

WATCH!

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FADE IN

INT. THEATRE - 20:00

We open onto a dimly lit theatre, viewed diagonally from a back row of velvet seats. It isn't particularly full. On the stage, lit by a single spotlight, sits a small plastic chair. There are silhouettes, vague suggestions of people seated directly in front of us. Chatting, throwing the occasional dirty look to someone they disapprove of- all things one might expect in a theatre. In bold, yellow letters, the title appears: WATCH!

Suddenly, a hush falls onto the crowd: someone of importance seems to have entered. A moment later, we see him too. An old man of about 80, of average looks except his shock of white hair, insanely parted and sticking up everywhere it shouldn't be. This is JACOB KLIMT, the once-famous (and still famously controversial) German actor. Everyone there knows him, has loved his work since they were young. JACOB KLIMT is barefoot, wearing a speckled white henley shirt and old slacks. He has entered the scene from behind (somewhat of an odd place to come onstage from) and climbs the steps to the stage slowly. Once there, he pulls the chair back a bit and sits. Because of his modifications to the scenery, he is now half out of the spotlight.

The camera has not moved since his entrance and will not move for the remainder of the scene.

JACOB KLIMT struggles to pull something from his pocket, lifting his hips to do so. He procures an enormous silk handkerchief almost the size of a pillowcase. After loosening his belt and unzipping his pants, he places the handkerchief on his lap. After a second of staring intensely into the darkness, he places a hand under the cloth, and, after a moment longer of looking challengingly at the audience, JACOB KLIMT starts masturbating.

There is outrage, commotion- a man yells, people leap to their feet. Mothers, their hands over the eyes of their children, rush out of the theatre. Their husbands follow sheepishly, apparently fascinated by the perverseness of the performance. Those that remain seated look around, searching for answer in the darkness.

JACOB KLIMT keeps jerking off.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - 09:40

A shaky camera follows high heels strut down an orange patterned carpet. Other feet pass to the right, keeping steady pace. Someone, a man, stumbles and falls- the high heels we have been watching barely even slow down. They belong to MARY GINA HARPER, a mid-level employee in the HR section of some useless company.

We see the corporate power, her arrogance in each step, thudding on the carpet. God is that an ugly carpet.

Suddenly, MARY'S feet slow down. They seem excited now, and yet a bit scared- her steps have slowed to a stop. We see what she must be excited for: patent leather shoes, clearly more shined than the rest: this must be someone important, someone who has something to say in this company that doesn't do anything. This is BASIL JOHNSON. We change direction to watch his steps, though out of focus- as we move up his body to his face, we see MARY standing in the same spot as before. We continue moving backwards with BASIL until he exits frame to the left. We are left to watch MARY stand, lost in the sea of people now walking by. The camera remains slightly unsteady, as if about to faint. MARY GINA HARPER keeps walking, self-confidence sucked out of her steps.

INT. FRANKS ROOM - UNSPECIFIED TIME

We cut into what seems to be a classroom: whiteboard, acoustic pads on the ceiling, floorboards worn in from use. A man stands in front of the whiteboard. This is FRANK. A projector, located somewhere above us, shows documentary footage of various animals mating. FRANK stands stiffly, leaning a bit to the side as the projection plays across his messy hair. He stands still for uncomfortably long, blinking and leaning. His blinks come in short bursts or incredibly slowly, with no apparent pattern.

FRANK

Odd, isn't it?

FRANK speaks slowly, deliberately. Every word seems to take force, every syllable accentuated as if to mimic rhythm.

FRANK (cont.)

She told him, yesterday. Sent him an email to say she loved him. A beautiful gesture, really, all things considered.

A cruel little smile flickers across FRANK's taugt cheekbones, forehead drawing together as if the movement pains him.

They've never really talked before, have they? She thought there were looks in the corridor, thought it so hard it must be true- her heart fluttered when she walked past him. Fluttered- it must be true. But it wasn't, never really was.

FRANK watches us with his head cocked to the side, seemingly gauging a reaction. He starts again, slower this time, tasting each word before it falls from his tongue.

