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ABSTRACT

The aim of the creative project was to adapt an autobiographical illustrated novel, *Ek is Suzie*, into a screenplay for a full-length feature film. Using a combination of live action and animation, the two main narratives play out parallel to one another – representing the past and present tense.

The explication is intended to offer a reflection on the process of writing the screenplay, on filmic influences that shaped it and on the kinds of theory that illuminate what I was trying to accomplish. Thus, I investigate various creative and technical decisions made during the writing of the screenplay – dropping the novel’s narrator, the mixing of languages, the use of dream and, especially, the play between live action and animation. I note the debate on fidelity in adaptation especially as this debate applies to graphic novels and take special account of Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, not only because of its engagement with the process of adaptation, but also because of its seminal use of animation as a serious medium of communication, dealing with trauma and childhood. Other (popular) filmic influences are *In America*, *My Left Foot* and *Garden State*, dealing with the dominant themes in my screenplay – childhood trauma, self-discovery, friendship, family and love.
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How can so frequently repeated an experience [as cinema-going] not have indelibly stamped itself on the mode of imagination? At one time I analysed my dreams in detail; again and again I recalled purely cinematic effects: panning shots, close shots, tracking, jump cuts and the rest. In short, this mode of imagination is far too deep in me to eradicate – and not only in me, but in all my generation.

- John Fowles

(Fowles, 1999:23)
Whilst writing *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, Fowles was, in fact, very much aware of the possibilities inherent in cinema, both as a medium of adaptation and as an influence on the imagination of novelist and reader (Stephenson, 2007: 106). Closely collaborating with renowned screenwriter Harold Pinter and director Karel Reisz, Fowles engaged with the production of the 1981 United Artists film interpretation of his novel, also titled *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, in “a spirit of friendship and co-operation that must be rare in the cinema” (Fowles, 2006: 252). Pinter’s screenplay was an outstanding achievement, in Fowles’s words, “the blueprint [...] of a brilliant metaphor” for the novel (Fowles, 1999: 13).

The novelistic verisimilitude of various adaptations has been widely debated by both critics and scholars: Is the movie faithful to the book? However, I am of the opinion that novels (in this case graphic novels, or comics) and films constitute art forms in their own right. Douglas Wolk expresses this sentiment in *Understanding Comics*:

> Comics are not prose. Comics are not movies. They are not a text-driven medium with added pictures; they’re not the visual equivalent of prose narrative or a static version of a film. They are their own thing: a medium with its own devices, its own innovators, its own clichés, its own genres and traps and liberties. The first step toward attentively reading and fully appreciating comics is acknowledging that.

(Wolk 2007: 14)

And on the other hand, “a film ought not to slavishly imitate its original source and should come alive as its own cinematic entity” (Hamid, 2008:1). In accepting this distinction, I committed to stay true to it in my own process of adaptation: to focus on the same story, yet in a different way. In many ways, the example of Fowles and Pinter’s ingenious adaptation of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* above served as a starting point in my journey of adaptation. In Fowles’s words, I wished to write the basis of a metaphor for my novel, instead of simply a replica of it.
My aim was to write a semi-autobiographical screenplay for a full-length feature film centered on the autobiographical graphic novel – *Ek is Suzie* – that I completed in my final year of studying graphic design and illustration at the University of Stellenbosch.

In preparation, a collection of basic screenwriter’s guides was studied to achieve an understanding of traditional forms of screenwriting. “Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting” and “The Screenwriter’s Problem Solver” both by Syd Field, as well as “The Screenwriter’s Bible” by David Trottier provided an understanding of the standard screenplay format. This gave me a backbone around which I could flesh out my screenplay, and introduced norms and accepted rules that I needed to observe but could also, where appropriate, attempt to circumvent. To start with, I felt that the screenplay did not necessarily need to be entirely resolved at the end; as it deals with my own life, the real story is in fact incomplete, and thus I wanted to leave it (partially) suspended. An open-ended ‘closing’ would also encourage the viewer to reach their own conclusions, as well as allow the main characters to live out their fates in the viewer’s imagination.

The style of the novel had to be taken into careful consideration in the beginning stages of conceptualizing its filmic adaptation. A clear distinction was made between the mainstream style of graphic novels (or comics), which basically refers to “superhero and other genre comics, serialized as pamphlets and then sometimes collected into books, and marketed mostly to comics stores,” and their so-called “indie” counterparts which include “general-interest comics marketed outside the specialty comics industry” (Wolk 2007: 19). *Ek is Suzie* would fall into the latter category – less concerned with heroes and action sequences than with the subtle nuances of daily life.

As very few filmic adaptations of “indie” graphic novels make it to cinemas, it was difficult to find appropriate and relevant references. However, my main
reference text – *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (the novels as well as the filmic adaptation) serves as an excellent example, thematically as well as technically, of the subtleties that can translate into film. It starts life as an autobiographical novel, like *Ek is Suzie*, and its two main themes – childhood and trauma – directly correspond to those of my novel. Satrapi explains the process of collaboration with director Vincent Paronnaud as follows:

> We had to start from scratch, to create something altogether different but with the same material [...] people generally assume that a graphic novel is like a movie storyboard, which of course is not the case. With graphic novels, the relationship between the writer and the reader is participatory. In film, the audience is passive. It involves motion, sound, music, so therefore the narrative's design and content is very different.

– Marjane Satrapi (Quigley 2008: 63)

Indeed, whilst writing the novel, I was permitted to make allusions – comfortable in the knowledge that the reader would use his or her imagination to make meaning of the open spaces. However, I needed to find ways to make the film speak for itself, and had to employ filmic devices such as matches-on-action, montages and dream sequences to fill the blank spaces in the viewer’s mind.

In addition, Satrapi’s illustration is stylistically quite similar to mine, and if I were to go as far as specifying a type of animation for my film, it would be black and white, two-dimensional animation homologous to that utilized in Satrapi’s film. She has said that “…the black and white of [her] novels and film lend the story a universal appeal, erasing national and racial divisions” (Hamid, 2008: 1). She wished for her novel to translate into a film that is as universal as possible, and the exquisite two-dimensional animation achieved exactly that:

> One of the best aspects of the film is the way in which it evokes the visuals of the graphic novels. It is animated in stark black-and-white two-dimensional images. The action appears on expressionistic, foreshortened backgrounds – the luminous, inky black and bright white used by the filmmakers adds further depth of field.

(Hamid, 2008:1)
Because my novel is a more personal account, however, the need for universal appeal is not of cardinal importance to me. In fact, I would like it to be much more specific – to a place, a time, and a culture. To aid this, I would make use of subtle colours to highlight certain aspects of the animation, and to give the recollections of the past more vibrance. Ideally, the animated sections of my screenplay would have a similar quality to Satrapi’s – the feeling that the illustrations on the pages had simply come to life – without entirely losing the hand-drawn quality. However, as my illustrations are somewhat richer in detail and fluidity, as opposed to Satrapi’s stark, static figures, the animation would have to be considered accordingly.

Figure 1: The farm sequence from *Ek is Suzie*, pg. 14 and 15.

Figure 2: Marjane introduces her friends in the first chapter of *Persepolis I*, pg. 3.
I decided to make use of a framing story, in order to give the childhood story (told in the novel) a broader scope and context. The ensuing critical choice was whether the film would be in the form of animation or live-action. Taking these factors into consideration, a decision was made at the outset that the screenplay would make use of two parallel storylines – one that deals with the past, and plays out in animated form; and one that deals with the present, and plays out in real action. In support of this seemingly strange choice, British-based animators John Halas and Joy Bachelor posit the idea that “if it is the live-action film’s job to present physical reality, animated film is concerned with metaphysical reality – not how things look, but what they mean” (Wells 1999: 194).

Deciding to make use of the medium of animation was not the only line of action available to me, of course. But Czech surrealist animator, Jan Svankmajer’s view “probably most articulates the real possibilities available to the animator, in a sense that he stresses how animation can redefine the everyday, subvert our accepted notions of ‘reality’ and challenge the orthodox understanding of our existence. Animation can defy the laws of gravity, challenge our perceived view of space and time, and endow lifeless things with dynamic and vibrant properties” (Wells 1999: 195).

By juxtaposing the portrayal of childhood (the past tense) in animated form with the depiction of early adulthood (the present tense) in real action, I attempted to highlight a number of concepts. Firstly, this would illustrate the way in which the
past, in the form of memory, can be re-remembered and distorted: “animation predominantly occurs in the short form, and manages to compress a high degree of narrational information into a limited period of time through a process of condensation” (Wells 1998: 76). Whilst the notions of condensation and distortion are certainly not the same, I believe that the process of compressing memories into a fluid narrative does result in a certain level of alteration.

Secondly, I wished to create a distinction between the perception of the adult as opposed to the perception of the child (I refer to “the child”, because even though Frankie and Lorraine become teenagers, the pathos of wounded youth is still very much present). In order to create this differentiation, then, the “child’s” responses would be expressed through the simplicity of animation. And finally, I felt that if the childhood portion played out in animation, the main character’s own style and perspective would be revealed – effectively making the story subjectively hers, as opposed to simply a factual account by an omniscient narrator. Wolk explains:

Cartooning is, inescapably, a metaphor for the subjectivity of perception. No two people experience the world in the same way; no two cartoonists draw it the same way, and the way they draw it is the closest a reader can come to experiencing it through their eyes.

(Wolk 2007: 21)

In her doctoral thesis, “Screening Interiority,” Meg Rickards proposes a theoretical understanding of the visualization of an interior world. In the section where she discusses animation as a medium, she argues that:

Animation can function to express the metaphysical and to transform reality. By extension, where animation is combined with live action, the animation affects and transforms the reality of the live action – by making visible the unconscious aspects of interiority. Like Surrealism, animation upsets the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious. The blending of live action filmmaking with animation bespeaks the inter-penetration of the conscious and unconscious realms.

(Rickards 2007: 96)
Whilst she is not necessarily referring to the actual combination of live action and animation in consecutive frames, her analysis nonetheless effectively addresses my aims.

As a prominent theme in the screenplay, childhood trauma is something that the main character is forced to deal with through the cathartic process of writing a graphic novel. I decided early on that the catalyst for this process would come in the form of a flashback – she remembers a time in her childhood preceding the traumatic events – a time of untroubled order and suburban normality. Dirk de Bruyn explains that the flashback is a term used in both cinema and trauma studies: “In both instances ‘flashbacks’ represent an ambivalence and operate in the here and now.” They “not only implore one to remember the past but to insert, to knock, to shatter these forgotten difficult events into the present” (De Bruyn 2009: 8).

Preceding the catalyst of the flashback, I decided to make use of another mechanism to visualize the main character's interiority: a dream. Rickards states that “filmmakers can effectively use dreams to reflect a character's psychology, to throw light on the central dramatic question motivating a character, and ultimately communicate what they as filmmakers are trying to say” (Rickards 2007: 46). Indeed, the dream scene with which the film opens is intended to convey the main character's deep-seated needs, as well as to motivate her most crucial decision in the screenplay: the resolve to write a graphic novel. I felt that the dream would serve as the ideal mechanism for affecting action, a feeling that was later substantiated by Richard Allen's suggestion that the imagination “provides a stage upon which the mind can represent itself, in the form of fantasies, desires not otherwise realizable”, and that dreams are “the stage of the imagination that are perhaps most readily apprehensible” (Allen 1999: 125 quoted by Rickards 2007: 47).
In addition to childhood trauma, some themes explored in the novel and screenplay are self-discovery, friendship, family (especially the relationships between siblings), and love. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which these themes can be or have been visualized or expressed in films, I studied a range of films that I considered successful in their execution. *In America*, written and directed by Jim Sheridan, deals effectively with the notion of losing a child or sibling. The focus on childhood trauma – specifically its effects on relationships within the family unit – as told from the vantage point of a child, provides an excellent example of how wholeheartedly and maturely children can experience emotions, and of the way in which they go about dealing with adult experiences. It goes on to explore the idea of new beginnings and the pursuit of dreams – moving to a new country, living a better life, and overcoming the tragedies and hardships of the past.

“*My Left Foot*”, also directed by Jim Sheridan, provided an essential frame of reference regarding technical elements. The frame narrative and the structure of the film echoes almost directly the structure that I had chosen to attempt in my screenplay – the telling of an autobiographical story, set in a present-day narrative, by means of a book. As the framing story was a love story, it made this film all the more relevant in my explorations, as I had decided that I too would tell my story against the backdrop of an unfolding love story.

Garth Jennings’ idiosyncratic “Son of Rambow” was also considered on a visual level for the masterful way in which a child’s illustrations are incorporated into real action. In doing this, Jennings succeeds in showing the viewer exactly how the little boy sees the world, going so far as to superimpose the boy’s imagination onto the world he perceives. In *Ek is Suzie* (the screenplay), the bridging, and sometimes overlapping of animation into live action aims to visualize the way in which the past and present are permanently interlinked.

In Atom Egoyan’s *The Sweet Hereafter*, a town is affected by the tragic death of a number of children in a bus accident. The film traces the aftermath of the incident, focusing specifically on the divergent ways in which individuals deal
with (or attempt to deal with) loss. The effect of the accident becomes the focal point, with the actual incident simply an image in the back of the viewer’s mind. This film provided an interesting example of how the repercussions of an event can constitute a story, rather than the event itself.

Another film that I considered on a lesser (nonetheless relevant) level was *Garden State* by Zach Braff. A modern-day, understated film – it addresses death, the loss of the concept of ‘home’, and the bigger questions such as what to do with one’s life. More relevantly, however, I examined the manner in which it tells a love story (through simple dialogue and subtle key moments) that is universal and affecting, and yet achingly realistic at the same time.

One of the most difficult issues I faced was that of the narrator. The graphic novel relies heavily on the narrative voice (in fact, there is very little dialogue in the actual novel), and yet I felt that including this voice in the film would make it feel rigid and formal – in the same way that I had illustrated emotions and concepts through a visual (illustrative) as opposed to a verbal language, I had to find a way of using filmic language to convey the feelings that the narrator’s words would have evoked. For instance, where the death of the main character’s older brother is implied in the narrator’s words (in the novel), I had to create scenes that would (on an equally subdued and non-literal level) register in the viewer’s minds as an indication of what had taken place. As it was important to me to avoid overly emotional displays of affection, this proved to be quite a difficult task. Fowles experienced a similar problem when deciding to omit the narrator in the screenplay of his novel:

Conceding that the inclusion of a narrator figure in the film version proved a popular solution of this problem and that he had once subscribed to this proposal, Pinter finally rejected the idea as unfeasible; on screen, such a device would prove awkward and time-consuming. Consequently, the challenge of translating the novel into film lay in devising some radically divergent scheme that would compress the novel’s bulk and express its format in cinematic language.

