy: RICHARD!!!

Richard, who was reading a book, notices Lucy, spots Banaard, and starts the car. Lucy runs after Banaard, who flees into an alleyway, too narrow for a vehicle.

Lucy: Go around!

Richard keeps driving down the road in the hopes of cutting him off at some point. Lucy goes after Bannard directly. In the chase sequence, they jump fences and cut corners. Lucy, although she is further behind, keeps pace with him. She gets a call from Richard. While running she puts her phone on speaker.

Lucy: He is escaping down the river!!

Richard: What?

Lucy: THE RIVER!

Int. Club, Bathroom

Stefan puts his force in his back and pushes himself and the Person into the cabin, Bannard escaped from. They land on the toilet seat, but the person doesn't soften their grip on his neck. The guitar string rips Stefan's skin, making him bleed a bit. Stefan helplessly grabs toilet paper and throws it back on the person's face. As if that would help. He then spots a Toilet brush. He barely reaches it with his fingertips and stuffs it into the

person's face. The grip gets a bit weaker, allowing Stefan to put his hand between the String and his Neck. Now, Stefan pushes forward. He stands up, while the guy hangs on for dear life. Once he is on his feet, he tries again with his Elbow. This time, he hits the face. The person tumbles back, the grip now completely gone. He grabs their collar with both hands and throws himself and the person out of the cabin, against the wall. Both land on the floor.

Ext. Street.

The chase continues as they pass streets, nearly getting hit by cars. Bannard seems to slip away more and more.

Int. Club Bathroom

The hooded person and Stefan get on their feet, facing down each other. There are punches thrown from both sides, some hit, some blocked, some dodged. Stefan gets hit with a brutal knee kick in his stomach, falling on one knee. In this position, he grabs the opponent's leg, that is still in the air, lifts it up to throw the person's balance off, and lets himself fall on their body, pinning them on the ground.

He then gets a brutal Punch in. And another one. And another. What first seems satisfying to watch, as we root for the protagonist, turns into a gruesome scene punch by punch, as he should have stops after the second or third one. But only when Stefan's exhaustion kicks in, he stops. The camera reveals blood on the floor. The person stopped moving. Their fingertips, twitching. Stefan sits up and leans against the wall, completely worn out. He grabs his throat, feeling the wound on his neck. After a breather, he checks the pulse of the person...barely there. Stefan now realizes he lost control. How could this have happened? He takes out his phone and calls Nic.

Stefan: Nic...this is Stefan. I need you to pick someone up asap.

Ext. Riverbank, under a Bridge

Wide angle shot of the empty street. It's just Bannard running in the middle of the road. Suddenly, Richard's car enters the Street in front of him. Bannard takes a turn to the bridge. But there, Lucy is already waiting for him, gun pointed at him.

She is completely out of breath.

Lucy: Don' t…move…huh.

Bannard stops immediately, throwing his hands up. Richard and Ben get out of the car, rush to Bannard, and put cuffs on him. Lucy walks up to him and stops directly in front of his face. Bannard starts praying.

Bannard: Here, beskerm my terwyl ek deur hierdie wêreld beweeg. Hou my veilig van gevaar en kwaad. Bedek my met U vlerke, en beskerm my teen alle boosheid. Mag U genade en barmhartigheid my konstante gids wees. *[Lord, protect me as I walk through this world. Keep me safe from harm and danger. Cover me with your wings, and shield me from all evil. May Your grace and mercy be my constant guide]*

Lucy: Pray as much as you want. I hope for your sake that my partner is fine…you have some explaining to do.

Bannard looks scared.

Ext. Stefan' s Apartment. Sunrise

Stefan holds a bottle of wine in his hand. It's nearly empty. Before he can unlock the entrance door to the building, his phone rings. He looks on his phone. 5 missed calls and 7 messages from Lucy.

He opens his messages:

Lucy: 01:04 PM Are you ok?

01:05 PM Where are you?

01:12 PM Nic called me and explained what happened, where are you???

01:12 PM STEFAN, Call me back!!!

01:13 PM Please!

01:14 PM I am swinging by your apartment.

01:15 PM, We got Bannard btw.

He closes his phone and opens the door.

Int. Stefans Apartment.

Stefan opens the apartment door and enters. It's the same scenery as at the beginning of episode 1. With the same TV setup, the same plants, the same chaos. Stefan walks to the kitchen and grabs a vodka bottle from his liquor stash. In the bathroom, he pours a bunch on his throat, disinfecting the wound. He grunts in pain, followed by a huge sip from the vodka bottle. He looks in the mirror, defeated. He is still in the process of understanding what has happened. No, he can't process what has happened. He just nearly punched a guy to death for no reason. He breaks down.

After a while, he leaves the bathroom and gets down on all fours to grab a shoe box next to his bed. He opens it. There is a picture of him and his girlfriend inside. He takes it out with shaky hands, looks at it, and puts it back in the box. He then digs deeper to take out a VHS. The name: "Napoleon". Stefan gets up again and walks to the living room, looking out the window. With his hand, he brushes through his hair and walks to his TV. He puts in the VHS and turns on the TV. His eyes change. His heavy breathing slows down, his sobbing gets quieter and his pain disappears. He is locked in.

End of Episode 2

Episode 3: Culpa et circenses

¹

VHS contents

A washed-out and grainy image. We see Stefan and his girlfriend on a car trip through Italy. The image cuts back and forth to scenes in a small village, sightseeing, eating pizza, drinking wine and dancing in the sunset. But the bright and beautiful imagery turns darker, as both get jumped in the night by a group of men. They knock out Stefan and force themselves on his girlfriend. In another jumpcut, Stefan reaches for his gun, shooting the guy on top of his girlfriend, hitting her in the process. She bleeds out in his arms.

Int. Stefan's apartment

Stephan's phone on the floor, flipped open. It sounds an alarm. "WEATHER WARNING: strong winds, don't leave the apartment!"

Lucy enters the apartment just in time. The moon shines bright. The apartment itself is superfoggy. As if Stefan smoked 4 Packs of cigarettes. The blue rays of the moonlight cut through the window, intensifying through the fog. The TV shows statics. Stefan, with the bottle of vodka in his lap, passed out on his chair. Lucy turns off the TV and grabs a blanket to cover Stefan. As she does so, she notices a book in his lap, behind the bottle.

She grabs it. "Schuld und Sühne" by Dostojewski. Lucy grabs pillows from Stefan's bedroom and lays down on the floor next to him. She starts reading.

A few hours later, the wind howls, shaking the windows. The morning sun shines bright. Lucy has read a significant portion of the book. Stefan wakes up. He doesn't move from his position. Lucy, while lying on her back, notices and puts the book down on her chest. She stares at the roof.

Lucy: do you want to talk about it?

(Pause)

Stefan: In Raskolnikow's pursuit of excellence, he wonders if taking a life by his own hand can be justified. He himself perceives his victim, an old pawnbroker, as lesser. He kills her, she who was responsible for much harm in his life. But as he does so, he also

¹ Reference: Panem et circenses: Brot und spiele: Poet Juvenal (around 1000 A.C.) criticized the political inaction of the Roman people, once they are well fed and entertained. Here: Culpa er circenses: Schuld und Zirkusspiele

kills her younger, cognitively impaired sister. He splits her skull in two. That is when he begins to question his actions, his morality. He detached from reality. Forgets who he was. And loses focus.

(Pause.)

Stefan: How could there be a difference in guilt? Both lives have the same value, don't they? Who can judge which human being is more deserving of life?

Stefan looks exhausted. His voice crackles under his effort to use his voice.

Stefan: What reason justifies taking a life in the name of self-perceived righteousness?

Lucy keeps staring at the ceiling.

Lucy: „*Ich wollte ein Napoleon sein, darum tötete ich.*“ Page 437. [*I wanted to be a napoleon, therefore I killed*]

Stefan: I had my chance for revenge that same night. After they killed my partner and the love of my life. When they were chained up in front of me, it felt like salvation, like higher justice. I thought...about what I could do to them. Cut off their ears, rip out their nails, beat them to death. All options felt so right...but also too mild. And yet... even though I wanted nothing more than to see them suffer, I let them go. Without a single mark on their bodies. Although I chose higher morals, it didn't feel right either.

The speech by Stefan started with hate and ended in sorrow.

Stefan: Is that what true righteousness is? Did my decision doom me even further?

Lucy: We don't get to decide.

Stefan: Fuck off.

Lucy sits up, gazing out the window.

Lucy: Your morality was already shattered. You only chose to not get worse.

Stefan looks over to Lucy with a condescending look

Stefan: What a cute, perfect image you have of me.

He leans forward, staring down on his hands.

Stefan: If it were up to me Lucy, I wouldn't be here anymore. But ultimately, I knew I wasn't worthy of peace. I can't take that from her. That is the best deal both of us get.

Lucy: I wouldn't go so far as to call it...

As Lucy speaks, she looks over her shoulder to Stefan but gets interrupted by Mia and Lia standing behind him, looking at Lucy as if she did something wrong. Yeah, they are right. This is not the time for being a smart ass. Lucy crawls to his side, taking his hand. For a moment, there is complete silence. Then, the sun shines warmer and the room brightens up. Dust-flakes fly through the room.

Lucy: When I was a small kid, I had night terrors. Even though I don't recall most of my dreams, one pattern stuck with me. It was always about me stabbing someone to death with a kitchen knife. It drove me crazy. Even during the day, I was afraid of the Idea, that I could just grab a pointy object and harm someone with it. Stupid, isn't it? As if my free will was underlying a higher power. But the thought was as real to me as you are. That's why I avoided the kitchen at all costs. I blundered so many possible memories with my parents, as they loved to cook, and I couldn't even watch. The dreams dictated my life. But every night, my two older sisters came into my bedroom to tuck me in. "We are your guardian angels, as long as we are here, nothing can harm you", they said. Then, they sang a song to me. It was the same song every single night. It took the angst out of it.

Stefan: Did it get better?

Lucy: It did. But only because it got pushed away by a new nightmare, which I can't wake up from. Loosing my guardian angels.

Stefan: Do you remember the song they used to sing to you?

Mia and Lia start singing the song. It is filled with sadness but also hope. The wind howls against the windows, and the sunrays keep intensifying. The scene is as if time slowed down to almost a hold. As Lia and Mia stand behind Stefan, leaning forward, and Lucy sitting on the floor, holding his hand, it reminds us of religious paintings. Then, the song ends and time keeps moving again.

Lucy: I don't. None of it. But I know it existed just for me. And knowing that someone cared so much helps to get by. Not more, but also, not less.

Main theme starts with credits. The intro plays, shots of Vienna and various characters are shown. Music is inspired by "keizoku"

Int. Industrial building.

Bannard slowly wakes up. A bright light is hanging over his head, dangling from the ceiling. To his shock, he realizes that he is strapped to a chair, unable to move. In his mouth, a piece of cloth. He is in a panic. A door creaks open. 4 People enter the Room, but to Bannard they are just silhouettes.

Richard takes out a pack of cigarettes and lights one up. Then he crouches down to Bannard's eye level and takes the cloth out of his mouth, he keeps staring at Bannard.

Bannard: Bro, I don't know anything, the last time I've been talking to someone it was Fernando, he has the package! I am just a middle man, oh god, please hê genade met my [have mercy on me].

Richard keeps smoking his cigarette. He doesn't speak. Stefan stands behind him. It is too dark to see his face.

Stefan: Who jumped me? How did you know we were coming?

Bannard: I don't know, you just showed up and suddenly you got wrecked by this fucker! I was alone! Please don't kill me! I can help you out! I know where they are hiding!

Bannard starts crying and praying in Afrikaans.

Ben brings over the Italian VHS tapes, he hands them over to Richard. He holds them in front of Bannard's face.

Richard: Recognize these?

Bannard takes a look while breathing heavy.

Bannard: Uncommon shelling, so what? Wait...you are not looking for Fernando? Dankie fok, dit is oor! [Thank fucking God!] Whatever it is you want from me, just tell me, we can strike a great deal!

Richard puts his cigarette out on Bannard's hand. He screams in pain.

Richard: What do you know about these tapes?

Bannard: Take it easy brother, no need for violence, I am complying! I would have to take a closer look on the tape. Bring it closer!

Richard holds it directly in front of Bannard's Face. He glances over it, taking his time.

Bannard: The tape is PAL Stereo. Those formats are usually not very common because of compatibility issues in Europe. I only sell them to private costumers!

Stefan: We already know that! Do you know who manufactures them?

Bannard: This seller specifically? Sure! An old friend of mine who lives in Erba. We go way back.

Stefan falls into a moment of trance. Lucy looks over to him, as if she could read his mind. Erba, the place it happened.

Richard: Italy. Tracks with what you have been saying Stefan.

Lucy: Who do you sell those tapes to?

Barnard: I only get addresses for these. I don't know any names. I don't ask questions. If you ask me, they are used for stimulants, nothing big! That's all I know!

Lucy, Stefan, Richard, and Ben walk back and gather in a group.

Lucy: If we use his phone, we can list all buyers of this format and track down whoever makes those files.

Stefan: And if we go to Erba, they might be able to tell us about how they are made. Maybe they know more about the digitalizing process and its effects.

Richard: There might be more I can squeeze out of this asshole, if you give me an hour or two, we might have all the info we need to bring it to the boss. Get you back on the case officially.

Lucy: No, I think it's risky. The smaller the operation the less attention we draw to us.

Stefan: Agreed, and who knows how the boss would react?

As the four discuss their options, Bannard manages to free himself from the shackles by dislocating his thumbs. He remains seated and waits for the right moment.

Bannard: The numbers of my contacts are usually used one-time only with these VHS formats. I don't remember delivering to the same address twice.

Richard approaches Bannard. Crouching in front of Bannard and getting really close to his face.

Richard: Even better, less backtracking work.

Bannard uses this moment and puts the rope he freed himself from around Richard's neck. He stands up and uses Richard as a shield. Both Lucy and Stefan draw their weapon and point it at Bannard.

Bannard: Let's stay calm everybody.

Stefan: You are making it worse for yourself, pal.

Bannard: You have everything you need from me. Now I need you to step aside, and let me walk out of that door.

Lucy: Not going to happen!

Bannard tightens his grab on Richard.

Bannard: I am not asking! Right now, Richard is looking death in his eyes. The question is, who blinks first?

An intense standoff started, but very short-lived.

Stefan: Dude, that line sucks.

Bannard: No, it doesn't!

Stefan lowers his gun in shock to Lucy and Ben.

Stefan: I don't think he has the guts to kill him.

Bannard: I will do it! So don't fucking play games with me here!

Lucy: ...I think you are right.

Richard: Fucking do something already!

Bannard: Let me through!

Stefan/Lucy: No!

Bannard tries to stay serious, but ultimately, he gives up and let's go of Richard.

Bannard: Fok dit… [fuck this…]

In the next scene, Stefan and Richard are holding Bannard's face down a water bucket, waterboarding him. They pull him up so he can take a breather.

Stefan: You will join us to have a word with your friend in Erba.

Bannard: Lovely idea!

They put his face back into the water.

Ext. In front of the Industry Building, very foggy

This time Richard made sure Bannards hands are tightly bound behind his back. As Lucy, Stefan, and Ben walk to the car, Richard walks a bit off the track and takes out his cigarette pack.

Bannard: Let me have one.

Richard looks over with a “Are you serious?” face.

Bannard: Come on mate, you would have done the same in my situation.

Richard shakes his head in disbelief that he agrees with him. He puts a cigarette in his mouth and lights it up, then he lights up his own.

Bannard: Tell me…

Richard: Richard

Bannard: Richard…what is so interesting about those tapes? You guys seem a bit too serious for a small distribution circle.

Richard: If you truly just distribute them, I don't think you want to know.

(pause)

Bannard: Your college...does he ever speak?

Richard: No, he doesn't.

Bannard: And the other one?

Richard: What is your aim here? You want me to have small talk with you? Trust you? Throw us in the pit the moment you have the chance to? Not going to happen. You help us, and maybe we will let you go once we are done. Until then, do us all a favor and shut up.