FRANK (cont'd)

And then it was all over. One moment, a missed glance in a hallway. Maybe he didn't read it yet, she thinks. Maybe he'll look at me next time.

FRANK raises his head, shaking his greasy locks back and breathing in deep through his nose.

She'll live on that for a while.

EXT. STREET CORNER - 12:00

We cut onto a run-down street, houses low and crumbling. Wooden doors, painted in various bright colours, lean irregularly on their hinges. It is mid may, and cloudy: patches of sunlight draw figures on the worn concrete.

A blue door, about five doors down to the right of the camera, slams open. Voices spill out: a man's livid voice, a dog's bark. Two children and the strained voice of an angry mother. Out of the door storms a young girl with tangled hair and grey pants a size too small: her name is JOAN HARPER: she is MARY HARPER'S niece. JOAN walks with the striding uncertainty of someone who's knees have been bruised too many times: fearful, searching for the confidence in her steps. She is stopped by someone we haven't seen before: this is LAURIE HARPER, her sister.

LAURIE

Wait, Joan—

JOAN tries to shrug her off, tear herself loose.

LAURIE

Stop, Joan. What happened?

JOAN

Same as always happens— he got mad, mom didn't do anything.

JOAN'S face contorts, grimacing from trying not cry.

JOAN

And the baby was crying and mom started to get angry and she—

LAURIE stops JOAN by grabbing her shoulders, goes to the door. LAURIE is left alone on the street, made unsteady from speaking. She sways for a moment, trying to steel herself. Then, after a while, she moves on.

JOAN walks to an old lamppost with a bicycle locked onto it- The bike is baby blue, with cream wheels. It's beautiful, sparkling in this otherwise decaying street.

Reaching the bike, JOAN stops. Looks at it for a moment, taking it in as if it were someone else's. She looks side to side, checking if someone can see: Carefully, JOAN opens the lock, slides the bike away from the pole (making sure not to scratch it) and rides up the street. She passes the camera on the left, which follows halfway before letting her disappear.

FADE OUT

INT. FRANKS ROOM - LATER

FRANK stands with his back turned to us, watching the frantic thrusts of mating deer. After a moment, he retakes his original place.

FRANK

She loved that bike. Her father gave it to her, for her 10th birthday. Didn't want to drive her to school anymore. But she doesn't think of it like that: he loved her, she'd think. Loves her- the bike is proof!

There is something like bitterness in his voice now, some anger to offset his usually cold presentation.

FRANK (cont.)

Her mother hit her, when she was smaller. Yelled when she cried. But then later, she had her bike, and she had her father's love with it- it was what she had left. And she cared for it, worried for it. Locked it up, oiled the chain, changed the combination. And she could ride it, ride until she forgot what was behind her.

FRANK sniffs sharply, straightening his back. He is back to how he was before now, back to just telling us what we see.

She was paranoid about it. Little Joan and her bike, staring down the sidewalk. Angry, protective, desperate to hold on. Thieves and vandals, she said. Thieves and vandals, beware.

A small smile plays across his face, regretful and real. He seems almost ashamed of its appearance.

Nobody ever stole it. Make of that what you will.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME BREAKROOM - 15:20

MARY GINA HARPER sits at a round table in a kind of recreational room: various board games and decks of cards lay scattered around. An old sit-com plays on a TV to MARY's upper left. To MARY's right sit her two children, TOM and ANNA. They're 8 and 11, respectively. Framing the three are two silhouettes. These are MARY's parents, henceforth known as MOM and DAD or NANNA and POPPY, depending on if it is MARY or the children speaking to them. DAD sits completely still, empty eyes searching the children's faces.

NANNA

Did you have a nice trip here, honey?

She seems to be speaking to TOM, who, absorbed in the sit-com, gives no answer. MARY seems restless, wanting something to happen. She flicks her fingers, looking from her children to her parents.

MARY

Did he eat already, mom?

NANNA

A little while ago.

MARY

Did *you* eat?