(Klein 1985: 147)
The introduction of a *leitmotif* in the opening scene allowed me to create a link between the past and present – the purple backpack. In addition to this, it served as a symbol of the metaphorical ‘baggage’ carried by the main character – the memory of the trauma experienced in her youth and the responsibility she felt to tell her story in order to relieve herself of this weight. In the opening scene, she is desperately and unceasingly searching for something – and on finding the backpack, she is transported to her childhood, where her story begins. Carrying the backpack in the University scenes acts as a metaphor for the weight she felt during that time – the need to express her story, but the inability to do so under the confines of her lecturers. I felt that introducing a scene where the ‘baggage’ is lifted, or done away with, would be too literal, and so I decided instead to transform the actual backpack into the vessel in which she finally carries her graphic novel – the cathartic embodiment of transforming her burden into something tangible and beautiful.

In order to link the parallel narratives with each other and create a less jarring effect, I implied “matches on action”. For example, when the main character, Lorraine, first starts her illustration process, her accidental smudging of the drawing mimics the wiping away of her brother’s tears. Not only does this imply the frustration experienced during the drawing process, but it also makes the transition from animated to real action more fluid and connected. Again, Reisz’s adaptation is exemplary: “In the same way as he makes use of sound bridges, Reisz employ[ed] ‘matches on action’, technical devices that effectively blur time” (Chatman 1990: 180).

Finally, the decision to write the screen directions in English and the dialogue in Afrikaans, albeit seemingly unconventional, seemed to be the only course of action that would make sense. The reason for this being quite simple: while I’ve studied in English all my life – and therefore write and speak it – I still think, remember and dream in Afrikaans. In addition to this, South Africa is a country with 11 official languages, and it is not unusual for some people to speak at least two of these. More specifically, many students at Stellenbosch University use a mixture of Afrikaans and English quite comfortably. An example of this can be
found on page 64 of the screenplay: Stefan, an Afrikaans boy, talks of getting a tattoo of a verse from the Bible – in English. The film would therefore have to incorporate subtitles for those viewers who may not understand Afrikaans.

My motivation for adapting *Ek is Suzie* into a screenplay, quite simply, arose from the fact that I consider film to be a medium of communication that is not only universally accessible, but also undeniably powerful. I conclude with the words of Ingmar Bergman:

*Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls.*

- Ingmar Bergman


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EXT. LOOTS' BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

In the quiet hours of the night, the trees behind the tall dark house - macadamia, avocado, fig - are luminous with dream light.

The grass, damp and cold, holds drops of dew like tired fireflies.

The inky sky feels low, like liquid mist, and flows in and around the trees, stirring them, their shoulders rubbing against each other awkwardly.

LORRAINE (23) a tall pale-skinned girl with long brown hair wearing a white nightshirt, wanders barefooted on the grass.

Looking around, she moves her hair out of her sleepy face with the back of a tired hand. Passing by an avocado tree, she brings one of the half-grown fruits closer to her face, and then a look of recognition wipes the sleep away.

She looks around, suddenly anxious, and her eyes stop on the tree house closeted by an argyle apple tree standing in the yard's vibracrete corner.

She starts suddenly, moving quickly towards the wooden steps overgrown with wild jasmine. Skipping every second small step, she climbs to the door, unbolts it, and treads inside.

Against the wall in the tree house stands an antique white cradle, a tiny baby lying inside. Its arms reach out, with little hands opening and closing.

Lorraine watches for a second, her face frozen in shock, and then steps towards the cradle.

She reaches inside.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - NIGHT

A tiny, 28 square meter apartment next to a busy petrol station that is attached to a 24-hour convenience store and a McDonald’s drive-through.

Right across the street, a rowdy nightclub with a lenient liguor license is blaring loud, repetitive, bass-heavy music through a cheap sound system.

The apartment is open-plan, with the tiny kitchen cramped on top of the bedroom and lounge area. There is hardly space to walk.
LORRAINE wakes up from the strange dream, confused and distraught. She presses the space bar on her laptop next to the bed, causing the screen to light up and cast a soft glow in the apartment.

The bed stands against one wall, with a laminated map of the world above it. In the laptop's soft glow, the lines and notes written in permanent marker on the map are slightly discernible, indicating the places that have been visited and the destinations that are still just dreams.

The kitchen is a mess, with dishes piled high in the small basin.

She gets up, clumsy from sleep, and starts to scratch around the apartment. She opens every drawer in the chest of drawers, moving things around, getting more and more frustrated with not finding what she is looking for.

She picks up a purple BACKPACK lying in the corner of the room, and turns it upside down, letting the contents spill over the floor.

Then she pauses, looking at the BACKPACK in her hands, remembering.

LIVE ACTION (FLASHBACK)

EXT. SOMERSET WEST LIBRARY - DAY

A freestanding building in the center of a little town.

The library has face-brick walls and a low red roof, and is surrounded by trees. A small pond covered with lilies is situated at the entrance, and black wrought-iron fencing surrounds the garden.

A sign reads "Somerset West Public Library - Somerset-Wes Publieke Biblioteek".

INT. SOMERSET WEST LIBRARY - DAY

A typical public library.

A large lounge is spread out at one end of the H-shaped space, where people between the ages of 15 and 95 sit quietly, reading and studying.

Four elderly ladies shuffle around behind the long check-out desk, assisting people, arranging returned books and filing paperwork.

Mahogany bookshelves line the walls of the entire library, and form freestanding aisles throughout the interior.

LORRAINE (8), a little girl (small for her age) with her
dark hair in two long braids and large, inquisitive brown eyes, wearing awkwardly high-waisted jean shorts, a white vest and a pair of old sneakers, is carrying a pile of books so high that it covers the bottom half of her face. She is wearing the purple BACKPACK.

She marches through the library confidently, looking around the pillar of books balanced on her arms in order to negotiate any obstacles in her way.

She lifts her chin over the books, pinning them down against her body, and searches with her foot for something on the ground in front of her. She finds the small box, steps up onto it, and clumsily puts her stack of books down on the wooden surface. Her face barely reaches above the counter.

Then she systematically starts opening the books to the first page (where the check-out card with the library's details is) and placing them one on top of the other, ready to check out.

A tiny OLD LADY (78) in a peach dress-suit with a blue-tinged grey perm makes her way towards LORRAINE, a big smile spreading across her face.

OLD LADY
Ah, Lorrainetjie! Hoe gaan dit vandag met jou?

LORRAINE looks down shyly.

LORRAINE
Goed dankie, Tannie...um, net hierdie's asseblief.

LORRAINE gently pushes the pile of books towards the OLD LADY.

While the OLD LADY goes about scanning the bar codes of the books, LORRAINE reaches into the back pocket of her jeans, and takes out a stack of library cards. She puts them on the counter one by one. The cards read:

"Wouter Loots Snr." (3 blue cards)
"Jakkie Loots" (3 blue cards)
"Wouter Loots Jnr." (2 yellow cards)
"Lorraine Loots" (2 yellow cards)
"Frank Loots" (1 yellow card)

The OLD LADY smiles kindly, picks up the cards, and files them in a drawer behind her.

She closes the books and hands the pile back to LORRAINE.
OLD LADY
(cheerily)
Daarsy. Geniet die lees...en sien
jou oor twee weke!

LORRAINE
Um...dankie Tannie...baai!

LORRAINE picks up the books and turns around, heading
towards the library's exit.

EXT. SOMERSET WEST LIBRARY - DAY

LORRAINE makes her way across the little bridge that
crosses the pond, and walks through the gate onto the
sidewalk.

She puts her books down and sits on the sidewalk next to
them. She picks up the book on top of the stack - *Uncanny*
by Paul Jennings - and is immediately absorbed in the
author's words.

A blue Volkswagen Jetta pulls up in front of her, and the
driver hoots softly. Startled, LORRAINE looks up to see
her mother's car.

LORRAINE
Hallo Mamma!

JAKKIE (33) a beautiful, petite woman with her blonde
hair neatly pinned up, wearing well-fitting blue jeans
and a cream twinset, opens the passenger door for her
daughter.

She smiles as LORRAINE puts the enormous pile of books at
her feet and struggles to put her safety belt on.

JAKKIE
Is jy seker jy gaan al daai boeke
gelees kry in twee weke, hmm?

LORRAINE
Ag, Mamma...

Her mother laughs at her daughter's offended reaction as
she starts the car.

They pull out of the parking spot and drive away.

INT. LOOTS KITCHEN - DAY

A middle-class kitchen with white linoleum counter-tops
and tiled floors.

JAKKIE is standing in front of the stove, stirring
something and leaning forward to taste a spoonful.

JAKKIE
Lorraine! Kom dek asseblief vir my die tafel!

She puts the spoon down on a saucer and wipes her hands on the front of her apron.

JAKKIE
Wouter! Dis jou beurt om slaai te maak!

INT. LORRAINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A typical eight-year-old girl's bedroom.

A small reading lamp clamped to the bed is the only source of light, casting a warm yellow glow on one half of the bed.

LORRAINE is on her bed, lying flat on her stomach, her face propped up on her hands, reading a book.

She hears her mother calling and slowly starts to get up.

With her book still in her hand and her eyes scanning the pages, she walks towards her bedroom door. Not looking up for a moment, she feels around for her door handle, opens it, and slowly, robotically walks in the direction of the kitchen, not lifting her eyes from the pages once.

INT. LOOTS STUDY - NIGHT

In a small alcove of the Loots home, a kind of study space has been set up.

On an office chair in front of the computer, a small boy is perched.

WOUTER (10) with schoolboy-neat brown hair and the same curious brown eyes as his sister, dressed in an old T-shirt and comfortable shorts, barefoot, is absorbed in a violent computer game, his face dangerously close to the monitor, fingers dancing on the keyboard's buttons.

His eyes are stretched wide open, the images flashing on the screen causing colourful light reflections to dart across the surface of his eyes.

WOUTER
Wag...Mamma! Ek maak net gou hierdie level klaar!

JAKKIE
Nee, Wouter, die kos is amper reg! Jy moet nou dadelik kom!

WOUTER sighs loudly, disgruntled, pauses the game, and wheels backward from the computer on his father's big blue desk chair.
WOUTER

Ugh...

He saunters towards the kitchen, head hanging low with a glum expression on his face, dragging his feet melodramatically.

INT. LOOTS KITCHEN - DAY

WOUTER and LORRAINE file into the kitchen behind one another.

LORRAINE reluctantly puts her book down on the counter, and bends down to carefully count five plates out of the cupboard. Then she opens the drawer to pick out five knives and forks, and sets about laying the large round wooden table.

Meanwhile, WOUTER is half-heartedly preparing a simple salad, which he places in the center of the table.

JAKKIE walks towards them carrying two large dishes.

JAKKIE

OK almal, kos is op die tafel!

WOUTER, LORRAINE and JAKKIE take their seats at the table while WOUTER SNR. (44), a good-looking man with curly black grey-streaked hair, picks up FRANKIE (3) a lively little boy with a mess of blonde hair and the same big brown eyes as his siblings. He is wearing a short-sleeved white T-shirt with the words "I LOVE HUGGIES" printed in red across his chest, and stripey underwear. His legs are covered in colourful koki-pen marks.

JAKKIE dishes up and hands out plates of food.

WOUTER SNR. places FRANKIE on a large pillow on an open chair next to LORRAINE, and she systematically starts to cut his food into tiny squares.

WOUTER SNR.

OK, kom ons bid.

The family members take each other's hands and bow their heads in anticipation of the prayer.

WOUTER SNR.

Here, seën asseblief die voedsel wat ons eet, in Hemel's naam.

WOUTER opens one eye deviously, and his gaze falls straight onto his sister across the table who is doing the same thing. They struggle to suppress their giggles.

WOUTER SNR. opens his eyes, sees the cause of the disturbance, and gives them a deathly stare.
They close their eyes again and drop their heads quickly, apologetically.

WOUTER SNR. (CONTINUED)

*En vergewe ons, ons sones. Amen.*

LIVE ACTION (PRESENT DAY)

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - DAY

LORRAINE crouches down to look at the objects that had fallen out of the BACKPACK, sighs, and stands up, looking around aimlessly.

Then her gaze stops on the cupboard in the corner, and she walks over towards it hopefully. She opens the door and starts systematically scanning each shelf.

Finally, on the very bottom shelf, under a pile of old books, she finds what she is looking for: her sketchbook.

She takes a small wooden pencil case from the top shelf, and opens it to pick out a tiny brush and a pot of black Windsor and Newton ink.

She sits down at the counter that separates the kitchen from the bedroom, by the light of the laptop, the large hard-cover black book in front of her.

She opens the book, which appears to be blank, except for a half-finished drawing of a tree, with a few words scribbled beneath.

Dipping the brush into the tiny ink pot, she starts to paint short identical lines next each other.

She scribbles unintelligible things for a while, and then the face of a little boy starts to appear.

**ANIMATION**

INT. LOOTS' KITCHEN - DAY

WOUTER (10) now tall and lanky for his age, with a mess of brown hair and LORRAINE (8) a slightly smaller girl with the same hair, only longer, covering the almost asian-looking features of her rounded face, are fighting with each other in the kitchen.

FRANKIE (3) a chubby baby in a cloth nappy sits a few meters away on the wooden floor, chewing on a puzzle piece and watching them absent-mindedly, his brown eyes wide with bewilderment.

The kitchen is a mess.

Cereal bowls stand in puddles of milk on the wooden table, and colourful bits of cereal are strewn all over
the floor.

A 90's cartoon playing loudly on the television set in the background muffles the sounds of the children fighting.

LORRAINE pulls WOUTER'S hair from behind, and he falls backwards onto the ground.

WOUTER
Eina!! Grrr...

He jumps up, clearly enraged, and punches her in the face.

She stands back, defensively holding her fists in front of her, and kicks him on his side clumsily.

LORRAINE
Heeyyah! Vat so, jou simpel!

WOUTER approaches his sister, ready to throw another punch, and then stops, dropping his arms to his sides.

His expression changes rapidly, from aggression to confused concern.

WOUTER
Suzie, is jy OK? Jou neus...

LORRAINE wipes her face with the back of her hand, and on seeing blood, turns on her heel and runs out of the room.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - DAY

The untidy apartment looks even messier in the bright daylight.

LORRAINE starts to move, waking up grumpily as she wipes loose strands of hair from her face. She gets up slowly, reluctantly, and shuffles towards the kitchen.

She picks up one glass after the other, looking for a clean one, and then gives up, grabbing a coffee mug from the counter instead.

She pours herself a glass of water.

The pages of a desk calendar are stuck on her wall and door, and a note written in pink highlighter catches her eye.

She walks closer, standing for a second to glance over the past few months. Then she tears May, June and July off the wall, crumpling the awkwardly big pages up and stuffing them in the dustbin.
Standing back, she looks at the leftover months: August and September. With a pen, she crosses out the first part of August, leaving only a week.