Bannard: Ouch. I am not a bad guy you know. I just try to get by. I don't hurt people. I help them to get what they want on a safe trading basis.

Richard takes a deep puff from the cigarette, throws it on the ground, and puts it out with his foot.

Richard: You help bringing product to the people who get hurt by them, that makes you a bad guy too.

Bannard looks at Richard. He usually has an answer for everything, but this time he doesn't. He starts to realize that the tapes he trades with could be more dangerous than he thought.

Switch to Lucy and Stefan. Stefan puts a map of Italy on the car roof, pointing at the place they need to go.

Stefan: It should be a 10-hour drive to get there.

Lucy: We should split up. Two of us take Bannard and go to Erba, the other two stay here and wait for the next shipping address to be sent to Bannard's phone.

Stefan: Richard and I go to Erba.

Lucy: I was afraid you would say that.

Stefan: It's fine.

Lucy: Is it? I don't want to be insensitive but you really think you will be fine once you arrive there? Especially the way you handled the aftermath from yesterday...

Stefan: Well, you are insensitive!

Stefan and Lucy share an awkward silence. Stefan takes out the tension by continuing his argument. He is agitated, but mostly over his own impulses.

Stefan: I know Lucy! I am not well. Honestly, I don't know what it will do to me when I am down there. But I think it can help me to overcome this. If not, nothing will, I know that much. Just trust me, will you?

Lucy thinks for a moment.

Lucy: Don't be a Napoleon, ok?

Stefan: I promise.

Lucy's phone starts ringing. She flips it open.

Lucy: It's Nic...Bastian² woke up.

Stefan and Lucy share a stare of excitement and uncertainty.

Stefan: ok...It's basically on route...I will swing by and see what's up. Maybe your guardian angels are still around after all.

Lucy smiles

Lucy: You might be right.

Stefan, Richard and Bannard get in the Car. Bannard sits in the back while Stefan drives and Richard sits next to him. Lucy and Stefan share a last look, then they drive off.

² The guy who had the tape in his Belly.

While Lucy stands there and looks after the Car, her work-phone starts ringing, it's the Boss.

Lucy: Boss?

Int. Bosses apartment.

A wide shot of the living room, as the Boss stands in front of the Balcony window, holding a glass of whiskey with ice.

Boss: There has been another alleged suicide in Vienna. I want you to check it out and figure out if those cases are connected to the digital stimulants.

He sounds angry. How does he know? Lucy tries to play it cool.

Lucy : I don't know what...

Boss: Don't lie to me Lucy, I need you to figure this out asap and put an end to it. I know you have been working with Stefan on the case. Usually, I would act accordingly and fire the both of you, but the department is facing some major issues. We lost quite a number of Informants because they got blackmailed or bought by other groups. Cowards! All of them!

Lucy: I thought you didn't want to draw unnecessary attention to the Firm?

Boss: We are past that point. We are already served on the silver platter. Act quick and bring me names as soon as you can. If you do your job well, you will get a double bonus this Quarter.

Lucy: Understood.

Boss: And Lucy...don't go behind my back ever again. This time you were lucky; it gave us a head start in this effort, but that doesn't justify its means. Bye now.

The Boss hangs up the phone.

Lucy looks back to Ben, who awkwardly and very guilty looking smiles back at her. She realizes he has been telling the Boss.

Lucy: You are a shitty friend, you know that? Come on, we have work to do.

Car, Int. on the way to Nic

Richard sings along to a Song he put in the CD player, drumming the beat on his legs. It is a very Austrian song by Julian Kerner.

Stefan: You like this?

Richard: Are you kidding me? This guy was legendary!

Stefan: If you say so.

Stefan looks into the rear mirror and finds eye contact with Bannard.

Stefan: How did you get caught up in this?

Bannard: My line of work??

Stefan: The VHS Gig.

Bannard: Gotta get by somehow.

Stefan: You seem like a person who has enough charisma to work in something more decent. Like sales.

Bannard: I work in sales.

Stefan: I mean officially registered, no shady deliveries, upstanding work.

Bannard. Upstanding work lies in the eye of the beholder. Work for whom? Some rich asshole who thinks he can influence a district? Or a cult that invests in destabilizing them? No thanks, I like to stay fluid in my field of work.

Stefan: So, you are a mercenary?

Bannard: You could say that. But the high-stakes jobs I don't do anymore.

Stefan: Scared of getting put back in jail?

Bannard: Scared to deal with getting out again. In there, it feels safer than out here. They build those places in a way to break your concept of a free world. They make your life easier. Streamlining work, providing necessities. Like a lab rat. For most people, that's a better deal than freedom. Make that make sense, a conviction relieving you from all the hard choices in your life. But I see through their Bokdrolstories [*Bullshit stories*]. There is only one way to real happiness and that is to fall on your face once in a while to get the best deal. It would make the world a better place too. God knows! Freedom and Choice

Stefan: Freedom and Choice. Sounds awfully like the "Wiener Jugend Kämpfer" back in the day.

Bannard: The WJK...we had a good run.

Stefan steps on the break and brings the car to a hold on the side of the Road. Both Stefan and Richard look back to Bannard.

Richard: You have been part of them?!

Bannard: We got close to killing those corrupt bastards, didn't we? If the fucking FP wouldn't have stepped in last second, this city could have been a prosperous place. But what can you do?

Stefan: What happened to the members that survived the raid?

Left the country. Most of them, at least. Me and a good Buddy of mine stayed in Vienna. Got ourselves new identities and started infiltrating the tech giants, stealing their products and reselling them for much cheaper.

Richard: The Stock shortage crash of 43.

Stefan turns around and looks at the Road.

Stefan: Your friend...did you by any chance lose contact with him a couple of weeks ago?

Bannard: How do you know?

Stefan starts the engine.

Stefan: This will suck for you.

Ext. Mansion of Nic.

The car pulls up to the gate. One of the Bodyguards scans the number plate with their eyes, looks at a clip board, nods to the college and opens the gate. As the Car comes to a halt, Bannard jumps out of the car in full panic. He freed himself from the rope again. He rushes up the stairs to the main entrance. Richard opens the car door, about to run after him.

Richard: Hey!

Stefan: Let him, it's not like he can disappear on us around here.

At that moment, Nic opens the Door.

Bannard: Where is he?!

Nic: Upstairs.

Bannard rushes inside. Nic, a bit in shock of his hasty entrance, looks over to Stefan. His questioning eyes are met with a neutral look as Stefan pulls out a pack of cigarettes. Nic then rushes in to follow Bannard.

Stefan: Two ex-WKJ members, a private doctor and a halve ass Detective on one work day.

He lights up his cigarette and takes a deep puff.

Stefan: A hell of a workload to unpack.

Richard: Am I the halve ass detective?

Stefan: Maybe 3/4rd of one.

Richard: wow, despite the fact that you switched to Lucy as your partner and got me demoted to the B team, I am worthy a whole 4th of a promotion. Does it come with a raise too?

Stefan: Don' t get ahead of yourself.

Richard: How could I, I am too preoccupied with solving cases on a daily basis. I leave the headscratchers to you, suits you more.

Both share a look as well as a subtle grin.

Stefan: You think we are reaching a dead end?

Richard: You know I don' t like to predict things with you. I made that mistake too often.

Stefan: That' s a yes?

Richard leans on the hood of the car.

Richard: Even if we find out how the tapes are made. Hell, I throw in us finding the head of the production as well. What then? They are shielded by the FP. Or worse. It will be really hard to get away with dismantling their operation. And they already started targeting us.

Stefan: Yeah...shit is going sideways real fast. But we need to try Richard. No one else will. They cannot get away with this.

Richard: But stuff like this doesn' t stay at one monopole for long. Sooner or later, other organizations will get wind of the new digital stuff and try to replicate it.

Stefan: Which is why we need to set an example from the start. The more we let them reign free, the more they will push it. At least we

still have an institution that backs us. I don't know if that is the case if we don't act now.

Richard: ...yeah...I did not miss this part about us. Your smart ass can be a real pain in the butt you know.

Stefan puts out the cigarette.

Stefan: Shall we.

Stefan walks towards the entrance. Richard rolls with his eyes. Again, a typical Stefan move. Just walking off like that in mid-conversation.

Richard: Prick.

Int: Hallway to upper Room.

Stefan and Richard walk up to Nic, who waits in the doorway. They peek inside the room. Bannard is on his knees, holding Bastian's hand. They have a conversation, but it's only whispering sounds we can hear. Bastian looks very weak.

Nic: His condition is not as good as I would have hoped for by now.

Stefan: When did he wake up?

Nic takes a look at his wristwatch

Nic: It should be about 14 Hours by now. He is very weak, takes time for him to speak.

Stefan: Did he tell you what happened to him?

Nic: No, he was very closed off. Haven't seen him this communicative with me. I guess he trusts him.

Stefan whistles at Bannard. He turns around, and Stefan waves him over. He approaches the doorframe.

Stefan: I need you to ask him some questions.

Bannard: He just woke up. Give him a break man.

Stefan: I am aware you don't understand the severity of the situation quite yet, so I will talk in easy terms for you to understand. What happened to him is just the beginning. If they found him, how difficult will it be to find you.

Bannard nods in agreement, looking scared.

Bannard: What do you need to know?

Stefan: Let's not overburden him. Find out two things, very simple. Who did this to him and why the tape in his Belly? We will be waiting downstairs.

Bannard nods again and returns to Bastian.

Stefan turns to Nic, his eyes turn more serious

Stefan: Been ramping up the security?

Nic: Given that we are holding a hostage of unknown allegiance, yeah, I thought it might be a good idea Stefan!

Nic is clearly on edge about this.

Stefan: where are they?

Int. downstairs, operating room.

The hooded person, now revealed as a woman in her 30s, is strapped on a chair next to the operating table. Her mouth is muffled. She seems to be half asleep. Her face is pretty boiled up. Stefan definitely did a number on her. The door to the hallway slowly opens and Stefan enters, alone. He slowly approaches her. Every step feels heavier than the one before. The woman is not impressed by his slow walk. She stares him down in a way that could only be described as someone possessed. The power dynamic is established, she claims the room by her sheer confidence and deadly gaze. Stefan walks by her, fixing

himself a drink at Nic's Bar. He knows that to get through to her, he needs to play her intimidation game.

Stefan: I firstly want to apologize for your face. Even though you tried to kill me, the rage I let out on you was not due to your actions but rather caused by a personal topic I don't intend to share here. Does it hurt?

The woman moves aggressively and spits through the cloth. The salvia drips down her chin.

Stefan: I figured.

He finishes pouring himself a Negroni, takes a chair, and sits vis-à-vis to her. He smells the drink, enjoying the coffee aroma. He then takes a sip. He has all the time in the world to get to his point.

Stefan: I always enjoyed a good Negroni. It tastes bitter, which I like, but also creamy. I feel like this shouldn't work. There is a sense of opposites that, for some reason, when mixed, creates a perfect balance in texture and taste.

Stefan leans back and sinks into the chair.

Stefan: It somehow reminds me of us two. Both of us work for different people who, I take it, work opposite to each other as you tried to strangle me with a guitar string. Yet we get this opportunity to sit together, enjoy a drink, and create something beautiful. Let's call it an exchange of knowledge. I will be very fair about this since you got beaten up more than necessary. I will tell you something about myself, and then I will ask you one question which you will then answer.

Stefan takes a sip from his drink

Stefan: Great, I expected you to say something, but since you don't complain, we seem to be on the same page.

Stefan takes out a notebook and holds it in the air like a trophy.

Stefan: This...is my little notebook. I got this one from a person I very much loved. It was a gift for our 3rd anniversary. Seems a bit underwhelming, doesn't it? One would expect flowers or something more romantic. No, this gift...this gift was beyond belief. You see, this notebook used to be hers. And it's the contents that makes it so special.

Stefans seems like a different person. Almost like a predator stalking its prey. This is why he is considered to be the best in the Firm.

Stefan: The person who gave this to me used this notebook in all her years of work. To me, this is a bible, a testament of her work. Every page holds personal contacts of pretty much anyone you would want to know in this country. Hotel owners who will get you a room within 10 minutes, even if they are fully booked. Doctors like this fine gentleman here, who has a private arsenal of all the medicine and toxins you have ever heard of. A getaway driver that will turn your 40-year-old car into a racing beast once he sits behind the wheel...

Stefan looks into the woman's Eyes

Stefan: A professional torturer who cracks even the sternest and best-trained people. The list is endless. And the effort she made to get all those favors from those people is...I will look up to that till the day I die. And if that wasn't enough already, she just gave it away, entrusting it to me to use at will. Such selflessness is something I will never be able to compete with. But I try to get as close as possible.

Stefan puts away the notebook

Stefan: Now, I will remove your muffler and you will answer me this. Who do you work for?

Stefan holds eye contact for a while. Then he leans forward and takes off the muffler. The Woman moves her jaw to loosen it up a little.

Woman: We have warned you to stay out of our affairs and you went against it. Your name has been spoken by the leader. At that moment, your life was proclaimed to be forfeit. You might be still walking, breathing and shitting, but what is left of you is a mere casket of flesh, waiting for the butcher.

Stefan: So, you are part of the FP?

Woman: I am a seer of the movement that defies the global order. I am the keeper of the light against the darkness of human debauchery. And we WILL=claim=absolute=victory.

Stefan sits there for a moment and looks at her. This is awkward. He gets up from his chair and puts the muffler back into her mouth.

Stefan: Alright then...very productive talk. I appreciate your cooperation. I think we are done here, so... Nic will take it from here and...yeah...good luck with your Verdi veni vici stuff.

Stefan leaves the room where Nicolas and Richard are waiting.

Stefan (to Nic): I would do a check-up on here. She might have a major manic schizophrenic episode.

Richard: Did you find out anything?

Stefan: Oh yeah, lovely talk. I found out two things. First, the inner cycle of the FP seems to be absolutely delulu. Second, they collectively decided I am not a living being anymore so they have tea-partys over how to beat me into a wiener schnitzel.

Richard: I mean, for the second part, it wouldn't be a case of yours if it were any different.

Stefan nods in silence, way to calm for what just happened.

Nic: You guys just accept that information like that?

Richard: We will be fine. Not our first rodeo.

Nic: I need a drink.

Nics disappears into his study.

Stefan: Care to join me for a smoke?

Richard: Sure.

Ext. walk to Lake

As Stefan and Richard make their way to the Lake to wait for Bannard, Stefan dials for Lucy on his phone. After a brief moment, she picks up.

Stefan: Bannard is a WKJ survivor, Bastian regains speech slowly, the woman who tried to kill me is a time traveler from medieval times, and I'm low on cigarettes. How are things on your end?

Int. Vienna, Apartment of Theodor

High angle wide-angle shot of room.

Theodor's corpse remains behind the sofa, blood everywhere. Lia and Mia are wearing full-body suits, taking photos and fingerprints of the scenery. Veronica sits by the table, pale and pacified. Ben sits with veronica, handing her a questionnaire to fill out.

Lucy: Boss found out about our operation and forces me into it now, got called to an after-party suicide scene that has some similarities with our husband situation. Also, I had too much coffee so I am a bit on edge.

Stefan: Man, sounds like you guys have way more fun.

Lucy: Says the guy enjoying the lake view while talking to her partner who is standing between a pool of blood and a traumatized roommate.

Stefan (beautiful scenery shot): Point taken. Was it a USB stick?

Lucy: Looking at the setup, it was probably a tape, but we didn't find one that has the same qualities as the others.

While saying that, she looks at a box of Theodor's personal belongings that they brought into the room for forensics.

Lucy: Which leads us to two possibilities. The entire thing is either staged to throw us off or someone took it with them.

Stefan: Any ideas yet?

Lucy looks around the room.

Lucy: Working on it.

She hangs up the phone.

Lucy: Ok girls, give me the rundown.

Mia hovers over the corpse.

Mia: Giving the time of death, the corpse was dragged behind the couch after it happened. Considering Ben's Interview with Veronica, it would imply the perpetrator was still in the apartment when she went to the kitchen to grab a glass of water. Given the brutality of the killing, one would expect a fight scene. But the apartment is in top shape despite the party-mess. Also, there are no typical signs of a fight, like skin tissue underneath the fingernails or bruises on the knuckles. On the contrary, the blade penetrated the throat very cleanly. One quick stab. That's very unusual for a suicide case. That asks for a level of commitment that most people wouldn't have.

Lucy: Also, nobody would stick a knife in their own throat by choice if they tried to end their life.

Lucy turns around to Lia, who is crouching next to the TV.

What about the VHS player?

Mia: This one is pretty common in Europe but it is not compatible with PAL systems. There is no way it could have been a Tape.

Lucy stands there for a while, thinking.

Lucy: There was this book Stefan geeked out about, when he got into analog stuff a couple of years back. I think it was written by someone called McGinty?

Lia: Videocassette Recorders: Theory and Servicing.

Lucy: Yes! Remind me, how big is the speed difference of the head drum rotation between NTSC and PAL?

Mia: 1800 to 1500

Lucy: Ok so the Video Signal Decoder would have to be swapped out, the TV output Chip to be reprogrammed and there might be an issue with the power supply so changing it could have been necessary as well.

Lia: And voltage, as well as firmware regulations, are needed in order to slow down the capstan motor to make PAL Cassettes run.

Lucy: Sound might have been an issue too, but that is secondary given the nature of the tape's function.

Lia: Lucy, this sounds technically possible, but this is hardcore engineering we are talking about. To do this for real, one would have to be an absolute pro.

Mia looks inside the VHS player as she opened it up during the discussion.

Mia: It is converted.

Lia is stunned.

Lucy grabs a bunch of Cassettes from a box of Theodor's goods.

Lucy: And because the Guy only owns NTSC Tapes, it must have happened close to his death. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to watch these. Someone had to walk in here during the party, mod this thing without anyone noticing, make him watch their tape and leave without a trace.

She looks at both Lia and Mia

Lucy: If you can pull something like that off, you might even be able to make a digital copy of the damn thing. Thanks girls.

Mia: Always

Lia: You got it.

The camera rotates and what used to be Lia and Mia are now 2 other people doing their job. Lucy walks up to Veronica, who is still petrified. She sits down next to Ben, who is holding a clipboard to write down whatever Veronica can share with them.

Lucy: You are Veronica, right?

No answer

Lucy: I understand your shock, and I am sorry to put so much strain on you. I know my college already gave you a questionnaire to fill out. But if there is anything else you can remember...

Veronica: It was her...

Lucy: Excuse me?

Veronica: That petit french bitch, Theodor fell for. I knew she was trouble the moment I saw her.

Lucy: That “petite French girl”, what do you know about her?

Veronica: She said her name is Noémie. Blond, short hair, blue eyes, a bit tomboyish, beautiful.

Lucy: Noémie…

Lucy writes the name down in a notebook.

Lucy: When did she arrive?

Veronica: Pretty early. She lives next door, at least she did till last night.

Lucys and Ben share a look.

Int. Apartment of Noémie

Low angle shot inside the apartment

Lucy slowly opens the door to the apartment. Directional light from outside reveals an empty, dark room. Except for one thing. A cheap Go Board on the floor, with a finished game on top. Lucy looks around the room, and Ben follows her.

Lucy: Not only does she do the coding, but the killing as well.

She looks at the Go-Board. You don’t need to play the game to understand the outcome of this one. The black stones are dominating the playing field. A close-up of Lucy reflects her thought process. This is someone as calculative as her. Someone who thinks about every move from start to finish.

Ben walks up to her and looks questioningly.

Lucy: She is mocking us. She knows we are after her.

Int. small flat

Close up, American framing

Noémie looks out the window. A wide angle reveals her new apartment. Boxes are stacked on top of each other. On a Desk in the corner, her PC is already set up. This flat is bigger, and way brighter than the one before. Noémie is enjoying it, as the sun warms her face. She takes one of the boxes and puts it in the middle of the room. She crouches down and opens up the lit. It is full with personal stuff. She pushes some books aside and pulls out Theodor's script. She makes herself as comfortable as it gets on hard wooden flooring and starts reading. After a while, her phone rings. She takes a look, it's a message from her Boss.

Boss: ICB 45 order, pick up at 7PM.

Her eyes turn tired. She can't get a break, can she? She puts the script aside and starts unpacking. While going through her stuff, she realizes that she only has one PAL system tape left. She takes out her phone and sends a message

To Bannard:

10 Tapes, today 3 PM sharp, don't be late.

Ext. Lake.

Richard and Stefan sit at the lake. Bannard walks into the frame and sits next to them. (Collage of Schoeppler in apartment starts)

Bannard: Constantin Schoeppler, the new leader of the FP. He paid him a visit to force him to join. Said they need a second programmer in Vienna, as the one in Italy should be removed from the operation. He refused. Schoeppler played it cool, said he would want to show him a new product before leaving. Made him watch a highly potent tape. It paralyzed him for days, while Schoeppler used his apartment as a hideout. I didn't even know those tapes could do that.

(Back at the lake)

Stefan: That's why we are here. So as of now, two people are making those Tapes. And one of them sits in Erba. What about the tape in his belly?

Bannard: He said everything seemed blurry at the time. His guess, Schoeppler knew he was followed. Put a tape in his belly to scare you off. And then used another tape to make him seize right before you came.

Stefan sits up and looks across the lake.

Stefan: No. I don't buy it.

Richard: Whats on your mind?

Stefan: I agree with him wanting us to find the tape. But that alone seems a bit weak of an explanation to scare us off. Especially when he did his research on us. What if...

He turns around to Richard

Stefan: What if he wanted us to watch it?

Int. Hallway.

Bannard, Stefan and Richard are sitting around, waiting for Nic. Nicolas exits the operating room and approaches the guys.

Nic: I made her watch the tape. No effects. You should be good to go.

Int. Nic's Study.

Stefan and Richard sit next to each other on the couch. Bannard stands behind them next to Nic. Stefan holds a remote and presses Play.

Footage, woods, daytime.

The Camera is set up in documentary style within a crowd, which reminds us of the Riefenstahl aesthetic of "Triumph of the Will." A large group of FP followers is wearing ceremonial blue gowns and masks. They are lined up and each one is holding a smoke Stick. They are humming words, probably in Latin, similar to Mongolian chanting. Then their leader appears out of the crowd, placing himself in front of the people. His outfit is similar, yet more noble, with golden chains and a beautiful deer bone mask. As he takes the Mask off, the crowd turns silent. It is Schoeppler. He takes his time looking through

the crowd. He doesn't look like a bad person though, quite the contrary. The way he carries himself is very elegant and soft. So is his speech.

Schoeppler: Da virtutem Fidelis Patriaorganisationi.
Cor unum, fides una, opus iustum.
In lumine veritatis,
Serviamus.

All: Serviamus

Schoeppler: We gathered here today to celebrate the 25th birthday of our beautiful movement. In the last years we have been working hard to ensure that each follower deserves a life better than before. We recruited the people who needed us, opened the eyes of the politicians that doubted us and convinced those, who resisted us. And now, after years of imprisonment, I accept your offer to lead us into a future of stable growth.

Alle: Serviamus

Schoeppler: I know that many of you have suffered. Under the system, which has shown us the world and robbed us of its promise. The World leaders, whose decadence killed a utopia we once worked for. And now, even after liberating ourselves, investigations of private organizations remind us that we can never be free.

To that I say, no more. It is time to end the dialogue we upheld for years, because clearly, they don't want to reason with us. The middle ground has made us more vulnerable than we have to be. And our numbers are growing by the day. It is them who should seek us out for guidance and leadership, not the other way around.

Schoeppler pulls out a ceremonial knife and cuts into his hand.

Schoeppler: With this, I swear to you that we will destroy everyone who tries to stop us. This country will be the example for the entire continent. We will share our freedom and its superiority with the rest of the world. And they will tremble in awe and join the

cause. As our ancestors fought for it, we will honor them in their ways. Fidelis Patriaer!

All: In lumine veritatis!

Stefan turns off the TV.

Stefan: When the world abandons the people, they turn to even worse things in the hope of safety...Humanity will never outrun itself.

Richard: This means...

Stefan: Bannard, say your goodbyes to Bastian.
We have to go, now.

Nic: What about the Woman?

Stefan: A new subject for your experiments, isn't she? You have the security to be untouchable. They won't target you. For now.

Ext. In front of the Villa

The guys drive off, Nic looks after them.

Int. Noémie apartment

The apartment looks more like the one she occupied before. The sound waves of the old hardware create a similar thick atmosphere. Big drapes darken the room, electronics everywhere and the PC set up is pretty much back to how it used to be. Noémie sits at the PC. Theodor's script lies next to her on the table. She read half of it by now. As she is staring at the PC while coding, she listens to music with her old headphones. Her phone starts ringing, a message.

Boss: They found you!

Noémie freezes for a moment. She puts the earphones down. She gets visibly nervous as she gets up and peeks through the drapes, looking down on the street. A car parks in front of the apartment. Lucy and Ben open the Car's door and approach the building. Things have to go fast now. She runs to the

PC and shuts everything down. She then opens a drawer and takes out the last VHS tape. Looking around the room, she takes the garbage bag in the corner, empties it, and puts things like clothes, the tape, and some pc parts, as well as small speakers inside. Before she leaves, she writes a message to her Boss.

Noémie: "You promised safety! Liar!"

Noémie puts on a Coat, a Bandana and Sunglasses. She slowly opens the door and takes a look. Nobody there yet. She walks out and tries to lock the door, but she is so nervous that she drops the keys. It doesn't matter. They would break in anyways. She picks up the keys and jogs to the stairs. As she looks down, she can see Lucy and Ben climbing the stairs. She is on the last floor, only one way to go. Noémie knows they definitely have been talking to Theodor's roommate. Her French accent, her looks, everything could be a giveaway. She needs to pass them without any interaction, or it's over. Another message.

Boss: "Stick to the plan!"

With inner rage, Noémie puts her phone away. There is no alternative. She walks downstairs, lowering her face. The adrenaline kicks but she moves swift and calm. On the next floor, Lucy and Ben arrive on the same floor at the same time. She tries to play it cool and keeps walking. They don't seem to pay much attention. For a moment, Noémie feels relieved as she passes them, but before she reaches the stairs, Lucy turns around.

Lucy: Excuse me?

Noémie freezes but doesn't turn around.

Lucy: Do you by any chance know who lives in apartment 32?

Noémie turns a bit to the side to acknowledge the question, but not enough to reveal her face.

Noémie: no, sorry.

For a brief moment, there is silence.

Lucy: Well, thanks anyways.

What a relief. They keep climbing the stairs. Noémie tries to quickly leave the building without running.

Int. Last floor

Lucy and Ben walk up the door of apartment 32. They hide behind the doorframe and grab their pistols. The door seems to be unlocked. Lucy slowly opens the door and scans the room. Empty. Then she realizes. She walks up to the window, puts the drapes aside, and looks down at the street. There she is, Noémie, running for her life. Lucy doesn't waste time. She immediately thinks of the route Noémie is taking. Only a few options to run from here. She could still get her.

Lucy: Stay here and secure the evidence!

Ext. Street

Lucy rushes out the apartment and sprints like never before in her life. As she looks down a big empty street, all the way in the far back, there is Noémie, barely visible before making a left turn. As Noémie keeps running a car pulls up in front of her and the doors open. It's the FP coming to her rescue.

FP member: Get in.

Noémie evaluates her situation for a moment.

Noémie: Fuck you, we are done!

She passes the car and keeps running.

FP member (to driver): Don't let her get away! We need her!

He closes the door and the car starts up again.

Lucy reaches the crossing just to see a car chasing after Noémie as well. She doesn't have time to think about it. The chase leads to a narrow street near a sewer. Lucy can hear Noémie's steps in the distance. She seems to catch up. Quite fast. After another turn, Lucy stops. She realizes she lost her. Speakers with a sound board on the floor simulate the sound of Noémie's

running-steps. While catching her breath, the car pulls up. Noémie hides behind a dumpster, before they can spot her. Two FP members get out of the car and pick up the speakers.

FP member 1: FUCK! The boss is going to kill us!

FP member 2: What's the big deal, we still have the Italian girl.

FP member 1: The one who is about to be executed you mean?! The Boss needs her to centralize production in Vienna! Shit! Call the others NOW, before it's too late. They cannot kill her!

Close-up on Lucy's Face as she hears this

Lucy: Stefan...

Int. Car. Erba

Richard receives a message from Lucy.

Richard: It's from lucy. She says FP is about to kill the Person we are after.

Stefan: Shit, Bannard, how long till we arrive?

Bannard: Its right around the corner!

The car arrives in front of the house and comes to a halt. All three jump out of the car and run to the house. But before they even think of entering the House, they know it is too late. There is a young woman, dead, next to the pool. Blood everywhere. A clean shot to the Head. Bannard breaks down, again, he lost someone dear to him.

Richard: Lucy just wrote again. The FP lost their tape-maker in Vienna as well. Didn't pull the assassination back in time. I guess it's over.

Stefan: This case might be.

High angle shot of all three, standing next to the dead girl. Then, a close-up to Stefan, who looks to the horizon.

Stefan: I need to walk on my own. Search the house and gather what you can find. I'll meet you back here.

Ext. Night, empty Vienna Street.

Noémie runs towards the camera. She has been on the run for quite a while now. But at last, she breaks down in exhaustion, leaning against a building wall. She takes a breather, then she looks at her phone.

Boss: Don't do anything rash, you can still stick to the plan. I am paying you double.

For a moment, Noémie stares into the void. Still out of breath. She then takes out the tape from her Bag. After looking at it for a while, she messages back. While doing so, she...smiles? As if she knew what was about to go down.

Noémie: I will clean up after myself, thanks. Deleted your firewall on the way out. Hope you rot in hell.

After sending the message, she breaks the flip phone in two and throws the pieces away.

Ext.Night, Erba street.

Stefan arrives at the street where it all happened. He sits on the side walk and just looks at the spot he shot her. After a while, Bannard appears. He sits next to Stefan.

Bannard: We got all the stuff I need to reconstruct how the tapes work. It will take me a while but I should be able to finish up by the end of the weekend.

Stefan: Why do you care?

Bannard: Nic told me Bastian will never fully recover. And my friend got clipped just like that. If they are desperate for anyone

knowledgeable in this field, I am basically fucked. I guess you guys are my only lifeline now.

Stefan: Is it safety or revenge you are looking for?

Bannard laughs and cries at the same time

Bannard: I have been through this before. I learned. I can't go back to that place. I don't know what it would do to me.

Stefan: You are a hopeless case Bannard. You only think about yourself.

Bannard: The fuck is that supposed to mean?!

Stefan points on a spot right in front of them

Stefan: See this? I accidentally shot the woman I loved, right on this spot. I thought I could save her, but in the end, I was the one who killed her. People like us don't get to move on. We don't deserve it. But you...you have no grasp of right and wrong. If you stood for a cause, you would have died with your brothers and sisters back at the WJK raid.

Bannard: You are right. When the raid happened, I was the first one to run. Another thing I have to live with. But with that decision also came a chance of self-improvement.

Bannard gets up and walks away. He then stops for a moment and turns around.

Bannard: If she really loved you, what do you think she would want you to do? Keep killing yourself, or to be better?

He keeps walking away. Stefan starts tearing up. And then, he falls apart.

Int. Car Night. On the way back to Vienna

Stefan gazes into the distance. Although he seems emotionally drained, there is a healthy look to him. Almost as if he is ready to get on with his life.

Int. Apartment of Noémie

Lucy sits at the PC, behind her Lia and Mia, looking over her shoulders while she tries to recover the files on the PC. Ben is going through Noémies stuff, grabbing whatever he thinks of value.

Mia: No documents in the DOS?

Lucy: No, it's all gone.

Lia: Unsurprising.

Lucy: Stefan should take a look at it; he is better with these things.

She turns to Ben

Lucy: Did you find anything yet?

Ben shakes his hand to suggest a somewhat neutral outcome.

Lucy: Well, better than nothing.

Lucy receives a message.

Richard: We were too late; the hardware was stolen. On our way back now.

Lucy sinks into the chair.

Lucy: I guess that's that.