At the end of September, the bright pink note pops out: "FINAL EXHIBITION".

She breathes in slowly, deeply, closing her eyes.

Then she slumps down into the chair at the kitchen counter, and picks up a paintbrush.

ANIMATION

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

The predominantly white bathroom is clean and understated.

A collection of her mother's cosmetics - bottles, tubes, perfumes and make-up - lines the round white basin.

LORRAINE stands on a small chair, looking at her disheveled self in the mirror.

She pulls a tissue out of a box to her right hand side, and leans closer to wipe her nose.

She stops, hesitates, and then a menacing smile crosses her face.

She stuffs the tissue into her back pocket without wiping her nose, and excitedly jumps off the chair, heading back to the kitchen.

LIVE ACTION

EXT. STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

LORRAINE is walking on the sidewalk of a busy street.

She has her backpack on her back, and is wearing a pair of large white headphones with fur over the ears. They are connected by a thin white cable to her iPod, slipped into the back pocket of her jeans.

She crosses the road, weaving in between cars, bicycles and motorcycles.

On the opposite side of the road, she passes underneath a group of ancient-looking trees, their many long, twisted roots coiling under and over each other, and down, into the raised pavement.

She negotiates the maze of roots, making it to the other side, where a large, red paved area spreads out in front of her.
Here, many students are walking in groups, or, mostly - pairs - chatting away and laughing loudly, greeting people as if they hadn't seen them just yesterday.

LORRAINE keeps her head down, trying to avoid making eye contact with anyone.

She keeps walking in the same direction at an accelerated pace, hands in her pockets.

Then she starts to near what looks like a student center, where girls are standing against pillars and sitting around wooden tables sipping Coke Lites and smoking cigarettes, and boys are eating greasy cafeteria burgers and chips.

She turns off before this, taking a shortcut through a little triangle of lush green garden, ducking underneath the trees and trying to keep on the barely discernible path.

At the other side, a large old Cape Dutch building rises up ahead of her, and she walks to the side entrance.

A few steps from the door, she takes her student card from her back pocket, and swipes it to free the large glass door.

She pushes her way inside.

INT. THE ART DEPARTMENT - DAY

Inside the building, ASHLEIGH (22) a short, blonde-haired girl with pale skin and connect-the-dots beauty spots, is standing against the wall, holding a take-away cup of coffee.

She looks very excited to see LORRAINE, and immediately moves away from the wall and towards her.

ASHLEIGH
Dude! Where on earth have you been?

LORRAINE takes her headphones off her ears, and starts to put them into her backpack.

LORRAINE
Uh...I've been working - or at least trying to. I'm really struggling to come up with ideas...

ASHLEIGH nods in solemn agreement.

ASHLEIGH
We all are, don't worry.
ASHLEIGH hands her the coffee cup.

ASHLEIGH
Here, have some caffeine. Might help.

LORRAINE takes a big gulp.

ASHLEIGH
It is a little late to be worrying about ideas, though. The exhibition is in less than three weeks.

LORRAINE
Don't remind me. Ash, I don't know what I'm gonna do. I have nothing to show.

They start walking towards the open-aired quad in the center of the building.

ASHLEIGH
Neither do I! Like I said, we're all in the same shitty little boat.

They sit down on one of the two wooden benches in the middle of the quad, underneath two giant oak trees.

ASHLEIGH lights up a cigarette.

LORRAINE reaches out towards her.

ASHLEIGH
What? Since when?

LORRAINE
I don't know, it's just, a phase, I guess. Don't interrogate me.

ASHLEIGH takes another cigarette from the packet, lights it, and reluctantly hands it to her friend.

ASHLEIGH
This is a bad idea.

LORRAINE
I know, I know, Mom. I just need it right now, OK. I'm freaking out a little bit.

ASHLEIGH
Cool, no worries. No judgement here.

They look at each other, and for a moment they let themselves laugh, ignoring the almost tangible pressure
hanging in the air.

At that moment, ANJA (22) pretty like a Japanese cartoon character, with two-tone hair, huge brown eyes and a grungey street style, jumps down the stairs and approaches them.

ANJA
Aww, friends! Lookie, where have you been?

LORRAINE
Hey Nanna! Ugh...same old. Stres oor werk en stuff.

ASHLEIGH
Ja guys, enough with the formalities, we can catch up later...we're late already. The one we may not mention awaits.

LORRAINE
Voldemarthie.

ANJA and ASHLEIGH laugh.

ANJA
Haha! Voldemarthie - ons siele is in gevaar, julle.

ASHLEIGH
Come on! Let's just go in there and get it over with already.

They get up, grab their bags, and disappear into a dark passage of the building together.

INT. A STUDIO IN THE ART DEPARTMENT - DAY

A large, high-ceilinged room, with white walls and grey floors.

Free-standing dividers form the students' cubicles of workspace, arranged in a haphazard maze of corners and alcoves.

The floor is a mess, with bits of paper and magazines lying scattered everywhere.

One entire wall of the top room is lined with large, wood-framed windows with wide windowsills, through which the luminous green of a solid row of old oak trees can be seen.

The room - which seems normally to be buzzing with students - is empty, save for one table in the center of the room, where MARTHIE (54) sits.
A pale-skinned woman wearing drape-like black clothes, MARTHIE looks older than her years, with her greying hair pulled back tightly, and a pair of black-rimmed glasses balanced on the tip of her nose.

She is impatiently tapping her pen on the table.

ANJA, ASHLEIGH and LORRAINE enter the room, walking towards MARTHIE somberly.

They pull out the chairs opposite MARTHIE, and sit down clumsily, nervously rummaging around in their bags and eventually finding and laying down their sketchbooks on the table in front of them.

MARThIE stares at them over her black-rimmed glasses.

MARThIE
Hallo, julle.

EXT. THE ART DEPARTMENT - DAY

ANJA, ASHLEIGH and LORRAINE walk out of the Art Department together.

They look simultaneously shocked and relieved.

ASHLEIGH
Damn.

ANJA looks at ASHLEIGH in agreement.

ANJA
Pft, ja. Jissie maar dis 'n scary vrou daai, hoor.

The girls walk around the corner to the cafeteria area, where they slump down at a table in the corner.

LORRAINE sits on the wall with her legs dangling down, and ANJA sits opposite ASHLEIGH at the table.

ANJA immediately takes out her drawing book and starts doodling, making quick sketches of people around them.

LORRAINE
Ten minste hou sy van julle konsepte! Ek's meer lost as ooit, nou. Fok.

ASHLEIGH
But what was wrong with your graphic novel idea? I don't understand.

LORRAINE
Ugh, same old story...it's too sentimental. She doesn't want me
to do it at all.

They sit for a moment, contemplating possibilities.

ASHLEIGH
Look, Lorraine. I don't mean to be the bearer of bad news here, but we're all running out of time. Three weeks left. You need to just go ahead with anything right now.

LORRAINE
Ja, talking about bad news...I had the weirdest dream last night. I had this baby, but I didn't know about it...it was just there, and I had abandoned it or something.

ASHLEIGH
No, Lorraine! You're not saying you're pregnant or something, are you?

LORRAINE
Uh, no. That's definitely not possible...so I don't understand where this baby stuff is coming from.

ANJA looks up from her drawing book.

ANJA
Jy weet, meeste van die tyd het babas in drome niks te doen met actual babas nie. Hulle represent eintlik creativity.

LORRAINE looks at ANJA, considering her statement.

LORRAINE
Weird...so jy sê die baba is eintlik net'n konsep, of 'n deel van my kreatiwiteit, wat ek so-te-sé abandon het?

ANJA
Well, miskien. Net jy sal weet.

ASHLEIGH
Ja, take this graphic novel idea of yours. You've wanted to do it for a while now, and they just keep shooting you down. It's obviously important to you on, like, a subconscious level.
ANJA
Ja, dis waar. En anyway, ek hou van daai sketches wat jy gedoen het! Hulle is so mooi. Gaan net aan daarmee. Wat weet Voldemarthie, anyway.

LORRAINE frowns, looking into the distance at the endless row of students passing them by.

LORRAINE
Ja...ek gaan dit net doen, I mean, ek het nie rerig 'n keuse nie, het ek?

ASHLEIGH
Nope. Stop worrying about it so much, and just do it.

LORRAINE

LORRAINE marches off determinedly, as ASHLEIGH and ANJA stare after her, confused at her sudden change of heart.

ANIMATION

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

LORRAINE rushes into the kitchen, stopping when she sees WOUTER and FRANKIE sitting side by side on a small chair in the middle of the room.

WOUTER's arm is hanging limply over FRANKIE's shoulders, and FRANKIE's little arm is reaching around his older brother's body, clutching onto his shirt.

Their heads are hanging low, and tears stream down their cheeks, forming wet circles on their creased shirts.

LORRAINE looks at the crying boys, the anger on her face slowly dissolving, and takes a step towards them.

WOUTER looks up at her, startled by her sudden appearance, and by the unexpected look of understanding on her face.

His cheeks are shiny and wet with tears, and there is a child's deep remorse in his eyes.

LORRAINE
Boots...dis OK. Ek sal nie vir Mamma sê nie.

She takes the crumpled tissue from her back pocket, and starts to wipe her face.
LORRAINE (CONT.)
Kyk, ek sal my gesig was en ek,
ek sal nie vir haar sé nie, en jy
sal nie 'n pakslae kry nie.
Belowe.

WOUTER stares at her with a puzzled expression for a
second, sniffs, and then starts to wipe his and FRANKIE's
faces with the front of his shirt.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - NIGHT

The ink on the drawing of FRANKIE'S face starts to
trickle slightly down the page and, without thinking,
LORRAINE attempts to wipe it away.

She accidentally smears the ink across the entire
illustration, ruining it completely.

LORRAINE
Ah...shit!

She rips the page out of the book, tears it in half, and
tosses it aside. She starts painting again.

ANIMATION

EXT. AN EASTERN CAPE FARM - DAY

A muddy lane runs through a cluster of eucalyptus trees,
their vivid green leaves contrasting with the trunks
below, scorched black by a recent fire.

A field of prickly-pears is visible behind the trees,
stretching up against the foot of a rocky hill.

LORRAINE (9) is pushing FRANKIE (4) in a rusty old
wheelbarrow.

He screeches and giggles hysterically as she swerves left
and right in a half-hearted attempt to miss the puddles
of muddy water.

WOUTER (11) aims his slingshot at some invisible evil
hidden in the trees, a look of intense concentration, and
a scowl, on his face.

A bird sings happily from somewhere above the children's
heads.

FRANKIE
(humming)
Doo-dee-doo-doo, dee-deee...

WOUTER
(whispering loudly)
Shhh, Frank, bly stil!
Suzie...kyk!

He points at a tree a fair distance away from them, where a small brown bird sits on a low-hanging branch, staring away from the children.

FRANKIE reluctantly stops humming, and climbs out of the wheelbarrow, clearly not interested in the bird.

LORRAINE
(whispering)
Hy's nogals naby...

WOUTER looks over at LORRAINE, a sudden sly expression on his face.

WOUTER
Dink jy ek kan hom kry?

LORRAINE darts an accusatory look in his direction, her mouth half open with surprise at her brother's daring insinuation.

LORRAINE
Wat, skiet? Jy weet ons mag nie.

She looks up at the bird, and back at the slingshot hanging from WOUTER's hand.

LORRAINE
...maar ja, ek dink jy kan...

WOUTER bends down to pick up a small stone.

He meticulously lifts his weapon, aiming upwards.

He pulls the rubber band backwards, squinting with one eye as he strains to stretch it as far as it can go, and then releases it.

A moment of silence ensues as the children wait for something to happen.

FRANKIE is obliviously trudging around in a muddy puddle behind the two older children.

LORRAINE looks at WOUTER, waiting for some kind of signal.

Then, suddenly, he drops his slingshot and bolts towards the tree, with LORRAINE not far behind.

LORRAINE
Wag, Boots! Wag vir my!

WOUTER shows no indication of having heard his sister, and disappears into a bush underneath the tree.
He emerges with something in his hand.

LORRAINE
Wat? Is dit...is hy...

The children lean closer to look at the little bird lying limply in WOUTER's cupped hands.

They look horrified.

A drop of blood runs from the corner of the bird's glass-bead eye, trailing down to its tiny beak.

The children sit on their heels, staring at the dying bird, completely taken aback and struggling to hold back the tears gathering in their eyes.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - NIGHT

LORRAINE is startled by the sound of wings flapping. She looks in the direction of her balcony, where a pigeon is perched on the railing.

She puts down her paintbrush carefully, and gets up, walking slowly towards the sliding doors.

As she steps onto the balcony, the surprised bird flinches and flies away.

She walks up to the railing, and stares at the buildings, her hands resting where the bird was sitting moments ago.

Then she snaps out of her trance-like stare, and walks back inside. She stops in front of the calendar on her wall.

She looks at it for a second, sighs, rubs her eyes with her sleeve, and slumps back into her chair.

She pages to a new, clean page, and reluctantly starts again.

ANIMATION

EXT. AN EASTERN CAPE FARM - MORNING

In front of the deep red farmhouse, ankle-high, ochre grass stretches out to the horizon.

The fields are separated by barbed wires and ramshackle gates.

Cows graze close to a solitary cement dam, their tails swinging lazily from side to side.

LORRAINE
Boots...Boots! Asseblief kan ek saam kom? Asseblief!

WOUTER is walking away from the farmhouse, with LORRAINE running a long distance behind him, trying to catch up.

WOUTER
Nee, Suzie...gaan huis toe!

LORRAINE slows down to a lead-footed trot, a look of desperation on her face.

LORRAINE
...maar...

WOUTER disappears in the distance, leaving a disgruntled LORRAINE standing on the narrow dusty path.

Her hands become fists, and frustration flashes across her face. From her dress pocket, she retrieves WOUTER'S slingshot, picks up a large stone, and starts to run in his direction.

WOUTER is standing on an ant-hill cupping his eyes with his hand and staring into the distance.

LORRAINE walks closer, silently, until she is only a few feet away. She loads the slingshot, aims directly at WOUTER's back, and releases the rubber band.

The pebble strikes him in the center of his back with a muted thump.

WOUTER
EINAAAAAAAAAAAA, dammit!

He spins around, only to see his sister's silhouette disappearing in the distance.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - NIGHT

LORRAINE rolls around sleeplessly.

She sits upright, wide-awake now, and quietly gets out of bed.

She picks up her sketchbook lying on the kitchen counter.

When she opens the book, a number of pages flutter to the kitchen floor.

She lays them out side by side, stands back to assess them, and then rearranges the order.

With a pencil, she scribbles notes in the margins of some drawings, and then stands back to look at the arrangement
INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two single beds stand in the corners of a high-ceilinged room in the old farmhouse.

The room has a blue glow, emanating from the lampshades and reflecting off the decorative, handmade quilts covering the beds.