Lia: We can still find the girl.

Lucy: Sure, good luck with that one.

Mia: We should still see this as a victory. The distribution should be on hold for now.

Lucy: For now...

Lucy gets up and walks out of the flat, wandering around the corridor. A close-up reveals her disappointment, yet there is a somewhat relieved expression as well. Maybe, they really did it. She is tired.

Int. Stefan' s apartment, Morning.

Stefan enters his apartment, beat. He gets rid of his jacket and shoes and falls into bed. But even though he is exhausted, he doesn' t feel like sleeping. Quite the contrary. He keeps thinking about revisiting Erba in the future. Maybe he can be better. He gets up and starts putting his VCs and Tapes into a Box. The box he then stores on top of his Closet. Afterwards, he grabs some old paint from the closet as well as well as an easel and a small canvas from a corner behind the kitchen. He starts painting.

Int. Bedroom, late afternoon, Lucy' s apartment

Lucy wakes up in Bed. As she looks at the clock, she can' t believe how long she has slept. It is dusk already.

Int. Kitchen

Lucy just finished brewing herself some coffee. She sits down at a table with her Go board. The game is pretty much over. White has a very small margin of victory. She analyses the game while drinking her coffee. Then, she wipes the board clean, ready for a new game. Her phone starts ringing. It' s the boss.

Lucy: Yes?

Boss: Good job with the case.

Lucy: We didn' t catch the coder, though.

Boss: But you made her go underground and break with the FP, we can now go after her more easily. Very stupid of her. Maybe she isn' t that smart after all. I think we will catch her by the end of the week. Your money should be in your account. There is a little extra, you deserve it.

Lucy: I guess I am going back to local cases for now.

Boss: Not quite, we are still dealing with the FP. There is someone who wants to see you. High-profile case. He is in dire need of protection, and I want you to be his bodyguard.

Lucy: Who?

Stefan, late evening, rain

Stefan finishes up a graffiti-inspired, expressionistic painting. He looks proud of himself. And healthy. Almost as if he were born anew. His phone rings. Weather warning: strong rain, seek shelter. Before he can put the phone away, he receives a call. It's Lucy. Lucy is on the street with an umbrella, walking.

Stefan: Yes?

Lucy: Diego fucking Licht!

Stefan: What?

Lucy: I got assigned to be the bodyguard of the greatest composer of our time!

Stefan: Is he in danger?

Lucy: I am on my way to meet him in Tom's bar tonight. Gotta make it before the rain shuts down the Metro. It's music night as well. Tom is such a fan; he will not believe it! Are you coming?

Stefan starts watering his plants

Stefan: Nah, I think I will stay home for a while and work on my painting skills.

Lucy: You started painting again?

Stefan: I did. Replaced it with the TV. Figured I would treat myself for a while.

Lucy: Yeah, the boss told me you are taking a break. I was worried, but you sound well!

Stefan: Yeah, Italy was something I needed, I guess. I want to get better. And once I am on my feet again, help others again.

Lucy: That sounds great! And you have protection?

Stefan looks out the window, a tall man in black stands at the crossroads, making sure nobody tries to get to Stefan.

Stefan: I do. Don't worry. I am used to it.

Lucy: I will try not to.

Stefan: Congratulation to the gig! You will be great.

Lucy: You think so? I am so nervous!

Stefan: I know you will, I have a hunch!

Lucy smiles. She hasn't felt so happy for Stefan in a while.

Lucy: Of course, you do. Btw I know who the killer is. The same person who coded the USB stick, crazy right? She...

Stefan: You mind giving me the details after my vacation? There is no rush now.

Lucy: Right, sorry. Ok, I guess I will be seeing you soon. Let me know when you need company!

Stefan: I will. Bye now Lucy.

Lucy: Take care Ben!

Stefan hangs up the phone and picks up a book about painting styles. As he skims through the pages, there is a knock on the door. He puts the book aside and approaches the door. He opens it. A young woman in a red dress, soaked from the rain, stands in front of him.

Noémie: Salut!

A close up of her bag shows the corner of her last PAL VHS tape sticking out.

End of Episode 3

Episode 4: Best of the best

7 years old Lucy is standing on a road on the countryside. She is wearing a blue dress. She looks directly into the camera. The song of her sisters fades in. The scene cuts to her kid's bedroom. Lucy lies in bed, breathing heavily. Her two sisters, Mia and Lia, are standing next to her. Both are holding her hand (close up). As they sing the song, she calms down and her eyes get heavier. We cut back to her standing on the road. Just watching. The camera changes to a wide angle behind her. She looks at a car that crashed against a tree. The driver doesn't move. Both Lia and Mia are crushed in between the tree and the car. Blood everywhere.³ The song ends.

Main theme starts with credits. The intro plays, shots of Vienna and various characters are shown. Music is inspired by "keizoku"

Black screen

Noémie: Salut!

Int. Entrance to Stefan's apartment, Night.

As Noémie finishes her greeting, the picture fades in. Camera positioned behind Noémie, revealing Stefan's confused face.

Stefan: Good evening?

Noémie: I am sorry, we have not met yet. I just moved in a floor up from this one, and I already managed to lock myself out. Just got blasted by the rain before getting back here.

Stefan: I see...

Stefan is very confused of what she expects of him.

³ This is a comp shot with spherical a. lense, meaning the girl and the dead people will be shot separately, the kid doesn't see the actors playing dead

Noémie: I already called the building management, but it might take a while due to the incoming storm. None of my neighbors seems to be home either. No wonder, I guess, it's a Friday night. That's why I am trying my luck a floor down. I don't want to cause any inconvenience but...would it be possible to come in and dry up until the manager brings the spare key?

Stefan hesitates, but who is he not to help a stranded person, let alone a neighbor in need? While he doesn't particularly sense danger, he is still in a passive, carefully observing mode.

Stefan: Sure, come on in...what was your name?

Noémie is sure now that he doesn't know who she is. He didn't have the chance yet to talk to Lucy about her. But still, she wants to take extra measures.

Noémie: Manon.

Both share an awkward smile. He steps aside to let her in. She takes off her shoes and leaves them in front of the apartment. She walks in, and as Stefan closes the door, she takes a look around the living room. Where is his VC player? She expected a fully functioning setup. Just some paint and a canvas. Fuck.

Stefan: You want to take a warm shower? I can give you some dry clothes?

Noémie turns around

Noémie: That would be great, thanks!

Int. Stefans apartment. Living room

Stefan is sitting in his chair, reading his book. But he is obviously distracted by the random visitor. Noémie opens the bathroom door. Stefan immediately gets up. She is wearing one of his shirts and short pants. This is somewhat sexual but also very awkward for both of them. Although Noémie knows exactly what she is doing.

Noémie: Thank you! I put my wet clothes on the drying rack, I hope that's ok.

Stefan: Absolutely.

He rubs his sweaty hands on his pants.

Stefan: Oh, I made you some Tea!

Noémie walks up to Stefan as he walks back to his seat. Next to it, a cup of Tea. Noémi takes it out of his hand, does a little head bow, and smiles. As she takes a sip, she looks around the room. Stefan feels a particular need to break the silence.

Stefan: So... (clearing his throat) ...you just moved in? Is it your first time in Vienna?

Noémie: Vienna yeah, Austria no. I lived in Salzburg before to do some work, but it was too small for me. I am a city person.

Stefan: If you want the real city life, I don't think this country is the right place to be.

Noémie: That's true, I have been here for only a month, and it already feels more like a village. It's still better than where I am from.

Stefan: Which is?

Noémie: Collioure, Its very close to the spanish border.

Stefan: Collioure! Of course, I know that place. The birthplace of Fauvism!

Noémie: Oh, you know? That makes me so happy!

Stefan: I have been into Matisse for quite a while. And when you see pictures of it, you can clearly see its influences in the works of Picasso and Derain as well!

Noémie: Right? I totally agree! I think there is a spanish nuance to the architecture and colors of the houses. It seemed to speak a universal language to the painters. Liberated them in a way.

Stefan: That's why the heavy, colorful brush strokes of that era are regarded as the "wild beast" paintings, aren't they?

Noémie: Oh god, that makes sense!

Stefan and Noémie share a laugh.

Stefan: Sorry, I didn't want to lecture you on your own culture.

Noémie: No, please, you are good, I take pride in a random guy in Vienna knowing so much about it. Speaking of art. Seems like you don't only talk about it.

Both of their attention wanders to the painted canvas.

Stefan: Oh, nah, I barely started up again. Took a break for quite a while.

Noémie gets up and looks closer at the painting. Stefan gets up fast and joins her next to the painting because she leans forward a bit too intimately.

Noémie: I like this. It feels unfiltered. Like you are not shying away from showing your emotions.

Stefan: I used to paint more structural, school-based. But after a while, I realized it's not who I am. I started to find meaning in deconstructing the rules I learned.

Noémie: But I do see a lot of structure in this one. Almost like an unspoken rule of balance within the chaos. And a bit comic-ish as well. It's as if Keith Haring and Taki 183 had a Baby.

Stefan is pleasantly surprised by her knowledge and interest in this line of work.

Noémie: I never tried to reference any of them, but I do see your point.

Noémie: Do you have some more?

Stefan: Only very old once.

Noémie: Sorry, I am nosy, aren't I. I just get excited about stuff like this.

Stefan: No, you are good! I will show you.

Int. Bedroom, Night

Stefan enters his bedroom, closely followed by Noémie. While Stefan opens one of his closets and decides on which piece to show, Noémie carefully scans the room.

High angle on the closet and Noémie

She sees a Box and a VHS peeking out of the lid. Bingo! She might still be able to pull this off without any complications.

Stefan: I could have sworn they were here.

Noémie: Is that what I think it is?

Stefan turns around and sees Noémie glancing over his VC stuff.

Stefan: Oh, yeah…

Noémie: Did you ever use it?

Stefan: More than I am proud to admit.

Noémie: I have my own. Helps me unwind after a long day.

Stefan finds one of his older pictures and presents it to Noémie.

Noémie: Oh my god, you are really good…Wow, I didn't ask you for your name yet, did I?

Stefan: It's Stefan.

Noémie: Stefan...don't you dare stop painting.

This moment has a strong sexual tension, but Stefan tries to defuse it.

Stefan: Did the building manager say when he will arrive?

Noémie realizes she is too strong on the sexual part. She needs to play it cool. No rush now.

Noémie: Giving the Storm he will only be able to come by tomorrow. Uuh, I am already asking a lot of you, don't I? I know, but...could I maybe crash in your chair overnight? I will make breakfast for both of us first thing my apartment is open.

Stefan already figured as much. He is accepting the situation as is, although he was looking forward to some alone time.

Stefan: Sure, of course, and don't worry, you are not bothering in any way. I have a mattress you can crash on. I hope you make killer pancakes!

Noémie: The best!

Int. Tom's Bar, Music Night

A Jazz band is playing an upbeat song on the stage. The bar is filled with people, dancing and drinking. The Music-Night seems to be a hit. Lucy and Diego sit next to each other at the Bar. Diego stares down at his drink; he looks exhausted. As if he hasn't slept in days. Tim starts cleaning the bar, the moment Diego's eyes wander up to him, as if he hadn't stared for minutes. Diego turns around, and the group of people behind him starts talking with each other and play it cool, as if they weren't starstruck as well. Lucy tries to defuse the awkward tension.

Lucy: So... (clearing throat) ...Mr. Licht. I appreciate that you chose our protection services. I assure you that you don't have anything to worry about with us.

Diego: Yeah, thanks…At first, I wasn’t sure if I would be overreacting by reaching out, but the threats accumulated more and more over the past few days.

Lucy opens up a binder with printed out information about Diego’s application for the protection service.

Lucy: I already got the files sent to me. It seems like the FP is targeting you with death threats. This started a couple weeks ago?

Diego downs his drink and points at the glass to signal Tim for a refill.

Diego: It started with letters of disapproval, calling me names, and telling me my music sucks.

Tim puts another Beer in front of him.

Tim: What do they know…

Diego looks confused, Lucy looks at Tim angrily. Not the time to fanboy. Tim walks away in shame.

Tim: After a week, the curses turned into threats. At first, it was just about me, then they started sending me private information of my parents and friends.

The music ramps up, an intense duo with the pianoplayer and the bass player started. It seems as if both musicians disapprove of the other’s rhythmic choices. They keep looking up from their instruments and judging the other player by their looks. It’s more of a battle than a duo.

Lucy: I understand the frustration. We dealt with several high-profile people who were targeted by stalkers or certain groups. Usually, it’s empty words. I know it is hard, but I wouldn’t read too much into it.

The music performance keeps building up. The miscommunication is apparent, not only in the song. Diego reaches inside his pocket and takes out a piece of paper. He hands it over to Lucy. She opens it.

Your music goes against the will of our cause.

Cancel your Concert on the 14th, don't tell anybody why. If you don't comply, we will shoot you on stage, burn the musicians, and execute everyone in that music hall. Then, we will come for your mother, Luisa, your father, Gregor, your sister Nina, and your girlfriend Stefanie. Don't test us, as we are already tested by our Cause.

Signed:

Constantin Schoeppler

Lucy reads the name again. The leader of the FP himself is threatening the biggest newcomer in classical music composition.

Lucy: The concert is tomorrow evening...Tim, I need you to call Richard and tell him to show this to our boss ASAP. We need full 24/7 security measures for his family.

Tim: On it.

Lucy: As for you Mr. Licht.

Diego: Diego is fine.

Lucy: As for you, Diego. Under no circumstances can you cave in to such demands. If you do so, the threats are likely to get worse. This is an opportunity to keep them in check.

Diego: You expect me to perform on the stage while this psychotic cult is targeting my entire family and co-workers? I don't think so.

Lucy: I know how this sounds. And I get your frustration.

Diego: Frustration?!

Diego gets angry with Lucy; she seems to be missing the point here.

Lucy: But I have dealt with them more than once. I don't think they are expecting you to go through with your concert. And if they should show up, we will be prepared. We are increasing security measures, doing background checks for all the guests, ...

Diego: Why are you not arresting him now? This is a death threat on multiple people, signed by himself!

Lucy: Because the FP is well organized and actively working on destroying the very system we represent. Even if we knew where he was, we couldn't get close to him right now. They need to come to us, make a mistake. And with you, we are closer to that goal than ever before! This signature shows, he is personally involved in this matter. He is slipping.

Lucy is excited, this is the closest she could get to weaken the cause of the FP for a long time.

Diego: I am paying you to protect me, not to use me as bait! I heard you are the best, so I am expecting you to consider my safety first! I have nothing to do with your dispute with them!

The duo reaches its climax in the song, as the pianoplayer smacks random piano keys in anger and one of the bass players' strings rips. They leave the stage angrily as the next performance enters the stage. People are clapping and cheering. Lucy readjusts herself, silently recognizing that she just got called the best.

Lucy: You are right, I am sorry. I just came back from a big case and need to readjust my expectations. From now on, I will have nothing on my mind but your well-being.

Diego: Thank you…

Lucy: What's next on your schedule?

Diego: Tomorrow morning, we have our last rehearsal with the musicians. I will tell them not to come.

Lucy: If I may suggest, go to the rehearsal and don't let your orchestra know about this yet. Our Bureau will start its investigation right now. There is a chance we can defuse the situation, which means you can do your concert and the musicians don't have to deal with the shock.

Diego spins his glass in thought, then he takes a huge sip.

Diego: Fine. I'll be right back.

Diego leaves for the Bathroom.

Tim: The best huh?...

Lucy looks at Tom joyously, showing off her pride.

Lucy: It was bound to happen.

Int. Stefans Apartment, Morning, Rain

Stefan wakes up on the couch. As he looks around the room, the memory of the rest of the night slowly comes back to him. Most of his paintings lie around, empty wine bottles on the floor, and an overflowing ashtray. On top of him lies Manon. She is still asleep, but as soon as Stefan moves, she wakes up as well. Once she is conscious enough, she immediately gets off of him and sits up at the far end of the couch.

Noémie: When did we fall asleep?

Stefan: I don't know. Probably around when I started talking about Karada's painting of Kannon.

Noémie: Right...Asian modernism.

Both Yawn. Noémie looks at her phone.

Noémie: Oh, the house admin put the spare key under my rug!

Stefan: Great.

Noémie gets up and walks to the drying rack to get her stuff. She puts it in her bag. Then she comes back to the living room, standing in the doorway

Noémie: I will bring you your clothes after I have changed! I had fun yesterday!

Stefan looks at her

Stefan: Yeah, me too.

Noémie awkwardly turns around and is about to leave.

Stefan: So...you mentioned pancakes?

Noémie smiles, but not due to his attention. Her eyes reveal a more sinister thought. Everything is going as planned. She turns around.

Noémie: My flat is a mess right now so let me change and come back down in like an hour.

Stefan: Sounds great.

Noémie leaves the apartment. Stefan slowly gets up and starts cleaning. As he continues to clean his bedroom, the camera is once again at a high angle, showing the box with his TV stuff, but the VHS player is missing. He doesn't realize it, though, as his mind is in a completely different place.

Ext. Collage of Noémie

Noémie enters a hotel bathroom, cleaning herself, then she enters a bakery and orders pancakes to go. At the supermarket, she buys paper plates. Then, she walks back to the apartment, the VHS player in her bag.

Int. Stefan apartment.

During the collage of Noémie, Stefan receives a call. It's Richard. Stefan picks up the call.

Stefan: What's up?!

Richard: Wow, you are moody today.

Stefan: How could I not be when an idiot like you disturbs my vacation?

Richard: At least someone is thinking about you.

Stefan smiles.

Stefan: Is it important?

Richard: Just wanted to let you know what's going down. Diego Licht is targeted by the FP. They want to execute him at his big concert today if he doesn't cancel it. Lucy is trying to convince him to do it anyway.

Stefan approaches the canvas they talked about yesterday. He looks at it, pleasantly.

Stefan: Tss, of course she does. Never had the chills to wait things out. Why are you telling me this? I told you I am not on duty.

Richard: Didn't want to let you in the dark about this. You would have been pissed with me till the end of time if you found out afterwards.

Stefan: For the first time in my life, you might be right. But I am good. Lucy can handle it.

Richard: Did she brief you about the USB coder?

Stefan: No, I thought it could wait.

Richard: Lucy and Ben nearly caught her too. Wouldn't that have been great.

Stefan: She?

Richard: Yeah, apparently, she pimped the victims' VHS player in a matter of minutes.

Stefan: Is that so.

Richard: Yeah, she seemed to be more valuable to the FP than we thought in terms of production and Execution. But now that she is gone, who knows? Probably works for the next asshole group as we speak. She's...

Noémie knocks at the door.

Stefan: Would you mind giving me the details later? My neighbor just made pancakes and I need a break from all of this.

Richard: Neighbor? I didn't know you have friends in the house?

Stefan: Just met her yesterday.

Richard: Ooooh, I understand. One trip to Italy and Stefan is back in action.

Stefan: Easy there, I am just enjoying myself.

Richard: Of course, you are, well don't let me interrupt you with anything tiger

Stefan: Fuck off, be hearing you.

Stefan hangs up and opens the door. Noémie changed her clothes into something more casual, posing with the Pancakes and the biggest smile on her face.

Stefan: Wow, they look amazing!

Noémie: Right? Hahaha, oh no, I forgot the forks.

Stefan: I got you covert.

Noémie enters the apartment. Stefan notices she still has the bag from yesterday.

Stefan: Why the bag?

Noémie: Oh...It was easier to transport your clothes this way.

Stefan: You can give them to me, I just throw them on the pile of dirty clothes.

Noémie: ...sure.

She puts the bag on the floor and stands in front of it in a way, Stefan can't look inside. She grabs the clothes and gives them to him. Inside the

Bag, his VHS player. He doesn't seem to notice and takes the clothes to the washing machine. Noémie quickly puts the pancakes down in the living room and hides the Bag behind one of his plants right before Stefan comes back with 2 forks. They both sit down, and Noémie takes one of them.

Noémie: Thanks. I heard you talking before opening the door.

Stefan: Oh, yeah it was just a colleague of mine. He wanted to brief me about stuff. But I am on vacation.

Noémie: Right, I didn't ask, what do you do for a living?

Stefan: Well...

Stefan puts a piece of pancake in his mouth.

Stefan: Oh my god, those are so good!

Noémie: Thank you!

Stefan: They remind me of the pancakes just 3 blocks from here, at Gregory's haha.

Noémie overcompensates the gotcha moment with the worst fake laugh.

Noémie: HAHAHAHA I don't know that place, maybe they stole my recipe!

Stefan: Maybe. I haven't been in ages, so I might be imagining things.

Noémie: Hahaha...I take it as a compliment.

Noémie starts eating too.

Noémie: What are you doing today?

Stefan: I don't know. The weather seems to get better. Maybe I am going for a walk.

Noémie: Sounds nice...

Stefan: What about you?

Noémie: No plans. (Very suggestive)

Stefan suggestively looks at his food. He wants to ask her, but he needs to build courage first. Noémie notices.

Noémie: Yes? (smiling)

Stefan: Oh nothing, I was just wandering…

Noémie: Wondering if I would come with you?

Stefan: It was just an idea.

Stefan puts a big Chunk of the pie in his mouth to hide his awkwardness.

Noémie: Haha…why not. We weren’t done discussing Chinese, Japanese Imperial visual art anyway.

Both smile.

Int. Rehearsal room

Lucy and Richard enter the rehearsal room. Diego stands in front of the orchestra and rehearses parts of his song. He looks even more tired than before. And his patience seems to dwindle.

Diego: Strings, I need you to keep it up, its laaaaa LA LA, punctual!

Lucy and Richard are stopped by Diego’s manager. She is annoyed at both of them

Manager: Diego is busy, please leave the building now!

Lucy: I am his Bodyguard. I need to speak with him.

Manager: You can watch him from the side, but I can’t allow you to interrupt him while working!

Diego: NO, I NEED YOU TO FOCUS PEOPLE! I can't with you...take a break till 3!

Diego storms out of the room. Lucy mocks the Manager.

Lucy: Not working now, is he?

Lucy and Richard follow Diego, the manager looks very annoyed.

Int. Hallway.

Lucy and Richard follow Diego, who is so fast, Lucy almost has to start running to keep up.

Lucy: Diego, wait!

Diego: I am so stupid! I can't lash out to my musicians like that! I can't do this...

Diego leans against the window and breathes heavily.

Diego: I think I am having a panic attack!

Lucy: It's ok, we got you. Tell me what you see on the street.

Diego: Cars...a street sign... people...clouds...

Lucy: Keep going.

Lucy is holding his back in a supportive manner.

Diego: Buildings...kids...uffffff.

Diego seems to calm down a bit. Richard ran back to the rehearsal room to grab a chair and water. Diego sits down and takes the water bottle. After chugging half of it down, he nods towards Richard as a thank you.

Lucy: We have news, but maybe it can wait.

Diego: Just tell me...

Lucy: We put one of our guys on your case to investigate.

Ext. Street, Night.

We see Ben hiding behind a building, following 2 men of the FP and listening to their conversations. A collage of different places. Lucy's voice turns into narration.

Lucy: He snuck into a secret meeting. He was able to get all the information we need. They will send 2 people to the concert. One will be in charge of shooting you, the other one to burn down the Stage. Both of them will be armed. Sadly, he wasn't able to find out who it would be, but we are certain we will be able to set a trap. When we have a case like this in our bags, the FP will have serious charges on their hands. They will be targeted by every investigation firm in town and they will be forced underground.

Diego: So, you are still suggesting to use me as bait?! You can't be serious!

Lucy kneels down on his eye level.

Lucy: Diego. Your music inspires a whole generation of young artists as well as activists to fight for their beliefs. Your music is not only extraordinary in composition, but in messaging. This is your chance to use that message and take action. Be an example of your beliefs. Isn't this why you are doing this in the first place?

Diego: I am only a musician. Activism is part of it, but I am no front liner!

Lucy: If you like it or not, the people we go against are, in every way. This is not about me or you. This is about freedom of expression. Choice. Get on that stage today and do what you do best. We got you, Diego.

Diego understands what she is saying. But he is not happy about it in the slightest.

Diego: Fuck…ok…I will do it…I need to get back, apologize to the orchestra. Keep me updated.

Diego walks back into the rehearsal room.

Richard: You are getting good at this.

Lucy: I was just copying phrases from movies I watched.

Richard: Still worked, didn't it?

They share a look, one of pleasure with themselves.

Lucy: Make sure the security measures are in place at the concert hall.
I will meet you there later.

Richard: You got it.

Ext. Afternoon, River

Noémie and Stefan walk at the riverbank towards the camera.

Noémie …but does the word “angst” have the same connotation in German that it has in English? It is such a specific term, I usually hear it revolving around art or…well, as we established, talks of modernity.

Stefan: I think there can be a nuance to the word when used, that would be the same in English. However, most people don't get the privilege of a higher education, so the deeper meaning in an international context might not be as commonly understood.

Noémie: It's fascinating how a simple word everybody uses in one cultural sphere suddenly gains deeper meaning just because a random philosopher decides to throw his beliefs at it. What's his name again?

Stefan: Freud?

Noémie: Nah, not the "every boy wants to fuck their mother" guy. I mean...got dammit...Kier...

Noémie knows exactly, but she is playing the vulnerable girl.

Stefan: No idea.

They stop at a bench and sit down.

Noémie: I will remember, and then I will tell you!

Stefan: Haha, but the modernity complex is super interesting. I used to watch those really old movies. Metropolis, Hitchcock, or even an old Korean film that was made during the occupation. They all feel so...It feels like humanity hasn't changed ever since. The Italian new modernism, 30 years later, used the same themes. It wasn't new or different. It just adapted to the next standard of anxiety we are expected to achieve as a society. As if we

still experience the same dread of becoming modern and contemporary. Like a stupid ideology, you need to strive to, to be accepted as a civilized person. But while we all know the issue, we still participate. I guess it overshadows the postmodern movement to this day.

Noémie: “You can’t keep up with modernity”. Humanity totally fucked itself over for no reason, didn’t it? Endless shock therapy.

Stefan: Modernity was always an elite thing to enjoy, anyway. It has nothing to do with common people like us. Proletarian art, independent works. Now that’s the good stuff.

Noémie: I think you make it a bit too easy on yourself. Proletarian literature is deeply grounded in the works of modern societal suppression. That makes it proletarian in the first place. Class and angst of survival.

Funny voice:

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Stefan: What was that?

Noémie: A bible verse.

Stefan: I didn’t think of you as a religious person.

Noémie: Of course… I believe in the one and only god, the natural force that nobody should ever question, no matter how corrupt they may seem… Vulture capitalism!

Stefan and Noémie share a laugh.

Noémie: People don't need modernity to fuck themselves over. Even if we want to overcome the strive for something unreachable, something else will take its place.

Stefan: Yeah...

Noémie: Kierkegaard!!!! I remembered his name!

Int. Concert Hall

Lucy is on stage, communicating with the tech people via walkie-talkie.

Lucy: The guards are in position?

Tech room: two people in front of the door, one in the cabin.

Lucy: Dressing rooms?

Dressing room: Same over here.

Richard climbs up the stage, Ben can be seen in the background with 2 other people, investigating all the seats.

Richard: All the doors are guarded; we did a background check on all guests on the ticket sales and the instruments are being looked at as we speak.

Lucy: How are the musicians taking it?

Richard: Diego told them they got information of possible boycotters storming the building, so nothing that would make them fear their lives.

Boss: The ethics of silence as protection...I hope you know what you are doing, Lucy.

To the surprise of Lucy and Richard, the Boss enters the stage from the Stage side.

Lucy: What are you doing here?

Boss: I am not missing the Diego Licht. Especially when our Bureau's reputation is on the line.

Lucy: Boss with all due respect, I think it is too dangerous to...

Boss: If you consider it too dangerous, maybe your preparations are not ^ good enough then?

Lucy: We are setting a trap. I am expecting them to strike.

Boss: And I expect excellent work from you, no matter the circumstances. Now, if you excuse me, I am taking a look around the building. It is quite a fascinating piece of architecture.

Lucy rolls her eyes and activates the walkie talkie:

Lucy: Place an extra guard on each entrance.

Lucy looks at the clock.

Lucy: 30 Minutes till the guests are seated.

Lucy seems very nervous. Richard comforts her by putting his hand on her shoulder.

Richard: You are doing great! I am getting something to drink. You want something too?

Lucy: Thanks...

As Richard leaves, Lucy takes a deep breath and turns around. Mia and Lia stand there, clothed as a tech person and as a sound artist.

Lucy: What did I miss?

Mia: I don't know.

Lia: Everything seems to be the way it should be.

Lucy: No, I know I am missing something important; I can feel it!

Lucys breathing starts getting heavier.

Mia: almost 10 guards and another 5 are undercover in the audience, we are set girl.

Lucy: I need you to concentrate for fuck' s sake!

Mia and Lia rush to Lucy and hold her hands, as she is panicking.

Mia: OKOK…we hear you! You need to step down from the gas, Lucy. You can only do so much.

Lia: And you have the best of the best next to you. Even if there was a security slip-up, there is no way anything could pass all the eyes and ears in this hall.

Lucy: We don' t have the best one with us tonight.

Lia: We do!

Mia: The best of the best!

Lucy accepts the compliment in silence and takes another breath while closing her eyes. When she opens them again, the Sisters disappeared.

Int. Stefans apartment, afternoon

Stefan unlocks the entrance door and enters. He has a beer in his hand. Noémie is close to follow. She holds a bottle of wine and a bag of chips. Both of them are laughing.

Stefan: Nonono, I refuse to believe that happened!

Noémie: I have proof! I still have a scar!

Stefan: No way!

Both enter the living room and drop their stuff on the floor. Noémie lifts her shirt to reveal a scar on her back.

Noémie: The bastard clawed himself into my skin and didn't let go. They had to cut off his arm. We later got him served by the restaurant for free.

Stefan: This is so random, I love it!

Stefan walks to the kitchen and takes out two wine glasses from the shelf. When he returns, he starts pouring.

Noémie: If it weren't for my stupid ex, pleading with them to take a closer look at it, it wouldn't have happened in the first place. One of my many mistakes in life.

Stefan: Stupid relationships are part of the journey. Just roll with it. Wear the scar like a badge of remembrance.

Noémie: How was your last relationship if I may ask?

Stefan takes time to think about the question. He takes his glass and takes a huge sip.

Stefan: Incomparable.

Noémie: Why did you guys break up?

Stefan: We didn't.

Noémie stiffens up a bit.

Noémie: If I would have known that you are in a relationship, I...

Stefan: All good, I am not.

Noémie connects the dots.

Noémie: I am sorry...

There is a moment of silence. Noémie feels like this is the moment.

Noémie: You...want to watch a movie?

Stefan: Hmm...It's getting kinda late.

Noémie: Haha, I am sorry. It's just. I really enjoy the time with you, I kind of don't want it to end.

Stefan looks at her in a more serious manner. Noémie looks back at him, a bit nervous. He is so calm, so focused. Is he thinking? Did she blow her cover?

Stefan: My VHS collection is on the shelf in the bedroom. Pick a movie. But just a normal one. I am off the stuff for now. You know where the rest is.

Noémie: On it. You mind grabbing a bowl for these? (Pointing at the chips)

Stefan: Sure!

The moment Stefan gets up, Noémie grabs her bag from behind the plant and enters the bedroom. She grabs the Box with the TV and looks through his VHS collection.

Noémie: How about Ben Hur?

Stefan: Oh, great film!

Ext. In front of the supermarket

Richard opens the car door and sits down behind the wheel. Before he starts the engine, he hesitates. Wait a minute. A girl suddenly showed up in front of Stefan's door? Does security know about this? He reaches for his phone and calls the bodyguard in front of Stefan's apartment.

Richard: Hey, did you by any chance see a woman enter the apartment yesterday evening who is not registered in the Apartment?

Bodyguard: No, sir.

Richard: But you have seen Stefan with a woman, right?

Bodyguard: Yes, they went for a walk and got themselves something to drink. They are back at the apartment. He let me know that it's one of the neighbors.