The walls are adorned with faded pictures in old-fashioned wooden frames accompanied by a trio of kitsch porcelain ducks.

WOUTER lies on his stomach, facing sideways. LORRAINE is gently rubbing a cube of ice on his back, trying to soothe the swollen red mark between his shoulder blades.

From the portraits on the walls, the young faces of old family members seem to be glancing down at the children with disappointed expressions.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - DAY

LORRAINE is sitting in the archway of the sliding door to her balcony. Her arms are wrapped around her knees, and she is holding a cup of steaming tea with both hands.

The sky is filled with clouds of varying shades of grey.

From inside her apartment, a CELLPHONE rings. She looks backward for a second when she hears it, and then turns back to her tea.

She takes a long, slow sip and stares out across the tops of the buildings.

ANIMATION

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

LORRAINE (12) her brown hair now somewhat longer and her face a little less round, stands at a window next to her little brother, FRANKIE (7) a small wide-eyed boy with wayward blond hair. She is holding a portable TELEPHONE. FRANKIE is standing on a small cement wall with his hand on the window.

LORRAINE holds the phone receiver to her ear.  

LORRAINE

Boots?
WOUTER (15), thin and pale, with sunken cheeks, strains to lift the receiver to his ear.

WOUTER
Hey, Suz.

LORRAINE
Um...wat doen jy?

WOUTER
Kyk Mr.Bean...dis snaaks...

WOUTER looks down, limply tugging at his hospital gown with bony, porcelain fingers.

The children pause in silence for an uncomfortable amount of time.

FRANKIE turns to his sister, an expectant look on his face.

LORRAINE lets her hand drop to her side awkwardly, still holding the receiver.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The door to the isolation ward. A sign on it reads: "RESTRICTED AREA. STRICTLY NO UNDER 16'S ALLOWED".

FRANKIE and LORRAINE stand in front of the door, staring at the sign. They are wearing over-sized surgical masks pulled awkwardly over their faces.

They look overwhelmed and slightly confused.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

WOUTER SNR. leads JAKKIE into the isolation ward.

They look pale and exhausted, wearing sterile hospital clothing, shoes, masks and what looks like shower caps covering their hair.

Their everyday clothing hangs neatly on a rail against a wall of the room they're leaving.

EXT. HOSPITAL GARDENS - DAY

A garden on the hospital premises.

Aside from the neatly mowed lawn, the rest of the garden is wild and unkempt. Large bushes and overgrown shrubs form tunnels that connect a number of small, leafy caves.
The garden seems abnormally big.

FRANKIE is haphazardly hanging from the branch of a huge tree, while LORRAINE sits on the grass underneath playing with fallen leaves, clearly lost in thought.

Giant willow trees cast shadows, permeated with spots of light, on the blanket of leaves covering the flowerbeds below.

FRANKIE climbs down and sidles up next to LORRAINE, lying on her back underneath the sheltering willow tree. Their stomachs are covered in chocolate bar wrappers, sweet papers, chip packets, cooldrink tins etc.

Their bellies are distended and they seem to be avoiding any kind of movement.

FRANKIE slowly turns his face towards LORRAINE's.

**FRANKIE**

Suzie? Wat nou? Ek's bored. Ons is al die hele dag hier.

She continues to look up at the tree above her.

**LORRAINE**

(abruptly)

Ek weet nie, Frank. Hou jouself besig. Ek's nie jou babysitter nie.

He sighs and turns his head away from her, folding his hands on his stomach.

**INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY**

A stark waiting room, with an uncomfortable-looking couch standing against the wall.

A pile of uninteresting and outdated magazines lie on a side-table next to the couch.

A tacky poster with a picture of a man climbing a mountain and the word "PERSEVERANCE" underneath it hangs on the wall above the couch.

Through the little window, bright daylight is visible.

LORRAINE sits on the left edge of the couch, with FRANKIE next to her. An OLD LADY is squeezed in next to him and a MOTHER holds her crying BABY on the far right.

They are all disinterestedly staring at the small television blaring from the top corner of the room.

**FRANKIE**

Suzie...waar's die remote?
LORRAINE
Daar is nie remotes hier nie,
Frank.

FRANKIE
O.K.

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT
FRANKIE's head is resting on LORRAINE's lap, while she is
leaning on her elbow, eyes half closed.

The television is still blaring, but the OLD LADY and the
WOMAN with her BABY have left, and through the window the
sky visible has turned to pitch black night.

FRANKIE wakes up momentarily, looking disoriented. He
rubs his eyes.

FRANKIE
Suzie, wanneer kan ons huis toe
gaan?

LORRAINE lifts her head to look out of the window, and
then rests on her elbow again, her hand on FRANKIE's
head.

LORRAINE
...ek weet nie, Frankie. Amper.

FRANKIE
OK.

FRANKIE's eyelids are heavy, and he half-heartedly fights
the sleep numbing his body.

FRANKIE
(sleepily)
...en...wanneer...wanneer kom
Boetie huis toe?

LORRAINE turns her head away slightly, closing her eyes,
and waits for FRANKIE to fall asleep.

LIVE ACTION

EXT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - NIGHT

LORRAINE sits on the edge of her bed, looking through the
sliding doors at the dark, starry sky. She looks down at
her hands, covered in black ink lines, and attempts to
rub the marks off absent-mindedly.

ANIMATION

INT. LOOTS KITCHEN - DAY

LORRAINE is buttering a piece of bread, while FRANKIE is
reaching up to the counter for a tub of peanut butter.

A container of syrup lies on its side next to the peanut butter, a sticky puddle trickling from the container down onto the tiles below.

EXT. STREET – EARLY MORNING

An average middle-class suburban neighbourhood.

Neatly kept flowerbeds and lawns can be seen through the bars of gates and fences, and sprinklers rotate slowly, rhythmically, spraying artificial rain on the plants around them.

LORRAINE and FRANKIE leave their house’s driveway, and walk up Paul Kruger street side by side.

Both are wearing slightly over-sized school uniforms, their bulky backpacks slung over their shoulders.

LORRAINE
Het jy jou huiswerk gedoen?

FRANKIE slows down a little, his head hanging low.

FRANKIE
Um...nee.

LORRAINE stops, turning towards her brother.

LORRAINE
OK. Wel, um...jy moet, OK?

FRANKIE
(hesitating)
...OK, Suzie. Jammer.

INT. LOOTS LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

A large, comfortable living room with wooden floors.

LORRAINE and FRANKIE are sprawled out over two big bean bags, a bowl of popcorn lies scattered over the floor.

A violent movie is playing on the big television screen in front of them.

The clock on the wall reads 03:22 AM.

LORRAINE
Frank...kyk hoe laat is dit. As mamma-hulle hier was sou ons lankal moes bed toe gaan. Nogals cool né?

There is no response, and after waiting for a second,
LORRAINE looks over to find that FRANKIE is fast asleep in a seemingly very uncomfortable position.

She sighs, picks up the remote, and turns the TV off.

INT. LORRAINE'S STELLENBOSCH FLAT - DAY

LORRAINE wakes up, turning over, and finds that she had fallen asleep with her sketchbook on her lap.

Her laptop is open on the bed next to her, and there is a large black ink stain on her white duvet cover.

Looking at the stain, she runs her hands through her hair frustratedly.

INT. HOSPITAL RESTROOM - DAY

A clinical ladies' room in the hospital.

LORRAINE walks out of the bathroom cubicle and comes face to face with a LITTLE GIRL (4) painfully thin with a bald head, wearing a hospital gown and grey bunny slippers.

The girl is holding a barbie doll, the doll's hair has been chopped off untidily.

The LITTLE GIRL stares up at LORRAINE with a scared, vacant look in her eyes.

LORRAINE attempts a smile.

LITTLE GIRL

Hallo.

LORRAINE

...uh...hallo...dis 'n mooi poppie daai.

The little girl looks down at her slippers shyly and hugs the doll against her stomach as she turns to leave.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A tiny, claustrophobic examination room. The walls are white and bare, and there is just enough space for one narrow single bed in the room.

WOUTER is lying on his side, facing LORRAINE.

A tall, middle-aged DOCTOR stands behind him, towering over him as he performs a procedure on WOUTER's lower back. A Superman pillow is propped between the young
boy's legs to protect his frail, bony knees.

WOUTER's face contorts with pain, and then suddenly becomes calm, a tear appearing at the corner of his eye.

JAKKIE stands next to WOUTER, stroking his hair incessantly.

LORRAINE reaches for his hand, but hesitates and looks down.

WOUTER's eyes are closed, and he fails to notice the attempted gesture.

INT. LOOTS KITCHEN - DAY

LORRAINE sits opposite JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. at the kitchen counter. She is nervously tapping her fingers on the linoleum.

Her parents look at each other with their tired faces, a hint of excitement in their eyes.

WOUTER SNR. clears his throat seriously.

WOUTER SNR.
Lora, jy weet ons het vir jou verduidelik dat Woutertjie 'n beenmuroorplanting moet kry?

LORRAINE looks at them questioningly.

LORRAINE
Ja, ek weet. Maar ons het iemand nodig om vir hom beenmurg te skenk, ne'?

She looks at her parents for approval.

They look at each other and smile nervously.

JAKKIE
Ja, dis reg, Kind. En onthou jy die ander dag toe daai suster 'n bietjie van jou bloed getrek het?

LORRAINE
Ja, ek onthou.

LORRAINE looks at her father, frowning as she attempts to understand the news.

WOUTER SNR.
Die dokters sê jy het die regte beenmurg vir Woutertjie. Dis baie goeie nuus-

JAKKIE
-hulle sê dit gebeur baie min,
Lora. Dis baie goeie nuus.

LORRAINE
Maar wat beteken dit?

JAKKIE
Wel, dit beteken jy kan boetie se lewe red, Lora!

WOUTER SNR. flashes a concerned look at his wife.

WOUTER SNR.
Maar dit is nog steeds jou keuse.

LORRAINE looks at her hands placed in front of her on the counter, and then she looks upwards at her parents' anxious faces hovering above her.

LORRAINE
Obviously. Natuurlik sal ek dit doen!

She smiles as her parents reach across the table to hug her excitedly.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A small hospital room with three beds against one wall.

Two of the beds are empty.

LORRAINE is lying in the bed on the far right, holding a stuffed toy rabbit in her right hand. There are tubes coming from both her arms, running in and out of a big machine next to the bed.

She looks a little frightened and out of place in the seemingly oversized hospital bed.

LIVE ACTION

EXT. A PARK IN STELLENBOSCH - DAY

LORRAINE stands facing her bed, which is completely covered with loose pages of illustration. Some are still rough pencil sketches, but most of them are complete, detailed ink drawings.

She folds her arms, smiling a little as she surveys her progress.

ANIMATION

INT. LOOTS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

WOUTER, drowning in an oversized robe draped over his skin-and-bones shoulders, sits at the dining room table,
with LORRAINE opposite him. The room is dark except for one light above their heads.

LORRAINE
Ek's so bly jy's weer terug by die huis, Boots...

WOUTER
Ja, ek ook.

The look of dull exhaustion on his face conveys no emotion.

LORRAINE
So wat het die dokters gesê?

WOUTER shifts uncomfortably in his chair, adjusting the Superman pillow he's sitting on slightly.

WOUTER
Well, hulle het gesê die oorplanting het goed gegaan-

He struggles to take a deep, slow breath.

WOUTER (CONT.)
...en dat ek nou net beter moet raak.

He takes another effortful breath.

LORRAINE
Wat gaan aan? Sukkel jy om asem te haal?

WOUTER
Ja, Suz...dis so moeilik...jy verstaan nie hoe dit voel nie.

LORRAINE looks down at her hands helplessly.

LORRAINE
Ek weet, ek bedoel, ek weet ek weet nie...

She plays with her fingers anxiously.

LORRAINE
...ek's so jammer, Boots.

JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. enter the room. They look somber and worried.

JAKKIE
Kom, seun. Ons gaan jou terugvat hospitaal toe. Dalk kan die dokters jou beter laat voel.
WOUTER gets up slowly, like an old man, with the help of JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. They leave the front door, with LORRAINE watching as they go.

MONTAGE

INT. LORRAINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LORRAINE's bedroom, over the years, has metamorphosed into a typical teenage girl's bedroom.

LORRAINE sits hunched over her desk, in the light of her bedside lamp.

She chews her pen, stares at the wall, writes something, and then crumples the piece of paper and throws it on a growing pile of discarded letters.

Finally, LORRAINE holds the finished letter in her hand, scrutinizing it.

Then she folds it in half, slides it into an envelope and carefully writes "WOUTER" on the front in blue glitter glue.

INT. JAKKIE AND WOUTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A dark bedroom.

Framed pictures of relatives hanging above a double bed are vaguely visible in the dim moonlight.

LORRAINE and FRANKIE are lying on top their parents' bedcovers, squeezed tightly next to each other underneath a single Batman duvet.

The alarm clock beside the bed reads 02:16 AM.

The deadly silence is pierced through by the sound of a telephone ringing. The children on the bed lie dead still, but their eyes are wide open.

After a motionless moment, with only the shrill sound of the telephone persisting, LORRAINE sits upright and picks up the receiver.

LORRAINE

...O...OK...

Frank's little arm reaches up and he places his hand on her back, his eyes staring downward.

On the bedside table next to them, the letter to WOUTER lies, unopened.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. walk out of the oncology unit,
down an empty hospital corridor. WOUTER SNR. has his arm around JAKKIE, and she is clasping her son's Superman pillow tightly to her chest.

Their faces are pale with exhaustion, save for their eyes that are red from crying.

LIVE ACTION

INT. LORRAINE'S CAPE TOWN APARTMENT - DAY

LORRAINE (23) is standing in the middle of a parquet-wooden floor, holding a big box - reinforced with brown packing tape and neatly marked "BOOKS" - in her arms. Her eyes are closed and she is smiling.

She sighs, and then opens her eyes.

She is standing in a spacious old apartment, lined with weathered windows overlooking a part of the city and Table Mountain.

There is no furniture in the room, except for two large white rectangular seat cushions lying on the floor in the sunroom.

LORRAINE walks through the passage, and into the first room.

She sits on the corner of the bed, and starts taking books out of a box on the floor. Amongst Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, The Catcher in the Rye, and The Fountainhead, she finds a pile of old Dazed and Confused magazines. She takes some of the stack and puts them in the bottom of the bookshelf.

As she pulls out the remaining magazines, a few pictures flutter to the floor, and she bends over to pick them up.

Fumbling through another box, she retrieves a packet of Prestik, and starts to put the pictures on a narrow strip of wall next to the closet.

An old medium-format photograph of her parents kissing, her father's arms wrapped around her mother's waist, a column of sunlight filtered through a thick hedge of faded green bushes behind them.