Richard: What does she look like?

Bodyguard: Petite, blond, short hair, French accent.

Richard's pulse shoots up like a rocket ship at takeoff.

Richard: Take her in custody immediately!

Richard hangs up the phone and calls Stefan.

Int. Stefans apartment

Noémie sets up the TV and the VHS.

Noémie: Did you know it was the first 65 mm Film with a 1.25X Anamorphic lens, creating a suuuuper wide Image?

Stefan: I did not!

Stefan's phone rings, he flips it open. Its Richard. He hangs up. Not in the mood for work.

Noémie: That was the beginning of cinemascope, but the MGM 65 mm camera was so expensive to shoot with, only 10 movies were ever made with it.

Noémie puts the cassette into the VHS

Stefan receives a text from Richard, he reads it.

Richard-The Woman is the Coder! Get out of there! Bodyguard on his way up!

Noémie: A real shame I wish we had gotten more masterpieces like this one from that system.

Stefan freezes, he puts away his phone and keeps filling the Bowl. He needs to stay calm. He opens the lower drawer in the kitchen and grabs a gun. He slowly walks back to the living room. Noémie is nowhere to be seen.

Stefan: Manon?

Silence. Where could she be? He slowly walks towards the bedroom. He peeks through the door, but she isn't there either. As he turns around, Noémie stands right in front of him, holding the heavy TV up high, right into his face. He wanted to look away, but it was already too late. His eye color changes, losing himself in the screen.

Ext. Car.

Richard tries to call the bodyguard again, but no luck. He punches the steering wheel in frustration, then he calls Lucy.

Int. Behind the Stage

Lucy wishes Diego good luck, who is visibly nervous.

Lucy: We have everything under control, Diego, no worries!

She leaves the backstage area and looks through the curtain into the room. The room is packed with people. She spots Ben, standing in the back of the Room. She walks towards him.

Lucy (to ben): Okay, this is it.

Her phone starts ringing. It's Richard. She hesitates but picks up the phone.

Lucy: I am busy...

Richard: LUCY, Néomie is at Stefan's place as we speak. I lost contact with the Bodyguard. I am going there now!!

Lucy's face turns pale white. No, this cannot happen. She turns around and looks at the stage. What should she do...? The tension rises. She sees the boss, sitting down, the sound crew doing a last routine check, the orchestra

walking on stage, taking their seats, the lights going dark. She made a decision.

Lucy: I will meet you there!

Lucy hangs up the phone and looks into a confused Ben's Face.

Lucy: Stefan is in danger...I need you to take over! I trust you!

She starts sprinting out of the theater. The Curtains open, and the musicians enter the stage.

Ext, Street.

Lucy is running down the street. She is not thinking, not doubting, not contemplating. Just running. With thunderous applause, Diego enters the stage with a pale white face, sweating heavily. He looks to the crowd and bows down a little. Then he turns around and lets the musicians stand up to do the same. As they sit down, the musicians are ready to play the first note of the piece. But Diego is hesitating. He doesn't seem present. The guests are looking at each other as seconds turn into what feels like a minute. The musicians start to get nervous as well, locked into the starting position. Lucy keeps running. Then, with a big breath, Diego slowly raises his hands. The piece starts. It is an epic song, one of suspense, hope, sadness, and heroism.

Lucy arrives at Stefan's building. She climbs the stairs as if she didn't just finish a 3 km sprint. She reaches Stefan's door and enters.

Int. Stefan's apartment.

The song reaches a suspenseful low, with minimal movement. Lucy breaks through the door. Directly in front of her lies the dead body of the Bodyguard, A stab wound to his skull. Lucy breaths heavily and turns her head towards the living room. Stefan kneels over Richard. He is holding a knife, which is penetrating Richard's shoulder. Richard is fighting for his life. Stefan raises his head and looks at Lucy. His eyes are not his own. His face is emotionless, almost zombie-like. Lucy pulls out her gun and aims at stefan. Her voice is faint as tears rush down her cheeks.

Lucy: Stefan...please...wake up!

Stefan pulls the knife out of Richard's shoulder, who is unable to move. He is hurt bad.

Lucy: Don't make me do this...I can't...

Lia stands behind Lucy in her sportswear, putting her hand on Lucy's shoulder.

Lia: Lucy! Listen to me. I need you to pull the trigger...now.

Lucy: Give me another option.

Stefan starts sprinting towards Lucy

Lia: Shoot!

Lucy pulls the trigger, but it is already too late. Stefan pushes her hands aside and the bullet penetrates the wall next to them. The music turns into an epic again. Stefan pushes Lucy against the wall, pinning her hand with the pistol high against it. He tries to force the knife into her stomach.

Lia: evade and break!

Lucy rolls under her pinned hand like a dance move and has a chance to break his arm with her elbow. But she stops herself last second as she can't bring herself to hurt Stefan that way. Instead, she uses her elbow to land a direct hit on his face. He stumbles back and both spin 180 degrees, both holding each other's hand of weapon in a tight grip. Lucy's back is now facing the living room. Stefan pushes her into his paintings, breaking them. Both fall on the ground. The pistol goes flying, the knife still firmly in Stefan's grip. He pushes his weight on the weapon while Lucy struggles to keep the blade away from her.

Int. Concert Hall.

Ben is looking through the crowd. He is very tense, and he also finds eye contact with his associates in the crowd, nodding to each other.

Int. Stefan's flat

Lia: use his weight to off-balance him!

Lucy kicks him in the butt and uses her strength to push the blade towards her face (up/forward). The combined directional force shifts Stefan's weight further up. The knife misses Lucy's head by a centimeter. Lucy rolls on top of him, but he is bigger than her, standing up with her in his tight grip.

Int. Concert Hall

As Ben looks through the hall's lodges, he sees a man raising his hand all so slightly. Ben looks through the crowd. Close-ups of different guests doing different activities intensify the moment. Then, he sees a woman bending down to tighten her laces. Next to her, a man reaches into his Jacket.

Int. Stefan's flat

Lia: Head-to-head!

Lucy headbutts Stefan and manages to wiggle out of his grip. What follows are dodging punches, hitting and missing blows as well as further furniture breaking.

At one point Lucy manages to get on top of Stefan after he fell on his chair, which broke into pieces.

Int. Concert Hall

Ben rushes to the man and grabs his arm, but he was only reaching for his brochure.

Man: Excuse me? What are you doing?

On the other side of the concert hall, a man walks towards the stage with a gun in his hand. Ben notices him and rushes over.

Int. Stefan's apartment

Lucy manages to take the knife off Stefan's grip. Now she is pushing the knife against his chest, while he is defending himself.

Lucy: Please wake up.... PLEASE....

Int. Concert Hall:

As the guy aims his weapon at Diego's head from the side front of the stage, in the last moment, Ben tackles him to the side and arrests him. Diego notices, but doesn't stop playing.

Int. Stefan's apartment

Stefan doesn't say anything. His eyes tell the truth, he is gone. Lia and Mia both put their hands on Lucy's, holding the knife tight, struggling against Stefan's strength. A flashback to Lucy's childhood, when Lia and Mia comfort Lucy in bed. It is a similar image of them holding her hand, facing her biggest fear. But this time the fear is real. All three push the knife down, penetrating Stefan's chest. There is no last word spoken, no solitude, his life fades away just like that. Dead.

Int. Concert Hall.

The song ends, and cheering erupts from the audience. Diego turns around and bows down. He looks up and sees Ben holding a member of the FP in custody. In the lodg, another Member seems to be put in handcuffs as well. In that moment, he realizes he is safe. Relief rushes through his every atom, followed by a soft smile. He walks to the piano and starts playing a beautiful solo, a sad song of loss and regret, later followed by strings.

Int. Stefans apartment.

Lucy is shaking. There is a long and eerie close-up of her face. Working through what just happened, traumatized by what she has done, and how she had to do it. Tears rush down her face. Blood on her Hands.

Ext. Graveyard. Day

A couple days passed.

As the music continues to bring sadness to the moment, Lucy stands at Stefan's grave. Next to her is her Boss, Ben, Tim, Richard in Bandages and with a blue eye. All of them wear black, but Lucy still wears her brown coat.

Ext. Graveyard, Night

Heavy Rain befalls the resting place of Stefan.

Lucy stands there alone with an umbrella. Not able to leave. The Boss appears behind her.

Boss: Don't hold yourself accountable for this. Nobody could have known.

Lucy: I could have known. I should have instructed the guard of Noémies appearance.

Boss: You are a good kid, Lucy. Make sure it stays that way. You are too valuable to break on this.

The Boss is about to leave

Lucy: Did you hear anything from Bernard?

The Boss turns around.

Boss: The tapes nature is hard to describe, but he figured it out. He gave us a manual of how it works. If we reverse engineer it, we will be able to develop protective hardware for new systems sold. With the right patent, we might be able to make quite some money off of it, too.

Lucy: So, you are selling the safety to the people rather than finishing the job for good?

Boss: The times of checked consumer safeguard is long gone lucy, you know that. I'd rather have us make the money to do some good than not gain anything from it. We are in a competitive market. Might as well get ahead. I'll be seeing you.

Lucy: Yeah...

Lucy just stands there for a while. Lia and Mia appear behind the grave stone in Black dresses. In a panning close up of Lucy's face, Stefan appears behind her.

Stefan: Lucy...

Lucy: I am so sorry Stefan.

Tears rush down her face.

Lucy: It should have been obvious to me that she could be a threat to you. I should have been able to avoid all of this. And now you are gone too. I am so sorry.

Stefan walks up to her and takes her in his arms.

Stefan: It isn't your fault. I am happy I was able to work with you. I chose you as a partner for a reason. And I am still holding on to that belief,

Lucy (now more crying than speaking): How can you say that after what has happened?

Stefan: Because you understand what loss can do to people. It destroys the fundamental beliefs and hollows you out, leaving only a shell of your former self. Heck, I know. But you are not like me. This will make you stronger, better.

Lucy: I didn't need to lose you to get better at what I am doing. All I have done is chase the belief that I can achieve something by being the best at it. But it only led to this. How could I possibly keep going?

Stefan: Because I want you to. I did not die for you to quit now. That is your curse now.

Lucy: I don't want to be a Napoleon.

Stefan: But you will be good at it.

Lucy: How do you know?

Stefan smiles, grabs both of Lucy's shoulders and looks her straight in the eyes.

Stefan: Because...I have a hunch.

He walks next to Lia and Mia, watching Lucy in silence. Lucy takes a letter out of her coat. She looks at it.

Letter:

*I am waiting. Noémie
Hotel Furian am Wolfgangsee.*

Lucy turns around and looks at the three now standing together.

Lucy: I will end this.

Stefan: You don't have to.

Lucy turns around, the camera pan makes the three disappear behind her head.

Lucy: Yes…

Lucy's face turns sour.

Lucy: Yes, I do…

End of Episode 4

Episode 5: Atari

A dark and unsettling woman choir starts chanting while drums pound an eerie, slow rhythm. The city of Vienna is shown in its most unsettling angles and light exposures. With each shot, the scenery moves farther away from the city to the countryside. Dark woods, Wild animals, rushing rivers. Uprising fog. Lucy in her car, driving down a road in the mountains. Finally, she arrives at the hotel, next to the “Wolfgangsee” Lake. “Hotel Furian” It is foggy, cold, and wet. Lucy just sits there for a moment. Her eyes have changed. It is hard to say if she is calculating the situation or driven by emotions. But whatever it is. She looks tired. Worn out. She grabs a big bag with her stuff and exits the car. Looking up at the big Hotel.

Main theme starts with credits. The intro plays, shots of The Hotel, the lake and various characters are shown. Music is inspired by “keizoku” .

Hotel Entrance

Lucy walks into the front door of the Hotel. In the foyer, there is a woman standing behind the counter. She is a beautiful woman in her late 50s. Hard to imagine how beautiful she must have been at a younger age. Lucy approaches her.

Lucy: Hi, I made a reservation.

Charlotte: Lucy, right?

Lucy: Yeah, how did you know?

Charlotte: Not that hard to guess when there are only two guests.

Lucy: Only two?

Charlotte: Oh, ups, must have spoiled the surprise.

Charlotte turns around and grabs a room key. Lucy looks confused. How much money does Noémie have? Why would she do this line of work if not for money?

Charlotte: You are in Room 407. Dinner is at 9.00

Lucy: Thank you...

Charlotte: Charlotte. I am the owner of this place!

Lucy: May I ask, isn't it bad business to let only two people take residence here?

Charlotte starts walking, Lucy follows.

Charlotte: Hahaha oh dear, in our prime season that would be unthinkable, wouldn't it? But it is off-season right now. Right at the time when school starts again, the lake is still too cold to attract tourists. Usually, my Husband and I take a break and travel, but this year, your girlfriend was lucky because my Husband's colonoscopy appointment got delayed right in the middle of this month. An error in the system, they told us. It has never happened before they said.

Lucy: Unfortunate (sarcastically, knowing it was Noémie's doing.)

Charlotte: Anyways your girlfriend offered quite a lot of money. I get it through. I remember when I fell in love and got married. I would have sold a kidney for a vacation like this. But my husband luckily was a bit more realistic with our expenses. And we are happy to provide you with an experience like this. I hope it comes close to an actual honeymoon. Maybe in the future you will be able to get officially married. Never lose hope!

Both wander through the corridors of the Hotel. The interior is mixed with an old and traditional charm while it also has all the modern conveniences you would want. This place is not cheap. But it is also very eerie with nobody around. Almost like a haunted place.

Charlotte: Here is your Room.

Charlotte opens up the door and reveals a beautiful suite with a view over the lake.

Charlotte: This is the door to the bathroom. You can always ask for extra towels. I put a bottle of champagne next to the bed as a welcome gift.

Lucy looks around the room as she puts her bag on the bed. The place is huge. She doesn't quite understand what is going on. She turns around to Charlotte.

Lucy: Do you know where...she is?

Charlotte: Oh, she is at the lake, reading. Do you want me to let her know you arrived?

Lucy slowly approaches the window. From there, she can see Noémie sitting on a chair, facing the lake, reading.

Lucy: No...I want to surprise her.

Charlotte: Ok then. You can always reach me via the room phone. I will see you at dinner. Enjoy your stay!

Lucy: Thanks.

Lucy is fixated on Noémie. After a while, she turns around and crams through her bag on the bed. She takes out her fancy Go-Board and puts it on the Table, next to the Window. An extreme close-up reveals the distress in her Eyes. What is her move? How should she approach this? Her eyes wander between the Board and Noémie. The camera framing is getting closer to Noémie. No sound but a subtle ticking of a clock. Then, she takes a black stone and puts it down on D-4. She gets up and walks back to the bag. She takes out the very knife she killed Stefan with and puts it in the inside pocket of her coat.

Lake

Noémie reads Theodore's script. She doesn't seem overly happy or enthusiastic, but quite sad and worn out, like Lucy. Speaking of, there she comes. The camera follows her slow steps. Her hand inside the Pocket with the knife. Approaching Noémie from behind. She stops behind her, just standing there. Noémie puts down the script. She looks up, looking Lucy in her eyes. She starts smiling.

Noémie: Salut... care to sit down?

Lucy hesitates. Then she grabs a chair and sits next to Noémie.

Noémie: Thank you for coming.

(pause)

Lucy: I've been thinking about it. I get it now.

Noémie: Do you now?

Lucy: At first, I couldn't wrap my head around you risking going after Stefan. You could have just disappeared, never to be seen again. You probably knew by then that the FP is overreaching their capabilities, challenging us openly like that. You build on our success. But you also knew that we wouldn't stop after that. You don't do halve measures. You would always have to look over your shoulder if you knew we were still out there. But why this? Putting yourself in a risky situation without obvious gain doesn't seem like you. Also, the only logical reason you would work for people like that is because of the money. But you seem to be quite cushy as well. Disappearing on them wouldn't be an option if you truly believed in their cause either.

Noémie: So, what is your conclusion.

Lucy looks over to Noémie. Her voice turns sour, but also sad.

Lucy: That you do it for fun. I think somewhere, somehow down the line, you accepted the fact that your life is meaningless. Because you have no one in your life. Just a small little girl. Too smart to be part of a normal life, while cults fight each other to employ you for whatever sick goal they have. So, you just do whatever you please. Whatever sick itch you want to scratch next.

Noémie reaches inside her pocket. Lucy does so too as a reaction, ready to defend herself, but Noémie only reaches for some cigarettes. She puts one in her mouth and lights it up. She has a faint smile on her Face.

Noémie: Establishing a psychogram seems to be a hobby of yours even outside your clientele… (exhales smoke). Sure, that is one way of seeing it. I will not challenge your beliefs. Although I think I deserve more credit than just being a deranged psychopath. If it weren’t for me pushing Schoeppler by leaving, you wouldn’t have gotten them under control. Now with Bannard, your company will make a fortune, and you will have a nice pay raise. I am honestly relieved they are put in their place. Those people are fascists fucks.

And now, thanks to me, you are the big Number one in your Bureau. I didn’t force you to come here. You could have taken the promotion without consequences. But you didn’t. Although there is no reason for this but revenge. Maybe there is even some personal glory in it? By your stance, I think that makes you as much a sick psychopath as you claim I am.

Lucy: I came because I want justice for what you did to Stefan!

Noémie: So why did you come all by yourself?!

Lucy just sits there. No answer can argue against her observation.

Noémie: Yeah…don’t play the moral game with me. I know all about you. Judging me for doing your dirty work. You tell me you want justice, and at the same time, you shoot people in the ass for it.

Lucy: People will never shut up about this won’t they.

Noémie: Well… (takes a puff) …it is pretty funny.

Noémie: If we are playing the “guess once motivation” game. There is one thing I don’t understand about you. I think we are pretty similar. How we think. And approach our work. And you seem to have a strong sense of righteousness. So why would you work for an old fuck like your boss?

Lucy: Because he is at least trying to keep a sinking city afloat.

Noémie: Yeah, but for what? A system that humanity has tried to keep going for centuries now? Dehumanizing the people that don’t

align with it just to be able to say, “we were on the right side of history, by the way, here is the arrest quota of the month” !

Lucy is getting heated.

Lucy: I know you are too blind to understand, but there is a difference between unfortunate and bad people. Which is why people like me are doing what we do. Yeah, there are assholes in our field of work who shouldn’t be there. But if the people who seriously try to do the right thing jump ship, all that is left is corruption and terror. And we have enough of that already!

Noémie: That’s why it needs to die and make room for something new!

Lucy: And what would that be?

Noémie: I guess we have to wait and see, don’t we?

For a moment, there is a loud silence hovering over the lake.

Noémie: Why didn’t you already kill me if you are so horny for revenge?

Lucy: I am considering it.

Lucy’s hand is cramping up, itching to put the knife in her Chest.

Noémie: Hmm, a moral dilemma isn’t it. Overreaching your moral code. You could just arrest me…but that wouldn’t be satisfying now, would it? Lucky for you, we have this place till tomorrow morning. Enjoy the lake, the drinks, and your room. Maybe you can figure out what you want by then.

Noémie gets up.

Lucy: What’s in it for you? Doing all of this?

Noémie: You are right. I am alone. I haven’t had a friend in a while. But you seem like someone I can talk to. Someone who gets it. Because you are smart. You take yourself out of the equation. Something your partner could never do, which is why he had to go.

It's the sickness of men so I don't blame him. But you, maybe there is hope for you. Besides, what's the worst that can happen? Leftovers?

Noémie throws Theodor's script in Lucy's Lap and walks to her room. Lucy looks at the script name. *Universal Love*.

Hotel, Bar

Lucy sits at the Bar, alone. A cup of coffee, right in front of her. With a spoon, she is stirring the beverage. The clinging sound of the porcelain penetrates the silence. She stares at a painting on the wall. The scene is reminiscent of the first scene in the first episode.

Lia: You are questioning what you are doing here, aren't you?

Lia appears behind the bar. She is wearing a barkeeper smoking.

Lucy: Hmm...

Mia appears behind her, eating a meal at another table. She wears a Hoodie.

Mia: You should be careful. She might jump you with her tapes like she did with Stefan.

Lia: All this for a move like that? If she wants to show dominance, she would do it with style. I mean, look at this place. Hell, I would go all out to make my move.

Mia shrugs and keeps eating. Lucy stops steering her coffee and leans on the Counter.

Lucy: Yeah, something is off. The way she spoke in the end. And this place is so specific. Maybe she expects me to do something.

Stefan appears next to her, drinking a Beer.

Stefan: Or maybe, she just wants you to enjoy yourself.

Lucy: And why would she want that?

Stefan: I believe her. I think she might just be lonely enough to go out of her way. Maybe she is looking for a friend. Maybe, she has nothing left to lose.

Lucy: “What’s the worst that can happen…Leftovers” …I have heard this quote before.

Lucy gets up, grabs her drink and sits on the floor.

Lucy: Ok girls, time to Brainstorm.

Lucy, Mia and Lia sit in a triangle. In the middle, a huge stack of books appear.

Lucy: Lets go through all the Books I read that talk about analyzing media. Maybe we find something within quoted paragraphs of literature to define iconographic Styles or Visual cues.

A collage starts where the three are reading through books like: *Methods on Textual analysis in Literature Studies, approaches, roaches, Basics, Model interpretations* by Vera and Ansgar Nünning, *Studies in Iconology* by Erwin Panofsky, and *Styles of Radical Will* by Susan Sonntag.

Mia: Nothing specific here, I will switch to film.

Lia: I am going to literature examples.

Lucy: I will go through political quotes.

Stefan sits at the bar, finishing his drink.

Stefan: I will have another one of these.

Lia gets up and brings Stefan another beer.

Stefan: Thanks😊

The Collage continues: “*The Politics of Nordsplotiation, History, Industry, Audiences*” by Pietari Kääpä and Tommy Gustafsson, *Gone away* by

Victor Mondane, “*Film Genre, from iconography to ideology*”, by Barry Keith Grant.

Mia: I think it was a film quote.

Lia: Agreed.

Lucy: Yeah, it might be a French movie.

Stefan: You think they have Nikka Whiskey here?

Mia, Lia and Lucy look at each other at the same time.

Mia Lia Lucy: La Femme Nikita!

Stefan: No, Nikka whiskey.

Lucy: That's the film, you Idiot.

Stefan: Woah, no need to get offensive.

Lia: But what to do with it. It's about a woman forced into becoming an assassin.

Mia: Noémie isn't forced into anything.

Lucy: Not quite true, she is forced by the circumstances of the world. At least that is what she tells herself.

Stefan: Pretty narcissistic don't you think?

Lucy: Well, as a woman, you take what you get.

Stefan: Do you believe what she said? The thing about the universal sickness of men and everything?

Lucy: Why? Does it hurt your feelings?

Stefan: I am just saying, there are good men out there too.

Lucy Mia Lia share an annoyed look.

Stefan: But maybe she was hinting at something else. What does universality mean in the first place? Who decides?

Lia: He might be on to something. What if we don't focus on her past but rather on her belief system.

Lucy: We could play her own game and shatter it.

Stefan: Are you planning on putting her in an existential crisis?

Lucy: I am planning on winning at her own game. She wants to convince me of her point of view? Fine. I will make her see what she did. Force her perspective.

Mia: Atari her.

Stefan: Atari?

Lucy: It's a term in Go, a group of stones dies when they have no free spaces around them. Atari refers to only one space left, which forces you to either forfeit the group or play at that exact space. If we can force her perspective, we might be able to get through to her.

Stefan: I don't understand, you wanted to kill her and now you want to humiliate her?

Lucy: I am doing this for you Stefan!

Stefan turns around and drinks his beer.

Stefan: You are doing this to prove that you are better than her. You already are the best. I hope you know what you are doing.

Lucy gets up and walks up to the bar next to Stefan.

Lucy: I have lost too much Stefan! Don't lecture me on how I should grieve!

Stefan: If you grieve the way I did, you will end up like me. But maybe you are part of this universal cycle too. Maybe we humans are not meant to overcome.

Lucy: Lucy is in tears.

Lucy: I have no choice!

Stefan looks at her

Stefan: Then she already got you in Atari.

Stefan disappears. Lucy turns around to Lia and Mia.

Lucy: If we are going to do this; I will need your help.

Footsteps approach the bar area. It is Noémie. She wears her red dress again.

Noémie: Oh, when great minds think alike. May I join you for a drink?

Lucy is all alone now.

Lucy: ...Sure...

Noémie walks behind the bar and leans on the counter. She smiles at Lucy as if they were best friends since childhood.

Noémie: Drinks are obviously on me so...what do you want?

Lucy: Lagavulin.

Noémie: Ah, you like fancy drinks?

Noémie grabs a whiskey glass and turns around to find the bottle in the Cabinet.

Lucy: I recently got into it. How about you?

Noémie puts the glass in front of Lucy and pours her a double.

Noémie: I like whiskey too, but I usually go for the cheap one. Tastes better with coke. Neat?

Lucy: Yeah.

Noémie takes the glass and holds it in front of Lucy's face. Lucy takes it. Their fingers touch.

Noémie: It's been quite a while since I have been on a vacation like this Lady Lagavulin!

Noémie pours herself a whiskey cola.

Lucy: Preoccupied with killing people?

Noémie: Preoccupied with figuring out a code I am working out. I haven't been out and about in ages.

Lucy: Well, you crashed a party recently.

Lucy takes a sip

Noémie: Yeah, that was fun...up until it was work. He seemed like a nice guy. Basic, but nice.

Lucy: Why did you kill him?

Noémie: He was about to release a framing article against the FP. I figured I could gain their trust if I did it.

Lucy: Well, it seems like it wasn't worth it after all.

Noémie stares into the void.

Noémie: No...no it wasn't. Things usually don't turn out the way we want for people like us, do they?

Lucy: Us?

Noémie: People with big dreams. Thinking further than just the next month or year. It is never the way we anticipate it to be.

Lucy plays with her glas. She silently agrees with her statement. Noémie takes a sip.

Lucy: What kind of code are you working on anyway?

Noémie takes a sip of her Drink, then she reaches inside her purse and puts a USB stick on the counter

Noémie: I try to expand on the physical copies you have been chasing down. While I was working on infiltrating the FP, I used their equipment under their safeguard to keep developing the effects.

Lucy: Perfecting turning people into foot soldiers?

Noémie: Uuuh, they would have loved that, wouldn't they? No, I only did it to take them out. A small sacrifice compared to what would have happened if they overtook the city. I just needed their equipment to perfect my code.

Lucy: Which is?

Noémie: Did you ever read Susan Sontags "Sickness as Metaphor" ?

Lucy doesn't reply

Noémie: It is about how Tuberculosis and Cancer have always been mythologized in culture and society alike. Diseases of passion. TB, in the 18 and 19 hundreds associated with love, both bodies of consumption. Slimming down one's body, turning you into an emaciated object that is wanted by the many. It frees you from the consequences of society. And with that, turning into a beauty standard. Sexual and performative liberation. A fleeting one at least.

Inevitably, cancer took the center stage, once TB was treatable. But this time, the sickness is not consuming, but invading the cells. It is no longer seen as a Body of time associated with the modern, but a factor of space,

pushing the healthy away. While in romantic literature, TB speaks of “romantic agony”, Cancer was usually associated with the opposite, as the sickness takes up too much room in life, ruling you out as a romantic interest. But it is argued to be part of the broader, nihilistic Idea of „the interesting”. Ash to ash. In other words, if you are sad and sick, you become an object of interest. Something to analyze, or to portray. But 50 years after Sontag’s book was released, suddenly, many types of cancer were treatable too. So naturally, as the Myth disappeared, society needed to find a new Disease. But this time, I would argue, it was a condition of the mind. Breaking the holistic approach of viewing sickness and diving into more nuanced conditions. ADHD, PTSD, Autism, Depression. In a growing society of authoritarianism and angst, suddenly everybody was deemed sick. And this time, it combined space and time. A new postmodern society, defining its flavors of fuckability by condition, while shutting each other out from a shared space of reality. Turning individualism into a Myth. So that, eventually, it would be treated. Replaced by uniformitarianism.

Lucy: Sounds like Haraway’s Cyborg Manifesto.

Noémie: hm, good point.

Lucy: What is your point here?

Noémie walks towards the window, looking outside. The sun overexposes the dark room, making Noémie look like a shadow in Rays of light. Almost like an angel.

Noémie: You asked me what I was coding. Imagine a file, everybody could watch, and nobody would suffer from any mental illness ever again. Eliminating the myth that puts us in Boxes in the first place. Getting ahead of the people that try to uniform us into something we are not. Ending the history on Sickness Metaphor. And crushing the fetishization of decaying bodies.

Lucy turns around and finishes her drink.

Lucy: Stop fucking with me.

Noémie starts laughing. She turns around and walks back to the Bar.

Noémie: Hahaha I am sorry, It was the perfect set up to seem like a crazy, power hungry scientist like in the movies ...hahaha.

Lucy shares a careful smile.

Lucy: It was pretty funny.

Noémie: But it is true. I use the code to experiment on social behaviors. Maybe find some form of understanding about consciousness. What it means. Where it comes from. It's a fun hobby.

Lucy: A hobby worth killing people for?

Noémies smiles vanishes as she grabs the USB stick and puts it back in her purse.

Noémie: No...of course not.

Charlotte enters the Room.

Charlotte: Ah here you are. Dinner is ready in an hour!

Noémie: Thank you Charlotte! I will rest till then. I got you something, Lucy. It is in your room. I will see you later.

Noémie leaves the bar area. Lucy looks after her. Did she just enjoy that conversation?

Int. Lucys Room

Lucy sits at the table next to the window. On her bed lies a present. It is quite big. She plays around with the glass of Whiskey in her hand, looking at the present. Her expression is torn. Conflicted. She puts the drink down and walks up to the present. She opens it. Inside, a yellow dress and yellow heels (reminiscent of noémie's yellow dress she wore at the party). She takes it out of the box and stands in front of the mirror. She holds it in front of her Body, inspecting its size. A perfect fit. Her eyes are tired. No expression of joy or hate.

She puts the dress down on the bed and walks back to the Go-Board. Still just one Black Stone on D-4. Stefan appears behind her.

Stefan: Last time I saw you in a dress like this was when you got promoted to be my partner. You remember the party?

Lucy: You told me I should wear it every day. I hated that comment. Wanted to throw my drink in your face.

Stefan: It was a compliment as a friend.

Lucy: I know that now.

Stefan: Hahaha.

Lucy: What?

Stefan: Usually, you are the one fumbling with her words.
Hahaha

Lucy starts laughing with him. Then she looks out the window. The sun sets behind the mountains

Lucy: I lied before. I don't know why she did the things she did. And I still have to find a proper reason.

Stefan: Does it matter?

Lucy: To me it does. She is a potential threat to so many people. What if she starts her work again? Or if she gets forced to do it?

Stefan: Does that delegitimize her as an Individu...?

Lucy looks at Stephan

Lucy: Why are you defending her?

Stefan: You know, I lived my last days in acceptance of things.
It shall be my legacy even after death.

Lucy: And you expect me to just accept what she has done to you? To me?

Stefan: I don't expect anything. But what do you expect of yourself? There is no perfection to be found here. No game to be won.

Lucy again looks out of the window. Stefan disappears.

Lucy: You are wrong.

Int. Dining room

Noémie sits at the far end of a long dining table. The tabletop decor is loud and seems expensive. It is close to being called fine dining for sure. She takes a sip of her whiskey cola. Then, footsteps. Lucy walks in. She wears the yellow dress and the yellow heels. She sits down at the other end of the Table.

Lucy: A bit impractical, don't you think?

Noémie: I for once wanted to feel like an old politician, using wide space to compensate dick length. Don't I seem all mighty?

Lucy: You need a different drink for that.

Noémie: Never.

Charlotte enters the room and serves Austrian Dumplings.

Charlotte: What would you like to drink?

Lucy: Red wine please.

Charlotte leaves the room.

Noémie: Changing up the formular I see?

Lucy: No matter the quality, after enough repetition, it becomes stale.