A polaroid of Ashleigh wearing an "I Love New York" t-shirt with cut-off seams, sitting on a large white pillow with her back against a wall, adjusting the bandage wrapped around her ankle.

A postcard of the faces of two little Indonesian girls in traditional dresses, laughing.

A photo of ANJA, ASHLEIGH and LORRAINE, wearing their graduation capes and hats, degrees in hand, arms around
each other, looking as exhausted as they are ecstatic.

LORRAINE looks at the pictures arranged perpendicularly to each other on the wall.

Then she suddenly looks at the time, a slightly panicked expression on her face. She reaches into a box and pulls out a short navy blue dress with a tacky embroidered mermaid on the back. She hurriedly pulls off the dress she's wearing, and puts on the navy blue one.

On the way out of the door, she slips on a pair of white tommy takkies and grabs her apron off the bed.

EXT. ASHLEIGH'S CAPE TOWN FLAT - DAY

LORRAINE pulls into the apartment complex's driveway, hooting before she’s even stopped.

ASHLEIGH, wearing the same blue mermaid dress, comes running down the stairs, tying her hair up as she rushes through the gate.

LORRAINE leans out of the window.

    LORRAINE
    Come on, Ash, we're gonna be late!

ASHLEIGH gets in the passenger seat, slamming the door loudly behind her.

    ASHLEIGH
    Hey, don't blame me! You're the one that's late.

    LORRAINE
    Ah, we'll make it. I just hope we make good tips tonight.

    ASHLEIGH
    I know! Rent in Cape Town is ridiculous...

    LORRAINE
    Tell me about it. Geez.

LORRAINE turns the volume up on her frontloader, and the sound of *The Shins* fills her car as they drive up the hill and towards Camps Bay, where the sun is already starting to set behind the mountain in a warm orange glow.

EXT. AN ALLEY - NIGHT

A dimly lit area behind Bungalow restaurant.

Next to the back door, there is a stack of red plastic
crates.

ASHLEIGH and LORRAINE, each sitting on a red crate, are taking a break from the bustling interior of the restaurant.

ASHLEIGH takes a drag from her cigarette and exhales slowly.

LORRAINE
This night feels like it's never going to end.

She puts her face in her hands, elbows propped on her knees.

ASHLEIGH
I know...I'm so freakin' tired!
Let's just take the cash in our aprons and run.

They laugh.

LORRAINE
Ja, I'm sure they'd love that.

ASHLEIGH smiles mischievously.

ASHLEIGH
Hey, why don't we go out after this?

LORRAINE turns toward ASHLEIGH, a surprised look on her face.

LORRAINE
But we only finish at twelve!

Then she shakes her head, disappointed in her own lack of spontaneity.

LORRAINE
Wait, what am I saying? Of course we should go out! Why the hell not?

ASHLEIGH
...and there's a party on in Stellenbosch...

LORRAINE
...and we haven't been there since we moved to Cape Town.

LORRAINE smiles.

LORRAINE (CONT.)
Right, it's on. We can go
straight from here, in my car.

ASHLEIGH starts to get up, tidying her hair.

ASHLEIGH
Deal. Yay! Something to look forward to.

LORRAINE
But for now, it's back to the land of fake tan.

They get up reluctantly, sigh simultaneously, and make their way back into the restaurant.

INT. ASHLEIGH'S CAR - NIGHT

LORRAINE is driving her white beetle, with ASHLEIGH by her side in the passenger seat.

"Yellow Country Teeth" by Clap Your Hands Say Yeah is playing loudly while ASHLEIGH half-dances with her upper body, the window next to her wide open, allowing the wind to rush in the window.

She reaches down and picks up a bottle of Black Label balanced between her feet. Smiling, she takes a few big sips.

Next to her, LORRAINE also has a smile on her face, and is moving slightly to the music, but her attention is (mostly) focused on the long dark highway they are traveling along.

INT. "THE MYSTIC BOER" - NIGHT

A dingy little club in Stellenbosch.

On the one side of the room, a fire is burning cozily in an old-fashioned fireplace.

In a booth in the corner, ASHLEIGH and LORRAINE sit comfortably slumped on the couches, with ample space for just the two of them. A bottle of red wine stands between them, and the last unwanted slice of pizza lies on a large wooden board behind it.

LORRAINE leans into the backrest of the couch, surveying the students milling about. She smiles.

LORRAINE
I'd never wanna come back here for real - but being back just for a little while is pretty cool.

ASHLEIGH
Definitely. So good to see all
the old familiars.

LORRAINE
Ja...speaking of...what's going on with you and Nicholas?

ASHLEIGH shifts position, leaning forward to tip her cigarette's ash in the ashtray on the table.

ASHLEIGH
Ah, I don't know. I do...love him, don't get me wrong...

LORRAINE
But let me guess - you're not in love with him.

ASHLEIGH laughs half-heartedly.

ASHLEIGH
Exactly. So clichéd, right?

LORRAINE
Ja, we've all been there though. Maybe you guys just weren't entirely right for each other.

ASHLEIGH
Yes, we're two very different people...but whatever happened to "opposites attract"?

LORRAINE leans forward to take a cigarette from the packet on the table. She lights it over the candle.

LORRAINE
Don't ask me! I don't exactly have the best track record when it comes to relationships.

LORRAINE picks up her wine glass and swallows the last sip.

LORRAINE
I'm gonna get us another drink, do you want anything?

ASHLEIGH
Uh, yes. Let's just get another bottle of wine.

LORRAINE gets up, walking towards the narrow bar.

As she nears it, she sees MARK (25) a tall, olive-skinned boy with neatly combed-back dark brown hair. He is standing against the wall next to the fireplace, the soft warm light from the flames emphasizing the sharp, strong features of his face, but his gaze is gentle.
Clearly intrigued, LORRAINE looks at the boy for a second or two before she realizes that she's staring, and then averts her eyes quickly.

She makes her way to the Ladies' room, squeezing through the crowd of dancing people.

INT. RESTROOM IN "THE MYSTIC BOER" - NIGHT

A tiny restroom with only two cubicles.

The walls are covered in handwritten graffiti, words and phrases of wisdom or vulgarity written in moments of intoxication.

LORRAINE pushes the door open with her shoulder, and stands over the basin with her hands resting on its ledges.

She takes a breath and looks at herself in the mirror.

Then she composes herself, and goes into one of the cubicles.

INT. "THE MYSTIC BOER" - NIGHT

LORRAINE walks out of the ladies' room, and towards ASHLEIGH at the bar.

ASHLEIGH is talking to a brown-haired BOY of average height.

    LORRAINE
    I'm gonna go outside for a second, it's really stuffy in here.

    ASHLEIGH
    Cool - see you later.

LORRAINE walks down the staircase and out the door, looking straight ahead. She walks across onto the sidewalk, and around the corner where a dark terrace leads straight onto the pavement. She sits down, digs around in her bag, and lights a cigarette.

She doesn't notice the boy sitting on the other side of the terrace.

    MARK
    Boring, right?

His voice startles her, and she drops her cigarette, but not without a feeble attempt to catch it on the way down.

    LORRAINE
    Uh, what? Who is that?
She tries to act unphased, stepping the cigarette into
the tar with the heel of her shoe.

MARK
Inside...I was just saying - it's
pretty boring in there, right?

Her eyes adjust to the light, and then she recognizes the
boy's face. She looks down.

LORRAINE
Ja...it is. But, uhm, it's good
to see old friends.

MARK
I guess. So you're not from here?
Or you used to be?

He walks over towards her, sitting down on the terrace
next to her. She shifts uncomfortably.

LORRAINE
No, I studied here. But I don't
live here anymore.

MARK
Ah, OK...neither do I.

They smile at the discovery of common ground.

MARK
So you would know - where can I
find food this late?

LORRAINE
Why, you a little hungry?

MARK
Starving.

LORRAINE looks up, thinking for a second.

LORRAINE
Well, there's always Steers...and
there's this 24-hour petrol
station near my old place, where
they have the best pies.

She smiles as he nods eagerly.

MARK
Take me to these pies.

EXT. A PETROL STATION - NIGHT

MARK and LORRAINE sit on a bench outside the petrol
station's convenience store, bathed in its luminous
light.
They are consumed by silence as they enjoy the pies in their hands.

MARK
Hmmm...you were right. These are amazing...

LORRAINE
I know! They never disappoint. Oh, shit! I forgot to tell my friend where I was going.

She takes her phone out of her handbag and frantically starts to type a text.

MARK
So do you often bring boys you don't know to 24-hour convenience stores?

LORRAINE
(feigning indignity)
Excuse me! Is this how you thank me? What's your name anyway, huh?

MARK
Mark. Yours?

LORRAINE
Lorraine. See? Now we're not strangers anymore.

MARK takes the last bite and throws his packet into a bin next to the bench.

MARK
OK, my turn. What do you do?

LORRAINE
Well, I just finished studying graphic design and illustration...

MARK
Oh, cool! And now?

LORRAINE at him pensively.

LORRAINE
Ah, I don't know. To tell you the truth, I'm not so sure that I'm cut out for that world. Talk about a waste of five years!

She laughs.

MARK
But, it couldn't have been a
total waste, right?

LORRAINE
No, it definitely wasn't! I mean, it was really hard at times - working under so much pressure - but at least I have some things to show for it.

MARK
Oh? Like what? What was your favourite project - if you had to choose?

LORRAINE looks sideways, thinking for a moment.

LORRAINE
Well, I did do this little graphic novel. It's not much, but it was really cathartic, I guess. I would say that's the piece that made it all worth it.

MARK
Well, do you have a copy? I'd love to read it, you know, if you'll let me...

LORRAINE
I don't have one on me right now, but I can give you one. Where do you stay?

He looks slightly disappointed.

MARK
I live in town.

LORRAINE
Town, Cape Town?

MARK
Yes?

LORRAINE laughs.

MARK
What? Am I missing something?

LORRAINE
No, no, it's just, so do I.

MARK
Aaah...so what are we both doing all the way out here, right?

They look at each other for a second.
LORRAINE
Right.

MARK
So anyway, back to the point. What is it that you do want to do, then?

LORRAINE shrugs.

LORRAINE
Uh - I don't know, really. Maybe I'll just open my own preschool.

MARK
(laughing)
Yeah, that sounds good...

LORRAINE
(also laughing)
Yup. I think that's what I'll do. At least I know I'll be happy.

EXT. BIRD STREET - NIGHT

LORRAINE and MARK are strolling back to "The Mystic Boer".

An inebriated first-year stumbles across the road, and they follow him with their eyes, giggling.

LORRAINE
So what do you do?

MARK
I, uh, I'm an accounts executive at a design agency. It's pretty fun, sometimes.

LORRAINE
Oh, cool! So you're a nine-to-fiver. Nice. And what brings you to Stellenbosch?

He coughs a pretend cough into his fist, looking slightly embarrassed.

MARK
Well...I'm also a drummer in a band. We played a gig here earlier tonight.

LORRAINE smiles at the irony.

LORRAINE
Oh, cool! Don't be so modest.

MARK
No, it's just, I don't know... a lot of people find it a little hard to see past that.

LORRAINE
Oh, no, I get it. But that's their problem, right?

MARK
Right... exactly.

MARK slows down a little, scratching the back of his head.

MARK
So, could we maybe, I don't know... meet up for a drink or something back in town? So you can show me that novel of yours?

LORRAINE smiles.

LORRAINE
Ah, I'll think about it...

He lifts his chin.

MARK
So that's a maybe, then?

LORRAINE shrugs, smiling.

He puts his hands in his pockets and they start walking again.

MARK
(coyly)
Well, maybe's good.

EXT. KLOOF STREET - DAY

LORRAINE walks down the street towards Vida e Caffe, headphones in her ears, searching amongst the strange faces.

Then she notices MARK standing against a lamp post, his hands in his pockets.

LORRAINE walks up to him, and when they notice each other, both are equally flustered, with nervous smiles on their slightly blushing faces.

MARK
Hello!

They hug awkwardly, with MARK stooping over slightly to reconcile their heights.
LORRAINE
Hi. How are you?

MARK
Ah, good...it's good to get out of the office for a bit.

LORRAINE
Yes, I'm sure!

LORRAINE takes off her purple BACKPACK, reaches inside to retrieve the little book, and passes it to him.

LORRAINE (CONT.)
...well, here it is.

His face lights up.

MARK
Oh, wow, thank you! That gives me something to read after band practice tonight. Great.

She shifts awkwardly.

LORRAINE
Uhm, OK. I should get going...

MARK
Oh, of course! Well, thanks again...

He hugs her quickly and she starts to walk across the street.

LORRAINE
It's a pleasure! I'll see you later.

MARK
For that drink?

LORRAINE is already quite a distance away, and she turns slightly, calling over her shoulder.

LORRAINE
Call me and we'll talk about it!

MARK smiles, putting the novel into his back pocket.

INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARK walks into his room, having just arrived home. He empties his front pockets, puts his wallet and cellphone on the bedside table, and falls onto the bed.

He reaches into the back pocket of his jeans and retrieves a small blue book.
The title reads *Ek is Suzie*.

He turns it over in his hands once, inspecting the cover, and then opens it up to the first page.

He brings the book closer to his face, examining the first illustration of LORRAINE being punched by her brother. He giggles.

**MONTAGE**

**INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT**

MARK sits on his bed with his feet hanging off the side, still wearing his shoes. The novel is propped on his knees.

As he pages, time speeds up, and the sky in the window beside him goes from pitch black night to navy blue.

He puts the novel down beside him, takes off his shoes, and sits back against the wall, covering his feet with a pillow.

Picking up the novel again, he looks at the page where he left off - the illustration of LORRAINE’S letter to WOUTER lying on the bedside table - and turns over to the next chapter.

The sky behind him slowly starts to turn into the brightness of dawn, and he reaches over, drawing the curtain towards him to cover the window.

**ANIMATION**

**INT. LORRAINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

LORRAINE (18), paintbrush in one hand, palette in the other, squints at a half-painted canvas propped on a homemade easel in the corner of her room.

'Piano Song' by Radiohead is playing loudly in the background. She steps forward, her face 10 cm from the wet oil paint, and works meticulously on a tiny square area.

Out of nowhere, FRANKIE (13) appears, head right next to hers, his face contorted in pretend concentration. LORRAINE, startled, looks at him with a mixture of disbelief and anger.

**LORRAINE**

Frank! What the hell! Klop jy nie?

She reaches down to the Hi-Fi standing on the floor next to her, and turns the volume down.
FRANKIE
Geez, Suzie, chill out...ek kom sê net hallo.

LORRAINE
(indignant)
Well, gaan uit my kamer uit en klop as jy wil inkom! En my naam is Lorraine, nie Suzie nie. Dis wat Wouter my genoem het.

She turns her attention back to painting.

FRANKIE
Wow..OK, OK. Chill.

FRANKIE shakes his head, slouchily walks out of the room, closes the door, waits a beat, and knocks.

LORRAINE
Wie's daar?

FRANKIE'S jaw drops, and he shrugs his shoulders in disbelief.

FRANKIE
Uhh...Frank?

LORRAINE
OK, kom in.

FRANKIE walks towards the bed, shaking his head.

FRANKIE
Suzie, jy's mal.

LORRAINE sighs audibly at the sound of her nickname, but decides to let it go.

LORRAINE
Whatever...

FRANKIE slumps down on the bed, grabs a magazine from his sister's desk, and starts paging through it.

LORRAINE
So, Frank...hoe kom begin jy nie kitaar speel nie? Jy kan begin klasse neem saam met my. Ek dink ons sal in dieselfde klas kan wees...

FRANKIE looks up from the magazine, a puzzled expression on his face.

FRANKIE
Uh, hoekom?
LORRAINE
Ek weet nie...net gedink jy sou
dalk hou daarvan. Ek sal jou
lift?

FRANKIE
Ag, nee wat. Dankie. Ek's nie
reirg lus nie.

LORRAINE
Ja, OK...whatever.

INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

A boy's bedroom.

The walls are stark, save for a framed collage of
FRANKIE, aged 10, crossing the finish line of some
cycling race.

A child's drawing of an army tank is pinned to a green
notice board.

Scattered around the room is an impressive collection of
sports paraphernalia - a tennis racket and a few balls, a
set of golf clubs, a hockey stick, a skateboard,
surfbord and one roller-blade.

LORRAINE and FRANKIE are sitting side by side on the
floor, staring upwards at the bright shapes flashing
across the T.V screen.

They are playing 8-bit Nintendo, and LORRAINE seems to be
struggling to stay in the game.

Suddenly, the words "GAME OVER" flash across the screen,
and she throws down her control in pretend anger.

FRANKIE grabs his control and is quickly absorbed in the
game.

LORRAINE
Jis Frank...watter sport het jy
nog nie gedoen nie?

FRANKIE
Watter boek het jy nog nie gelees
nie, huh?

LORRAINE
Ag, Frank...ek bedoel net...ek
wil net nie hê jy moet 'n jock
word nie.

FRANKIE looks at his sister with disgust.

FRANKIE
Net omdat ek hou van sport
beteken nie ek's 'n *jock* nie.

**LORRAINE**
Al wat ek probeer sé is, hoekom probeer jy nie iets... *nuuts nie?*

**FRANKIE**
O, soos kitaar? Ek dog ons het al klaar hieroor gepraat.

**LORRAINE**
Ja maar... OK. OK: Weet jy hoe *love* meisies ouens wat kan kitaar speel?

FRANKIE'S eyes dart towards his sister again, and for a second he looks at her inquisitively.

A sound in the game draws his attention back to the T.V screen, and he turns forward, irritated by his lapse in concentration. He focuses hard now, trying to save Mario from some imminent danger.

But it is too late, and Mario dies, accompanied by the requisite sad 8-bit tune.

FRANKIE pauses the game, and looks at his sister again. His attempt to hide his curious expression with nonchalance fails miserably.

**LORRAINE**
Trust my. Ek is 'n meisie. Ek weet.

FRANKIE stares at the black screen.

**FRANKIE**
(shrugging)
OK, fine. Whatever. Ek sal dit uitprobeer.

FRANKIE restarts a game, intercepting his sister's turn.

**LORRAINE**
(disconcerted)
Hey! Wag 'n bietjie... jy kry nie 'n tweede kans nie!

And at the same time, she smiles a victorious smile down at the control in her hands.

INT. LOOTS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LORRAINE is wrapped in blankets and curled up on a large brown leather couch.

She is drawn into an episode of *Gilmore Girls*, and distractedly reaches for a bowl of popcorn balanced on
the couch's armrest above her head.

A long, loud screeching noise startles her, and she knocks the bowl off the couch, scattering popcorn everywhere.

LORRAINE
Fraaaaaank!

FRANKIE
Wat, Suzie? Ek's besig!

LORRAINE
Um, ja...ek kan so hoor! Sit dit sagter!

FRANKIE
OK, OK, geez. Chill!

The sounds of the electrical guitar continue to howl loudly, resonating off the walls.

LORRAINE pulls the blanket over her head and lets out a long, exasperated grunt.

INT. LOOTS GARAGE - DAY

An extremely tidy garage.

Against the back wall, a large square panel hosts an array of tools, all arranged from largest to smallest and hanging from identical silver hooks. On the workbench to the right, a row of neatly aligned glass jars hold a collection of nails, nuts, bolts, screws and keys.

Amidst WOUTER SNR.'s obsessive neatness, three teenage boys have constructed an improvised band room. Cables cross the floor haphazardly, winding in between microphone stands and amplifiers.

FRANKIE (16) stands in the middle of the three boys, holding an electric guitar, and bending over to sing into the microphone in front of him. His blonde hair is longer now – not yet reaching his shoulders – and messy.

FRANKIE
WITH YOUR FEET IN THE AIR
AND YOUR HEAD ON THE GROUND –
TRY THIS TRICK, AND SPIN IT,
YEAH...

To the left of FRANKIE, HERMAN (16) – a lanky boy in a Ramones T-shirt with brown hair and yellowish-hazel eyes – is animatedly playing a bass guitar.

FRANKIE
...YOUR HEAD WILL COLLAPSE,
BUT THERE’S NOTHING IN IT
AND YOU'LL ASK YOURSELF...

Their rendition of The Pixies' hit "Where is my mind" does the song justice, yet at the same time there is a spin on the vocal melody that makes the song sound a little more laid-back and bluesy.

Behind them, ALTUS (16) a timid, fair-haired boy sits hunched over his drumkit, absorbed in the song, a serene smile spreading across his face.

**FRANKIE**
WHERE IS MY MIND?
WHERE IS MY MIND?
WHERE-ERE IS MY MIND?

The garage door in front of them is open, and in the middle of the sunny arch, on a black plastic crate, LORRAINE (21) sits, watching. She is wearing a patterned sun dress, her long hair loosely hanging over her shoulders, her legs stretched out in front of her, feet bare.

She is smiling, her toes moving in time to the song.

**INT. LOOTS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

LORRAINE and FRANKIE are sitting on the big brown leather couch, sharing their favourite Batman blanket and a take-away pizza. They are absorbed in an episode of "Gilmore Girls".

FRANKIE picks up a slice, folds it, and takes a big bite.

LORRAINE turns to him, folding her arms.

**LORRAINE**
Frankie?

FRANKIE continues to look at the television.

**FRANKIE**
Suzie?

LORRAINE turns the volume down slightly.

**LORRAINE**
Ek dink nou net...wat wil jy eendag doen? Soos, as 'n werk...

**FRANKIE**
(nonchalantly)
O. Ek wil 'n musician wees.

They stare at the T.V for a few minutes.

**LORRAINE**
OK. Maar, wat is jou back-up
plan? Soos, wat as die musiek-ding nie uitwerk nie?

Now FRANKIE turns towards his sister indignantly.

FRANKIE
Hoekom sal dit nie uitwerk nie?

LORRAINE
Nee, nee, relax...ek bedoel net...kyk na Pappa: hy's 'n musician, maar ingenieurswese is sy werk.

FRANKIE turns back to the T.V.

FRANKIE
Ja, well...ek sal dink daaroor.

LORRAINE turns the volume back up, and directs her attention back to the pizza.

INT. THE LOOTS’ CAR - DAY

The family is driving steadily down a pass, and through the window the rugged mountains fade into the distance, with colourful squares of orchard spreading out at their feet like a big green quilt.

Every so often, the grey-blue flash of a dam interrupts the shades of green.

WOUTER SNR., wearing an old, faded "Honolulu, Hawaii" shirt is leisurely driving the car along the beautiful mountain pass. Cheery jazz music fills the car, and he is happily humming along, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel.

Next to him, JAKKIE sits, a slight contented smile on her face, hands in her lap, looking out of the passenger window.

The car is packed full of weekend things - pillows, cooler-boxes, a braai-grill and a milk tart baking in the sun in the back of the car.

JAKKIE bends over to pick something out of the cooler-box filled with snacks at her feet, and turns around, holding out a packet of biltong.

JAKKIE
Hierso julle...lus vir biltong?

FRANKIE is absorbed in the latest issue of Rolling Stone magazine, and he is sharing a pair of headphones with LORRAINE, who is reading Shantaram by Gregory David Roberts.
FRANKIE looks up, and his eyes stretch wide at the sight of the biltong.

    FRANKIE
    Ja, asseblief!

He takes the packet from his mother, selects a handful of pieces, and then hands it to his sister.

    FRANKIE
    Hier, Suzie. O, dankie Mamma!

JAKKIE has already turned back in her seat, and waves his thanks away.

    JAKKIE
    Sê net as julle iets wil hê om te drink.

    FRANKIE
    Ons is OK, Mamma, hou op worry.

LORRAINE picks up the iPOD lying on the backseat in between her and FRANKIE, and starts scrolling through the list of artists.

    LORRAINE
    Animal Collective, Arcade Fire, Beach Boys, Beatles...

FRANKIE turns to her excitedly.

    FRANKIE
    Beach Boys! Aw, come on!

He tries to grab the iPOD from her, but she turns away quickly, a mischievous smile on her face.

    LORRAINE
    Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, Death Cab For Cutie...Death Cab!

    FRANKIE
    OK, OK, Death Cab. Maar net een song, en dan kan ek kies!

    LORRAINE
    Deal.

    FRANKIE
    Let me guess, 'I will follow you into the dark?'

LORRAINE looks a little hurt.

    LORRAINE
    (timidly)
    Ja, obviously, dis my
favourite...

As the song starts playing, LORRAINE stares straight ahead, and her eyes start to moisten slightly.

FRANKIE
Suzie...Huil jy?

LORRAINE blinks rapidly a few times, and then smiles timidly.

LORRAINE
Nie rërig nie. Mis maar net 'n bietjie vir Boetie.

FRANK smiles sadly as he shifts towards his sister, puts his arm around her and leans his head against her shoulder. He sighs deeply. LORRAINE smiles, looking out of the car's window as she fights off the tears.

They drive like that, each absorbed in their own thoughts, all sharing the same small space.

LIVE ACTION

INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bright daylight illuminates the edges of the curtain in MARK'S bedroom.

He is sitting in the same position, but has pulled the duvet covers up to his chest. He frowns at a sudden realisation, puts the book down, and gets out of bed, walking towards a low bookshelf standing against the wall.

He goes down on his haunches, and starts searching for something in the shelves that are overflowing with books and CD's.

He moves over to the other side of the shelf, lifts up two books and, underneath them, finds what he was looking for.

He holds the CD with both hands, reading the name of the band: "Death Cab For Cutie", and then turns it over to see the song titles. His eyes stop on "I will follow you into the dark".

His face is contemplative for a moment, and then he smiles.

He throws the CD onto the shelf, and climbs back in bed.

ANIMATION - FADE IN

EXT. A CAMPSITE IN CERES - DAY
A forest of pine trees on a bed of needles, with a number of small, simple cabins scattered throughout - far apart from one another.

A large campsite comprised of tents and caravans is nestled under the trees to the one side, next to a sizeable man-made swimming pool.

Children are playing everywhere, running around, screaming delightedly.

A group of adults, including JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR., have gathered together in an opening under a cluster of trees. They are sitting on logs and camping chairs, sipping wine and beer and chatting amongst themselves.

A few of the men are sitting near the fire, barbecuing cocktail sausages. Two of the women are talking and laughing while making a variety of salads.

Hits from the 60's are playing from a small portable CD player.

EXT. A DAM NEAR THE CAMPSITE - DAY

Somewhere nearby, LORRAINE and FRANKIE are drifting in a small wooden boat on a lake covered in lilies. Faded blue mountains on the horizon enclose the valley.

The only sounds that can be heard are birds in the distance, and the occasional sound of the oar moving the water as FRANKIE weaves the boat in between the lilies.

FRANKIE rests the oar across the boat and lies back, mirroring LORRAINE's posture.

He sighs dramatically.

FRANKIE
Ah...dis so peaceful hier...

LORRAINE
Ja, geen skreeuende kinders nie.

FRANKIE smiles, eyes closed, face to the sun.

FRANKIE
Ons gaan binnekort moet terug gaan...dis nie 'n "family reunion" sonder al die members nie.

LORRAINE
(in mock irritation)
Ag, ja. Ek weet. Don't remind me.

They lie like that for a while, pausing in the moment, and then FRANKIE breaks the silence.
FRANKIE
So, ek't gedink aan wat jy die ander dag gesê het...

LORRAINE opens one eye, lifting her head slightly.

FRANKIE
Jy weet, oor werk, en stuff.

LORRAINE closes her eyes, feigning disinterest.

LORRAINE
Hmmm?

FRANKIE sits up, shifting uncomfortably.

FRANKIE
Ja, dis net...dalk is jy soortvan reg...

LORRAINE opens her eyes now, resisting the urge to act on her surprise.

FRANKIE
(dejectedly)
I mean, dalk raak ek eendag 'n lawyer...jy weet. You never know.
Dalk is al hierdie musiek stuff net simpel drome. Ek wil definitief nie een van daai 45-jarige washed-out musicians raak wat outdated band T-shirts dra en in shitty CD winkels werk nie.

LORRAINE turns her head to the side, a hint of regret in her eyes.

LORRAINE
Cool. Ek bedoel, dis jou besluit after all.

EXT. A CAMPSITE IN CERES - NIGHT

FRANKIE and LORRAINE are crossing a small bridge over a narrow strip of the river leading to the dam.

FRANKIE
Aww, moet ons terug gaan? Kom ons gaan koop nog iets by die kafee...

LORRAINE looks back at him impatiently.

LORRAINE
Frank, ons escape al die heel dag! En ons het al basically daai hele kafee gekoop. Dis tyd vir
family duty. Come on. Stap vinniger.

FRANKIE follows her reluctantly.

FRANKIE
Ugh...

They walk along until they get to a clearing in the forest, where a collection of tents and caravans have been pitched.

FRANKIE and LORRAINE make their way over to a circle of mostly men, with a few women, sitting around WOUTER SNR., who is strumming some old 60's song on a guitar.

JAKKIE notices them coming, and beckons them over.

JAKKIE
Frankie! Lora! Waar was julle heeldag?

They approach the group, pulling chairs closer and taking their seat in the circle.

LORRAINE
Ag, ons het explore...

She looks at FRANKIE and he nods innocently.

At that point, WOUTER SNR. notices them, and stops playing, handing the guitar over to FRANKIE.

WOUTER SNR.
Ah, hier's my kinders! Frank, speel daar vir ons 'n song, toe.

FRANKIE leans back shyly, shaking his head.

FRANKIE
Dad...

WOUTER SNR.
Ag, net een, toe?