Lucy reaches inside her yellow handbag, which was part of the present and pulls out the knife she killed Stefan with. She cuts up a Dumpling, sticks one piece with the pointy end and shoves it in her mouth. She seems different. almost feral. Noémie laughs.

Lucy: I read the script you gave me. *Universal love*. It sucked.

Noémie : I know right? I haven't read something this basic in ages. I kept it to honor Theodor's death. As a form of remorse, maybe.

Lucy: Do you appreciate film more?... You know...because of VHS and stuff.

Noémie: I do. It's more interesting to me. Although a good book complements the visual component very well. Theory combined with the Medium, you know. A two-way current.

Lucy nods and takes another bite. Charlotte enters the room and pours a glass for Lucy. She leaves the bottle. Lucy takes a sip to wash down the food.

Lucy: Two currents...That reminds me of Schivelbusch's train metaphor.

Lia appears and puts a book next to Lucy. *The Railway Journey, The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* by Wolfgang Schivelbusch

Noémie: Wolfgang Schivelbusch...yes

Lucy: Sitting inside the train and looking out of the window is an intense experience, he says, as the information is too fast to absorb. Naturally, reading on the train became almost a compensating consequence, as it slows down the space in which one exists. It creates a back-and-forth between gazing and reading, putting you into the awkward position of two worlds colliding.

Two currents with different speeds. In the Industrial Revolution, reading in trains became so popular that books and magazines started being sold right at the station. Consumption turned into a state of transition, and changed the very definition of train travel. So, in a way, humans became part of the train. He argues, it eliminated space and time.

Noémie understands, that she is arguing against her sickness metaphor as her points were based on space and time artefacts.

Noémie: Are you hinting at apparatus theory?

Lia puts another book on the table, as the other one disappears. *The cinematic apparatus* by Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath.

Lucy looks at Lia and softly shakes her head. Lia puts down another book. *The anime machine* by Thomas Lamarre.

Lucy: I was thinking more about specificity theory and the function of one's action as part of the interplanar machine. In apparatus theory, one tries to define the body of an object, for example, a water bottle. How should it look? What are its ramifications?

Specificity theory talks about its contents. Defining its color, texture, and plane of perception. Of course, that doesn't mean it is separated from its apparatus. There is a consensus of interplanar exchange. One influences the other. When we switch out water with wine (grabs the glass) do we still consider a bottle to be the perfect container? Or do we choose a different material, like glass? (Drinks the wine) So...in a way...

A close up shows one cut dumpling and its contents, while Lucy shoves it in her mouth.

Lucy: ...contents and apparatus are the same. One does not work without the other.

Noémie: I like that...the criticism of apparatus theory was always on its forced perspective. Like when camera formats started to be standardized in the 1920s. What we are meant to see is solely directed by the person operating the camera, and the viewer doesn't have room for adjustments... Maybe theory would have evolved differently if camera designs had stayed more ambiguous. Maybe Genre as we know it now wouldn't even exist.

Both keep eating.

Lucy: But I think Theodore's script had one good point. The self-inflicted pain of the protagonist, choosing to bathe in his solitude... felt very real.

Noémie: You think so? I thought it was boring. I don't give him credit just because he wrote a male character that shows the weakness of men. Get in line, dude.

Lucy: It's not about that. It felt like he was bound to his feelings. His uncertainty. The way he felt influenced his interactions. It was like his body language was changing too. The contents influenced

the apparatus. And thus, limiting his own potential. I think at the end of the book, the name stayed the same, but it was a different character. Two people, same but different.

Noémie understands now. She puts down the knife and the fork and leans into the chair.

Noémie: And what is the difference between you and me?

Lucy looks at her drink, then at Noémie while chewing on the dumpling.

Lucy (full mouth): The contents.

. The sound of the utensils on the plate cut right through the silence. Noémie just looks at her, without emotion. (Wide shot of table)

Int. Hallway

Noémie stands in front of a framed picture on the wall. She just looks at it, observes its details. She seems to be more in her head than before. Almost taken aback by Lucy. Maybe she underestimated her. Or she just made a good point and she reevaluates her actions.

She strolls through the Hallway and walks back to her room.

Int. Noémie's room

It is different from Lucy's. A smaller, confined space. The way she is used to. Noémie looks around as if she lost something within her. She grabs her suitcase and opens it up. Next to the clothing's and a VHS tape, she grabs a cheap Go board. She puts it on the table and stares at it.

Int. Lounge

Lucy sits on a couch and reads her black book she had in the first episode while waiting for Nic. We now see, that it is about Go-board patterns. She seems very comfortable; the light is dimmed, and candles are placed all over the room. She wears a bathrobe. As the camera pans around her, it stops, revealing the entrance to the right of Lucy. Noémie stands there, watching

Lucy. Noémie wears a sleep suit. She looks tomboyish in it. Lucy notices her and lowers the book.

Lucy: Care to join?

Without a word, Noémie sits next to her. Lucy keeps reading as Noémie just looks into the void. Still thinking. After a while, she breaks the silence.

Noémie: How did you end up in your job?

Lucy: You want the short answer or the long one?

Noémie: The one that feels right for you.

Lucy lowers her book again.

Lucy: When I was very young, my two sisters died in a car accident. The driver survived...more or less...he was in a permanent coma. Had to put him on a ventilation machine. They suspected the accident was caused by microsleep. He was overworked by his Job. Delivery firm. And as it often goes, the faster you deliver, the more money you get.

I visited him often in the hospital when I got older. Just looking at his face. Contemplating to turn off the machines that kept him alive. Being able to have thoughts like that as a kid that young is scary, isn't it? When I was 13, I visited him on the 6th anniversary of the accident. I was ready to do it this time. I remember it like it was yesterday. I walked into his room and he looked like any other day. Pale as a corpse. I stood over him and looked at the machine, about to reach for the plug. But a split second before I did it, I looked at his Face, and he looked right back at me. His stare...even though he just woke up, he looked at me as if he knew who I was. And what he has done. As if he were with me all these years, when I judged him. It was louder than any verbal apology. True remorse

The next 2 years, I stood by his side as he recovered. He started to speak again, walk again, and in the end, work for the very same company, as nobody else would hire him after what happened. It felt empowering spending the recovery with someone you share such a deep trauma with. I was proud of him, although

that feeling was met with shame. How could I have those feelings over someone who hurt me so much?

Noémie: Do you guys still have contact?

Lucy: He died of a heart attack just 6 months after going back to work. The job pushed him too much. He had no relatives, so nobody was there to demand justice on his behalf. That's why I decided to work for my Boss, once I was old enough. I thought, although they are part of the problem, at least I can do something good. Change the system from within. After my probationary period, I got to work. A year later, the delivery chain had to close down.

Noémie: I didn't think you were the emotional type.

Lucy: The foundation of my career is built on a personal vendetta. I guess my own goals have always overshadowed my sense of judgment. That might be the part that makes us similar.

Noémie smiles in a caring manner.

Noémie: Do you think you will be able to forgive me?

Lucy turns to Noémie, her Eyes shimmer in the candlelight, as if she is holding back tears.

Lucy: I don't know. Does it matter?

Noémie: I guess it doesn't. Nothing really mattered from the start. We both know how this will conclude. Might as well enjoy ourselves tonight.

Lucy is visibly fighting with her emotions, a mixture of anger and sadness. But in a very subtle manner.

Noémie: Let's go for a walk.

Lucy: It is freezing outside!

Noémie gets up and reaches out her hand to Lucy.

Noémie: So, what?

Lucy hesitates, but follows suit. She grabs Noémie's hand and gets up.

Ext. Pathway to the lake

It is a chilly night. The fog has lifted overnight. Noémie walks in front of Lucy in a faster pace. She is very joyful in her movements. Lucy's arms are crossed, freezing.

Lucy: Fuck it is cold!

Noémie: Come on, don't be such a wuss.

They reach the lake. Noémie starts undressing.

Lucy: Fuck no.

Noémie: Come on, it will be fun!

Noémie, now completely naked, approaches Lucy and grabs her hands.

Noémie: Do only this for me...

Lucy hesitates. But then she starts undressing. Both of them stand on the pier.

Noémie: One, Two, Thee! AAAAHHH

Both jump into the lake. They are both screaming due to the cold. They both immediately get out again. And dry themselves up with towels that are stored in a cabin.

Lucy: Was it worth it?

Noémie: Hell yeah!

After dressing up again, they walk back to the Hotel.

Noémie: It's nice to feel alive once in a while.

Lucy stops walking, her face now more serious.

Noémie: Is something wrong?

Lucy: Why did you start going down this road?

Noémie: Does it matter?

Lucy: ...no...I guess not...

Noémie keeps walking but stops again after Lucy starts talking again.

Lucy: Now I have a request.

Int. Lucy' s room.

Lucy and Noémie sit vi-à-vis at the Table. The Go-board is in front of them. The black stone is still on D-4. Both seem to have taken a shower as they wear different night wear. Noémie thinks for a while and then wants to grab a white peace.

Lucy: You are black.

Noémie: What do you mean?

Lucy: You are the one who opened the game.

Noémie: What if I want to start in a more defensive position?

Lucy: You didn't.

Noémie seriously looks at her, but then her frown turns into a smile.

Noémie: You are right haha.

Lucy grabs a white stone and places it on Q-16. The game continues stone by stone. Sometimes, some skips reveal that more has been played already. The game looks very balanced, even for experienced players. Then, Noémie plays a

move that puts a group of Lucy's stones into Atari. Lucy thinks. Does she abandon the group, or does she play at the one free spot to save it? Tensions rise. She decides to go for the save. From now on, the game starts getting complicated. Both play excellently. It is hard to say who is leading; it is always a back-and-forth, who is forcing whom to play at a certain spot. And Lucy also puts Noémie in Atari at one point, although she abandons the group. In the end, Noémie smiles and places a last stone. Both know the game is over. Without counting the spaces, if you are not a professional, you cannot determine who won. The game was decided by half a point. Lucy takes a deep breath and looks out the window.

Noémie: I thought about what you said at dinner. I think I agree with you. One's actions will always reflect the person within and vice versa. But I think we have to look at the external factors as well. Yeah...now I know what I didn't like about his script. It was a self-made struggle. No need for it. It would have been more believable for me if there was another love interest, or a class difference, something to justify the change. But he managed to mess up without external pressure. While this idea of Shell and Ghost works in theory, it seems too detached from the chaos of reality. To go back to your water bottle allegory, the discourse changes when the design is challenged by a new, trendier one. And the contents suddenly turns undesirable, when there is a bad batch.

Lucy: You are right...

Noémie: The exposure to the outside influences and changes you, and might even change the trajectory of your train, you are sitting in. Makes you question your own free will doesn't it? Maybe we were meant to get together here.

Lucy: Maybe.

Noémie gets up and walks to the door. She opens it and turns around.

Noémie: Thank you, I enjoyed this.

Lucy: Me too.

Noémie: Salut…

Noémie leaves the room and closes the door. The moment the door shuts, Lucy starts breathing heavily as if she held back her emotions for hours. Tears rush down her face. She covers her mouth with her hand, as if she were getting sick. The outburst of emotions doesn't purely come from sadness though, like Stefan's death, but also from relieve, as she has reached the end of her endurance.

Int, Lucys room, next day morning

The sun warms Lucy's face as she wakes up. She lies on the bed, on top of the bedsheets. She sits up and looks outside. Next, we see her brushing her teeth, packing up her things and getting ready to check out. With the Suitcase in her hand, she looks at the Go-Board one last time. She didn't pack nor touch it. The outcome of the game still at display. She leaves it there, opens the door and leaves the Room.

Int, Noémies Room

Static noise penetrates the silence. The room is completely darkened out. Just a TV playing statics. In frame, in a close up, Noémies Hand, lying on the bad. The fingers softly bend, the palm facing up. In her Hand, the USB stick. In the background, the door opens. It's Lucy. For a moment, she just stands there, looking, then, she walks up to Noémie and takes the Stick out of her unmoving hand. She turns off the TV and leaves.

Ext. Parkinglot

Lucy walks up to the car and puts her bags in the trunk. She gets in the car, and drives off.

Int. Boss' s apartment

The boss sits at his usual spot with a frowning face. A close up reveals the USB Stick lying on his desk. Lucy stands in front of him in silence.

Boss: You want me to give the tech for the VHS-safety out for free?

Lucy: That's the price for the stick.

The Boss leans back and taps on the desk with his fingers. He breaths out heavily.

Boss: You know how much money that will cost us? Why would you think this is even worth it?

Lucy: Because that is the deal you get. If you don't agree to the terms, I will leave this company.

Boss: Hahahahaha. So you are blackmailing me? After everything I have done for you?!

Lucy: I am giving you the Terms for our ongoing partnership. Although I need this job, you need me more to keep things afloat. I joined this firm because I wanted to change things. And I very much look up to what you have done in the past. But I will no longer stand by the path this company is heading down to. And I advise you to consider my offer, as it will save your company in the long run. In order to build trust with our clients, you need to offer trustworthy services, even if it costs more.

Boss: Stefan really turned you into a pain in my ass, you know that?

Stefan stands next to Lucy, like in the first episode.

Stefan: Tell him I always hated his Face.

Lucy (to Boss): I know.

The boss takes the Stick.

Boss: You better make it worth my while. I will not let you quit this job until you've proven the worth of your work. Speaking off.

He grabs a folder from underneath the desk. Here is your next case. A Kid in the 9th district stole an Instrument from a musician. At first, we thought it was just for money, but Ben was investigating it further and it might be an organized theft ring. Get to the bottom of it.

Lucy: Yes Boss.

Lucy flips through the pages and walks to the exit.

Boss: He would be proud of you. So am I.

Lucy: Thanks.

Int. Bar.

Lucy sits at Tim's Bar, drinking a glass of wine. The Bar is empty. After a while, she looks to the stage. Stefan sits there in the spotlight, tuning a guitar. He starts singing a song, and Lucy approaches the stage. The lights around her dim down and it's just her and Stefan in the spotlight in a dark room. His rough, smokey voice isn't very melodic but has a local charm. He sings about Vienna, alcohol and his friends. As Viennese as one can be. He finishes the song.

Stefan: You will be fine, Lucy.

Lucy smiles with watery eyes.

Lucy: Yeah...Thank you for everything.

Stefan smiles back at her and fades away.

The spotlight turns off and suddenly Lucy is surrounded by a crowd of people, talking, drinking, dancing. Diego Licht is on the stage with the singer Lucy had sex with in episode one, playing music. He finds eye contact with Lucy and smiles at her. Lucy smiles back and returns to her seat.

Tim: A refill?

Lucy: Nah, I'm good. Richard is waiting for me outside.

Tim: Alright.

Lucy takes cash out of her coat and puts it on the counter.

Lucy: Let's play another game next time!

Tim: If by playing you mean me losing...

Lucy: It's not about that.

Tim: Yeah yeah...whatever you say.

Lucy laughs and walks to the entrance. Ben sits there with Bannard and Nic, drinking together. They seem to be getting along pretty well.

Lucy: Bannard! Team B huh?

Bannard: What can I say, other people work for their position, I wait for the right opportunity.

Bannard is grinning from ear to ear. Lucy smiles back in a sinister way.

Lucy: Good, because I got quite a lot of paperwork for you. I want it finished by Sunday. Be seeing you.

Bannard's smile disappears. Lucy leaves the Bar.

Ext. in front of bar.

Lucy exits the Bar and stands there for a moment. Richard stands on the other side of the road next to his parked car. His shoulder is bandaged up. He seems to be in pain. Lucy walks up to him.

Lucy: How's your shoulder?

Richard: Fantastic.

Both get into the car. In the backseat, Lia and Mia sit and make themselves comfortable. Lia wears sunglasses, Mia a Bandana.

Lucy: Ben said they meet in an hour at Rochus.

Richard: What's the gameplan partner.

Lucy: Let's get in position as planned and cut them off before they reach their destination.

Richard: ...I don't know Lucy; you think it will work? Seems risky.

Lucy: ...Yeah...I have a hunch.

Richard starts the car and drives down the street, it disappears behind the corner. The screen fades to Black.

THE END