FRANKIE
OK, maar net een!

As he starts strumming chords, LORRAINE slowly recognizes the song.

LORRAINE
Ah, Frankie! Dis my liedjie!

FRANKIE smiles, not looking up, as he starts singing the lyrics.
LOVE OF MINE
SOMEDAY YOU WILL DIE
BUT I WILL BE CLOSE BEHIND,
I'LL FOLLOW YOU INTO THE
DARK. NO BLINDING
LIGHTS OR TUNNELS
TO GATES OF WHITE, JUST OUR
HANDS CLASPED SO TIGHT WAITING
FOR THE HINT OF A SPARK. IF
HEAVEN AND HELL DECIDE
THAT THEY BOTH ARE SATISFIED;
AND ILLUMINATE THE "NO' S" ON
THEIR VACANCY SIGNS –
IF THERE'S
NO-ONE BESIDE YOU WHEN YOUR
SOUL EMBARKS, THEN I'LL
FOLLOW YOU INTO THE DARK.

As he plays and sings, LORRAINE smiles, hugging her knees with her arms.

INT. LORRAINE'S CAR - DAY

LORRAINE and FRANK are in her car, driving along a highway.

The windows are rolled all the way down, and they are both singing along loudly to the *Muse* song playing from the frontloader.

FRANKIE
Hoekom is Mamma so damn overprotective?

LORRAINE lets go of the steering wheel with one hand, reaching out of the window and letting it roller-coaster on the wind rushing past.

LORRAINE
Ag, dis maar net hoe sy is. Glo my, ek's gewoond daaraan. Sy was baie strenger op my as wat sy nou op jou is.

FRANKIE
Ugh. Whatever. Dis so stupid! Wanneer het ek en jy al ooit alleen Kaapstad toe gegaan vir die dag anyway?

LORRAINE
Ja, ek weet...noog nooit? Hoekom het ons dit nog nooit gedoen nie? Dis actually so naby...

FRANKIE stares out of the window, disgruntled.

FRANKIE
They start nearing the city, and LORRAINE changes the music to *The Strokes*’ "Is This It". The mood in the car goes from laid-back to fired up in the introduction of the first song.

They approach a busy intersection in the center of the city.

LORRAINE misjudges the traffic signs and drives across the intersection, only to be met by four lanes of cars speeding towards theirs from the right hand side.

In shock, she accelerates, and they drive away safely, the sound of screeching car tyres fading into the distance behind them.

FRANKIE and LORRAINE look at each other, eyes wide and mouths open with shock. FRANKIE looks down, running his hands through his hair anxiously.

FRANKIE
Wow...wow...

LORRAINE's still gripping the steering wheel with both hands, her knuckles white from strain.

LORRAINE
Frank...ek's so jammer...wow...wat het nou net gebeur?

FRANKIE
Ek weet nie...ek dink jy moes actually daar links gedraai het. Ek weet nie. Maar moenie eers dink daaraan om vir mamma-hulle te sê hiervan nie!

LORRAINE
(laughing with relief)
Ja! Imagine! Mamma sal nooit weer slaap nie. Jissie. Sy moet psychic wees...dink jy sy't gevoel dat iets gaan gebeur?

FRANKIE throws his head back in relief, considering his sister's strange suggestion.

FRANKIE

LORRAINE
Ja. Who knows.
They sit in silence for a moment, reeling.

LORRAINE
Frank?

FRANKIE
Ja?

LORRAINE
Kom ons gaan drink 'n bier. Nou.

EXT. KLOOF STREET – DAY

A popular street in Cape Town.

On the corner, an eclectic collection of (mostly young and trendy) people sip latte’s and read magazines at the small red tables of a stylish little coffee shop called Vida e Caffe.

A store selling designer toys, limited edition sneakers and clothes and a variety of interesting books hugs the coffee shop on the other side.

A hairdresser, vinyl and music store, and a shop hosting a collection of strange pop culture objects complete the tiny youth consumerist mecca.

FRANKIE and LORRAINE are sauntering along the sidewalk.

LORRAINE
Ja, so hierdie is pretty much my favourite deel van Kaapstad...nie dat ek veel anders ken nie.

FRANKIE
Cool! Ek hou van die vibe hier.

He points to one of the apartments in a block above the trendy shops.

FRANKIE
Who knows? Dalk as ek eendag 'n lawyer is, bly ek in een van daai flats.

LORRAINE
(laughing)
Ja...maybe. Dis nou as die musiek ding nie uitwerk nie.

She casts a little smile to his side.

LORRAINE
OK. So kom ons kyk hier binne vir 'n horlosie vir jou.

She turns into the designer store, followed closely by
FRANKIE.

INT. 'ASTORE' - DAY

An uncluttered little store, with long white shelves lining the walls.

LORRAINE and FRANKIE are standing at the counter, where a glass display case holds watches and jewellery.

LORRAINE
OK, so is jy seker dis die een wat jy wil hé?

FRANKIE looks down at the watch on his arm.

He smiles from ear to ear.

FRANKIE
Ja! Totally! En die geld wat mamma vir my gegee het is net genoeg.

LORRAINE reaches into her handbag.

LORRAINE
Nee man, moenie worry nie. Dis op my. Dink aan dit as 'n kersgeskenk.

FRANKIE looks at LORRAINE in astonishment while she pays for the watch.

FRANKIE
Uh...dankie Suz.

LORRAINE
(smiling mischievously)
Cool. Nou kan jy vir my lunch koop.

FRANKIE
Deal.

LIVE ACTION

INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARK looks up from the book, remembering.

FLASHBACK

EXT. KLOOF STREET - DAY

LORRAINE hands MARK her novel as they stand outside the store that she and FRANKIE had gone into years earlier.

LIVE ACTION
INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

The realisation of the strange coincidence registers on MARK'S face. He thinks about it for a moment, and then turns his attention back to the novel.

ANIMATION

INT. LOOTS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

FRANKIE and HERMAN are sitting on one of the leather couches.

FRANKIE's arm is slung over the backrest, and HERMAN intermittently passes him a big bag of chips. They munch contentedly.

On the opposite couch, LORRAINE sits, nervously upright, her one leg moving up and down.

LORRAINE
Dis weird...hulle moes al hier gewees het.

FRANKIE
Ah, moenie worry nie, ek's seker hulle is op pad.

JAKKIE
/calming from another room/
Fraaaaaank! Kom nou!

FRANKIE leans into the couch a little more, and takes another handful of chips from the bag.

FRANKIE
/towards his mother's voice/
Ja, mamma...rustig. Ek wag saam met Suzie.

He looks at LORRAINE.

FRANKIE
/mischieffully/
Ek wil sien wie hierdie ouens is saam met wie jy op 'n roadtrip gaan. Hoe ken jy hulle anyway?

LORRAINE
Ag, net 'n paar ouens saam met wie ek gewerk het 'n rukkie terug...

FRANKIE nods like an interrogating parent.

FRANKIE
En jy sê hulle gaan 'n paar gigs
The doorbell rings.

LORRAINE gets up, and starts to pick up her bags standing in the corner of the room. FRANKIE stops her, slings a backpack over his shoulder, and picks up a duffel bag with his free hand.

They start moving towards the front door.

LORRAINE
Ja, hulle het so vier gigs op die suidkus. Die verste is in Jeffrey's Baai. Dan kom ons terug.

FRANKIE
Klink cool.

LORRAINE opens the door to find STEFAN (24) a short, tanned boy with unkept dark hair standing on front of her.

STEFAN
Hey Pikkewyn!

LORRAINE
Hey Stefan! Finally!

They hug each other, and then LORRAINE turns to her brother.

LORRAINE
Frankie, dis Stefan. Stefan, Frankie.

The boys shake hands ceremoniously.

INT. GERALD'S BAKKIE - DAY

GERALD (28) a tall, skinny man with a mess of curly orange hair is in the driver's seat, with STEFAN as the passenger and LORRAINE squeezed in between.

From the Datsun bakkie's frontloader, a BB King song is playing loudly.

The heavy rain forms rivers on the windscreen, and a rush of drops make their way in through STEFAN's open window.

STEFAN laughs as he strains to reach out of the window, tugging on a piece of string that has been tied to a broken wiper blade in an effort to make it work, albeit manually.

GERALD sits on the edge of his seat with his face centimeters from the windscreen, struggling to discern
the road from the blurry mess visible from inside the car.

He looks somewhat tense, but the wide grin on his face proves otherwise.

In the middle of it all, LORRAINE sits laughing, sipping on a beer being passed through the little window separating her and WERNER (27) a lanky bonde-haired man – huddled inbetween guitars, amps and suitcases in the back of the enclosed bakkie.

INT. A HOUSE IN JEFFREY'S BAY - DAY

A spacious wooden cottage attached to a larger house.

The house's deck overlooks Jeffrey's bay, behind which a perfect view of the sea is visible. The waves are choppy in the stormy weather.

STEFAN stands in front of the stove, immersed in the process of cooking tagliatelle alfredo.

LORRAINE, GERALD and WERNER are sitting at the counter of the open plan kitchen, a bottle of cheap russian vodka and four glasses in the middle of the table. They are playing a drinking game, and seem to have been doing so for a while now.

The atmosphere is cheery and warm, despite the cold weather outside.

GERALD pours LORRAINE another glass of vodka.

LORRAINE
(in a bad russian accent)
Da! More vodka for Nadja.

GERALD
(laughing)
Da, da, da...let's drink, to good times!

They clink their glasses together and down their drinks.

GERALD

WERNER
(animatedly)
Come! Come friends. Let us go exploring!

They jump up and head out of the door, stumbling and laughing as they go.

EXT. A BEACH IN JEFFREY'S BAY - DAY

The sky is grey and foreboding, but the sea is calm, almost motionless. A tiny sliver of sunlight is visible above the water.
GERALD and LORRAINE sit in a rockpool.

GERALD is sitting on the edge, with his legs submerged in the water, whilst LORRAINE sits crouched with her legs tucked underneath her in the middle of the shallow pool. She is preoccupied with examining the contents of the little pool.

LORRAINE
Daar's so baie see-anemones
hier...

Gerald leans over to take a closer look. He smiles.

GERALD
Ja, kyk daai shocking oranje een. Raver anemone.

LORRAINE laughs.

She breaks a mussel off one of the pool's walls, places it carefully on a large rock, and then bashes it with a smaller one.

Then, she picks a small piece of flesh out of the dismantled mussel, and holds it next to one of the smaller anemones and waits.

LORRAINE
Toe ek klein was het ek altyd die anemones gevoer...

The anemone reaches out its tentacles and gingerly takes hold of the piece of mussel. Then it swiftly enfolds the precious food with all its tentacles, seeming to collapse into itself.

They sit there for a moment, not moving.

Then LORRAINE picks up a handful of sand from the bottom of the pool and lets it run through her fingers. She stops suddenly, bringing her face closer to her hand to examine a brightly coloured speck.

LORRAINE
Wow! Gerald, kom kyk hier.

GERALD slides into the pool opposite LORRAINE.

She picks up a tiny object from the palm of her hand, balancing it on the tip of her finger. It is no bigger than a grain of rice. They lean in closer and look at it.

GERALD
Wow! Dis 'n miniatuur skulpie!

LORRAINE
Kyk al die kleure en patrone, dis insane! Psychedelic.

Excited, they filter handfuls of sand, looking for more of the remarkable little shells.

LORRAINE looks down at the six or seven tiny shells in her hand.

LORRAINE
Hulle is so mooi! Maar wat doen 'n mens met so iets? Jy kan altyd een van daai tacky fotorame met die skulpe op maak.

They laugh.

GERALD
En my kamera is nie naby aan goed genoeg om 'n foto daarvan te neem nie...

They pause for a moment, considering their limited options.

LORRAINE
En as ek hulle probeer hou, sal ek hulle probably net verloor. Hulle is net te klein.

GERALD looks at LORRAINE, a naughty twinkle in his eye.

GERALD
Ek weet. Kom ons sluk hulle in.

LORRAINE looks at GERALD, a curious yet intrigued smile on her face.

LORRAINE
Wat? Maar-

GERALD pinches a few shells between his thumb and forefinger, places them on his tongue, closes his mouth and swallows, a big grin spreading across his face.

LORRAINE follows suit, throwing the remaining shells into her mouth.

They giggle like little children.

LIVE ACTION

INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARK closes the book, thinking for a moment. A slow smile spreads across his face.

Then he gets up, walking out of his room.
He goes down a flight of stairs, and steps outside onto the apartment's large balcony. The bright early morning light illuminates the buildings of Woodstock spreading out around him.

He climbs into a big hammock suspended from the balcony railings, positions himself comfortably, and goes back to reading.

EXT. A BEACH IN JEFFREY'S BAY - DAY

LORRAINE and GERALD are still sitting at the rock pool. In the distance, they see STEFAN approaching.

STEFAN
Hey! Wat doen julle? Kom ons gaan kry roomyse!

GERALD starts to get up, rubbing the water off his legs.

GERALD
Nee, dis cool dude. Dink ek gaan 'n raincheck vat. Ek moet gou gaan shower voor vanaand se gig. Check julle later!

GERALD walks off in the direction of the house.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOUR - DAY

STEFAN hands LORRAINE an ice cream cone as they walk back towards the beach.

The greyness of the sky means that there aren't very many people on the beach.

A mother and father play with their toddler in the shallow water, laughing at the expression on his face when they dip his toes in the cold ocean.

A solitary young man jogs where the water meets the sand, lost in thought and absorbed by whatever music is playing through his headphones.

They walk past an old bearded man, his wrinkled and folded skin covered in tattoos, some of which look professionally done, and the rest that seem to be DIY efforts. He is hunched over, walking slowly, his eyes set at a 45 degree downward angle.

The man smiles and mumbles something to his husky, devotedly walking beside him. The husky looks even older than the old man, but the fresh sea air has put a slight glimmer into his eyes, and an awkward giddiness into his stumbling walk.
STEFAN
Het jy al ooit gedink daaraan om 'n tattoo te kry?

LORRAINE looks at her ice cream pensively.

LORRAINE
Ja, I guess. Maar ek sal dit net kry as dit iets beteken vir my - iets wat nooit gaan verander nie. Bietjie sentimental, ek weet...

STEFAN
Nee! Glad nie. I mean, dit gaan verewig deel wees van jou. So dit moet significant wees.

LORRAINE
Ja. Dit sal 'n moeilike besluit wees vir my.

They walk for a while on the edge of the water, savouring their ice creams.

LORRAINE
En jy? Sal jy dit oorweeg?

STEFAN
Ja, totally...daar's een wat ek al vir 'n lang tyd wil kry.

He lifts his shirt up, exposing the side of his body.

STEFAN
Hier érens...dis 'n bybelvers, actually.

He looks away diffidently.

LORRAINE
En? Wat is dit?

STEFAN
Wel, OK...dis Psalm 133 vers 1. "Behold! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity".

He pauses for a second.

STEFAN (CONT.)
Ek weet nie, ek's nie religious nie, maar dis net vir my sulke powerful woorde.

LORRAINE looks away from STEFAN, towards the ocean, frowning as she considers the almost eerie resonance of the words.
LORRAINE
Ja. Dit is.

EXT. A PUB IN JEFFREY'S BAY - NIGHT
LORRAINE, GERALD, WERNER and STEFAN sit at a small round table in the courtyard of an understated but busy pub, drinking draughts of beer.

WERNER takes a sip of his beer and puts it back down on the table in front of him.

WERNER
...ja, en onthou julle hoe dronk was ons daai eerste aand?

They laugh.

LORRAINE
Ja, ek onthou dele van die aand...veral dat ek "Nadja" was...

GERALD
(laughing)
...en dat ons die heel aand in slegte Russian accents gepraat het.

STEFAN
So belaglik. Maar wat 'n goeie aand.

WERNER
Ja, maar die volgende dag-

They are disrupted by a cellphone ringing loudly. Everyone feels around for their phones.

LORRAINE
Dis myne...jissie, kan nie onthou wanneer laas ek my foon gebruik het nie.

She gets up to move to away from the bustling noise of the pub.

Behind a pillar, a few steps away, she sits on her heels and answers the phone.

LORRAINE
Daddy! Hallo, hoe gaan dit?

WOUTER SRN.
Haai kind. Nie so goed nie.

Her father's voice on the other side sounds unsettlingly
calm.

LORAINE
Wat? Hoekom-

WOUTER SNR.
Lora, luister. Frank was in 'n ernstige motorfiets ongeluk.

LORAINE
(shocked)
Wat? Ek verstaan nie, hy...waar, of, wanneer-

WOUTER SNR.
Al wat ek nou vir jou kan sê is dat dit nie goed lyk nie...wanneer kom jy huis toe kind?

LORAINE
Ek weet nie, ek...ek bel jou nou terug.

LORAINE's hand drops to her side, and she sits down, frozen in shock and disbelief.

EXT. A HOUSE IN JEFFREY'S BAY - NIGHT

Back at the house, in the quiet hours of the night, the boys are sleeping soundly.

On the sleeper-couch in the living room, GERALD and WERNER are lying back to back, their breathing audible.

STEFAN sleeps spread-eagled on the double bed in the house's only bedroom.

There is an open space beside him.

Outside on the wooden deck, LORAINE sits wide awake, hugging her knees and staring at the lights of the sleepy coastal town.

EXT. A HOUSE IN JEFFREY'S BAY - DAY

Having just woken up, GERALD walks out onto the deck sleepily, and finds LORAINE still sitting there, wide awake.

Without saying a word, he walks over towards her and sits down next to her, crossing his arms on his knees.

GERALD
Kom ons kry jou by die huis.

She nods numbly.
Again, LORRAINE sits squeezed between GERALD, who is driving, and STEFAN, sitting in the passenger seat.

Through the tiny window, WERNER's head in the back of the car is visible.

The atmosphere in the car is quiet and tense.

The silence is only interrupted by the sound of LORRAINE's phone ceaselessly receiving texts.

To worsen the already somber mood, the old Datsun bakkie overheats incessantly. The radiator is leaking, and it only takes a short while for it to dry up completely.

Standing at the side of the road, they take turns asking people in cars passing by for bottles of water.

The boys stare out of the car's windows uncomfortably. The bergwinds have resulted in a series of tempestuous veldfires raging in the fields alongside the road.

Again, they are stranded at the roadside, asking passers-by for water.

Flames ranging in size lap at the December-dry shrubbery and trees in the countryside, slowly devouring anything that will burn.

The sky looming above is an ominous orange-grey.

LORRAINE, STEFAN and WERNER sit in the dry grass next to the road, bathed in orange light, arms hugging their knees. They look despondent as they watch GERALD fiddle around under the car's bonnet anxiously.

Back on the road again, they look drained, each one lost in his or her own tired stare.

Through the car's windows, the scenery changes slowly.

The sky is a dark navy blue, and no stars are visible.

The Datsun bakkie makes its way over Sir Lowry's Pass and drives down towards Somerset West.

WOUTER SNR's car stands on a shoulder of the N1.

JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR stand next to the car, huddled in big winter jackets. They look exhausted.
LORRAINE washes her hands rigorously at the basin near the entrance to the hospital's Intensive Care Unit. As she dries them on a sheet of paper towel, she starts to look around the room.

Her eyes stop on FRANKIE, lying on a bed across the room from her. Despite the cast on his leg, the tubes coming from his nose and the drip in his hand, he looks like he is taking a quick nap.

She walks towards him slowly, with each step noticing more details.

His face and hands are slightly swollen, but he looks beautiful and calm, with his hair combed back like a young film star.

As LORRAINE takes his hand, all the worry and dread seems to catch up with her at once, and she buries her face in the stiff hospital blankets and weeps.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

In a waiting room adjacent to the Intensive Care Unit, a small couch is folded out to form an uncomfortable-looking bed.

WOUTER SNR. and JAKKIE lie curled up on the makeshift bed, under borrowed hospital linen, carried away in a deep but fitful sleep.

A large round plate with a pile of little sandwich triangles stands - practically untouched - on a table next to the bed.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

LORRAINE, JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. stand around FRANKIE's hospital bed.

They watch as THE DOCTOR performs tests.

THE DOCTOR's head drops, and he sighs softly. Then he takes a step back to address the family.

THE DOCTOR
I'm so sorry. I've done all the checks I can. There is no sign of any kind of brain function. The damage to his brainstem was just too severe.

JAKKIE and WOUTER SNR. both take hold of FRANKIE's left hand. They cry quietly, the disbelief clearly visible on their faces.

LORRAINE picks up his right hand as she sinks into the chair next to his bed.
She stares blankly at his hand inside hers.

EXT. LOOTS HOME - DAY

Paul Kruger street is dead quiet.

The gate to the Loots' home is closed and locked, and a small notepad is tied to one of the vertical iron bars.

A few sympathetic notes are scribbled on the pages of the notepad, and in front of it, the pile of flowers seems to be growing at a rapid pace.

Roses, lilies, sunflowers, daisies and tulips are all present, tied up with pink ribbons, string and cheery polka-dot cellophane.

Letters of sympathy are tied to the flowers, or placed amidst them.

There is no visible movement inside the house.

INT. LORRAINE'S BATHROOM - DAY

LORRAINE bends over her bathroom basin.

She looks in the mirror, then splashes her face. She looks into the mirror again, and then bends down, immersing her face in the water completely.

When she comes up for air, she fumblingly reaches for the hand towel and starts rubbing the water off her face.

Then she freezes.

On the corner of the basin cupboard, she sees FRANKIE's watch.

She smiles.

LIVE ACTION

INT. MARK'S WOODSTOCK APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARK closes the novel, and carefully puts it down underneath the hammock.

He lies down on his back, staring at the sky.

INT. LORRAINE’S CAPE TOWN APARTMENT - DAY

LORRAINE sits on one of the big white seat cushions on the wooden floor of her lounge, a glass of red wine in her hand.

She stares out of the window at Table Mountain, lost in thought.
ASHLEIGH's voice startles her out of her daze.

ASHLEIGH
So guess what?

LORRAINE
What?

ASHLEIGH sits upright, excited by the news she is about to share.

ASHLEIGH
I start working for my Dad next week. Not very glamorous, I know. But it's a start.

LORRAINE smiles.

LORRAINE
Oh, of course! Your Dad has his own design agency! Why have I never made that connection before?

ASHLEIGH
Exactly. So it'll be good for my CV, and I'll have time to work on my portfolio as well.

LORRAINE
Ash, that's great! Cheers.

They clink their wine glasses together, and each take a long sip.

LORRAINE
Actually, I've also started looking for a real job. I'm going for an interview on Tuesday.

ASHLEIGH
No way! Good luck. Cheers again!

They repeat the celebratory ritual, and then sit in silence for a moment, dreaming about the future.

ASHLEIGH
So have you seen that guy again...what was his name, Matthew?

LORRAINE
Mark.

LORRAINE fills up her glass, trying to hide her smile.

LORRAINE
Yes, the other day...he wanted a
copy of my novel, so we met up.

ASHLEIGH looks surprised, taking her cigarette from her lips mid-inhalation.

ASHLEIGH
What? You gave him a copy?

She kills her cigarette in the ashtray, shaking her head.

ASHLEIGH (CONT.)
You've seen him, what? Once?

LORRAINE laughs.

LORRAINE
Yes...I don't know, Ash...sometimes you just get a feeling about a person.

ASHLEIGH still looks taken aback.

ASHLEIGH
I understand that - but, I mean, it's just so personal...

LORRAINE
I know, but...maybe...maybe that's why I thought he should read it? I don't know! I guess I didn't think it through.

ASHLEIGH takes a sip of wine.

ASHLEIGH
Well, let's not overthink it. Are you gonna see him again?

LORRAINE smiles, hugging her knees with excitement.

LORRAINE
Yup! Tomorrow. We're meeting in his lunchbreak.

ASHLEIGH smiles with her.

ASHLEIGH
Hmmm, well. I expect a thorough report-back.

LORRAINE
Done.

EXT. KLOOF STREET - DAY

LORRAINE and MARK are strolling along the sidewalk, each sipping on a smoothie.
They approach a beautiful little park.

There is a set of swings on the one side, a see-saw and a jungle gym on the other.

In the corner of the park, a huge ancient-looking tree's thick, low branches spread out across almost half the park.

Across the park, about 30 meters away, a grandfather in his Sunday best is pushing his granddaughter on a swing. She is wearing a tiny denim dungaree, a colourful stripey shirt, and pink mary-jane shoes.

LORRAINE and MARK stop at the tiny gate, and look at each other. Then they both step inside, and are automatically drawn towards the big old tree.

Underneath the tree, a broken-down little bench stands, with only one plank left to sit on. It was clearly once red, but the paint has almost entirely chipped off.

MARK takes a sip of his smoothie, looking at the dismal little bench.

MARK
Yeah...that looks risky.

LORRAINE
I know, seriously.

They both look around, but the grass is patchy in most places and doesn't look like a very comfortable place to sit.

Then MARK turns his gaze up at the tree above them.

LORRAINE follows his gaze, and they look at each other, each trying to read what the other is thinking.

MARK
Come on! Let's do it.

LORRAINE
Uh, OK...but you have to help me a little.

MARK moves towards the tree. Standing next to its trunk, he interlaces his fingers and bends down slightly.

MARK
OK! Step on my hands.

LORRAINE
But...

MARK
Come on, just do it.
He gestures to a branch above his head.

MARK (CONT.)
Just grab onto that branch over there. You'll be fine.

LORRAINE warily steps on his hand, attempting to hoist herself up with the branch. But it is an awkward position, and she is left dangling in mid air.

LORRAINE
(laughing)
Ugh...oh no!

MARK laughs hysterically at the comical sight, and then guilt moves him and he puts his hands flat on her behind, pushing her up.

MARK
(trying not to laugh)
OK, don't worry, nearly there...

MARK's push allows LORRAINE to grab onto the branch more firmly, and she manages to hoist herself up into the centre of the tree.

She sighs with relief, still laughing a little, embarrassed, and turns around to see MARK looking up at her helplessly.

LORRAINE
OK, mister, now it's my turn to laugh at you.

MARK
Hey, no! Come on!

LORRAINE
I'm just kidding, geez, calm down.

She holds onto a fold in the tree's trunk, and leans forward, holding out her hand.

MARK places his foot firmly on the trunk, holds on to a branch with one hand, LORRAINE's hand with the other, and successfully pulls himself up onto the branch.

They giggle a little as they climb around, trying to find comfortable sitting positions. Then they settle, facing one another.

The little girl across the park laughs gleefully as her grandfather pushes her higher and higher on the swing.

MARK and LORRAINE smile as they watch her from the branches of the big old tree, drinking their smoothies.
LORRAINE
So I think it's a little unfair that you got to read my novel, and now know just about everything about me, and I know nothing about you...where did you grow up?

MARK shifts his position on the tree's branch.

MARK
Oh, wow. Where to start. Well, I grew up in Durban. My dad's Portuguese. He would take me fishing at every chance he got - I loved it.

He smiles at the nostalgic thought.

MARK (CONT.)
And I have nine siblings-

LORRAINE
Nine! Now, that's unfair. Wow. How is that even possible?

MARK
Oh, no, my dad's been married three times. So he just kind of accumulated children along the way.

They laugh.

LORRAINE
(laughing)
Well, that sounds like a plan...damn Portuguese.

MARK
(laughing)
Definitely...

MARK repositions himself on the branch, and his face turns serious.

MARK
Thanks for letting me read your book.

LORRAINE
(smiling)
Oh! No, thank you for reading it.

MARK
So...everything you wrote about really happened?
LORRAINE looks down at the empty cup in her hand, playing with the straw.

She smiles a half-smile.

    LORRAINE
    True story.

A tinge of sorrow flashes in his eyes.

He picks a glossy green leaf from the branch above his head and turns it over and over, examining it absent-mindedly.

    MARK
    I can't believe it.

    LORRAINE
    I know. That's exactly it, though...sometimes it just won't sink in.

    MARK
    Of course.

He tucks the leaf away into a fold in the branch he's sitting on.

    MARK (CONT.)
    It was brave of you to go back there, and write that, you know? I'm not sure if I would have been able to.

LORRAINE looks down.

    LORRAINE
    It wasn't easy.

Then she smiles.

    LORRAINE
    OK, OK. Enough about that! Let's talk about something else.

MARK nods.

    MARK
    OK, but just one more thing...

LORRAINE laughs.

    LORRAINE (mockingly)
    Oh, there's more? Just kidding. Go for it.

MARK glances downward, hesitating.
MARK
I really loved the part where you guys were at the beach, on that roadtrip, you know? When you ate those tiny shells.

LORRAINE laughs.

LORRAINE
Yes, weird hey? It's kind of hard to explain.

MARK
No, no. I totally get it - finding something so perfect and so fragile, and then-

He delays a little, considering what is he about to say.

MARK (CONT.)
I don't know...reason goes out the window, and you just find yourself having to hold on to it forever - or at least try to - even if it's not really yours to have.

He gets up, and climbs over towards where LORRAINE is sitting, and sits down next to her. He takes her hand carefully.

MARK
I get it.

He kisses her softly on the cheek, and they are lost in those few seconds. Then he sits back, they look at each other and dissolve into self-conscious laughter.

MARK grins from ear to ear, and he looks up at her.

MARK
(smiling playfully)
And now I'm the one eating shells.

She puts her arms around him and squeezes him tightly, all the while planting kisses on his cheek.
THE END.