NANNA seems not to have heard: she's making funny faces at ANNA, who humours her.

MARY

Mom

NANNA

What was that, honey?

MARY tucks her hair behind her ear, checking her watch. She doesn't seem to want to be there at all.

TOM

Can I go to the bathroom, mom?

MARY

Ask your NANNA, sweetie

TOM looks at his grandmother, giving an impish smile and wiggling his eyebrows.

NANNA

Why *of course* you can! It's down the hall to the left.

TOM gets up, walking to the left, and recedes down the corridor. The camera tracks him. TOM stops in front of a large sign indicating the WC to the right: he looks back to his grandmother, who is no longer in frame. Seemingly not getting a reaction, he follows her previous instructions and walks off to the right. An old man in a wheelchair is pushed by, a heavyset nurse wheeling him along. As the man in the wheelchair passes where TOM was standing less than a minute ago, TOM reappears. He seems confused, dodging the wheelchair as if he were crossing a street. TOM follows the signs to the bathroom, and disappears again.

We cut back to MARY and the others, now viewed far more closely. POPPY, who has been sitting silently so far, coughs. NANNA swats him sharply on the shoulder

(Simultaneously)

NANNA

Cover your *mouth*, Harry.

MARY

Don't hit him, Mom!

MOM looks confused by that, gesturing as if she never did.

MARY

You already almost got moved apart because you kept being mean to him. People can see, you know.

NANNA

I love him, Mary, I'm not mean to him-

MARY

I know you do, mom, but you have to go easier on him.

NANNA

I'm nice to him. I've always been nice to him- it's you who isn't nice to people. You aren't nice to me, you were never nice to Robert...

MARY seems taken aback by this. She sits still for a moment, hand on ANNA's shoulder. POPS coughs again, spit dripping onto his already stained shirt

MARY
(subdued)

Doesn't he have any- can you get him some clean clothes, mom? Just a... just a shirt.

MOM has noticed that something is wrong:

NANNA
How is your dad, sweetie?

Before ANNA can answer, MARY interjects:

MARY
Robert's gone, mom. Go get dad a shirt.

NANNA's upper lip trembles as she stands, pushing herself up from POP's chair. Her veined, long fingers grip hard enough that the chair almost tumbles. Her shoulders and head are out of frame now. NANNA's head appears again as she gives POP a kiss on the top of his head. The camera follows as she gets up again.

NANNA (reproachfully)
I am *nice* to him.

As she turns and heads down the hallway (POP's glazed eyes still in frame), she wipes her nose with the back of her hand.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME LOBBY - 15:36

We cut to large, brass coloured elevator doors. With a ding, they open to reveal NANNA and a cleaning lady, standing with a mop and a cart. The cleaning lady pushes past NANNA, who is drying her tears with the base of her palm. NANNA walks out of the elevator, turning right. The camera tracks. We cut again, now looking out from next to an old man sitting on a salmon couch. This is JOHN. NANNA, standing diagonally to the left of us, is visibly disoriented, looking around as if searching for why she is there. She walks towards us, looking just to the right of the camera.

NANNA
I'm sorry, I think I'm lost. Do you know where we are?

JOHN looks in the direction she is speaking towards. Finding nothing there, he decides she must be talking to him.

JOHN
Well, what are you looking for?

NANNA blinks, unsure.

NANNA

I... I was looking for-

JOHN

We're in the lobby.

NANNA

Thanks. I was looking for something, wasn't I?

JOHN shrugs, chews his lip. He takes his right shoe off, massaging his apparently painful foot.

JOHN

What's your name?

NANNA pauses for a second, watching JOHN.

NANNA

You don't think it was something serious, was it?

JOHN

Can't have been all too pressing.

NANNA nods, seems relieved by this news.

NANNA

So, how's your day been?

JOHN

It's been good. My great-grandson kicked me in the shin-

NANNA

You have a *great-grandson*?

JOHN

I'm old, aren't I?

He chuckles, looks at her. She looks back, some sadness creeping into her eyes.

NANNA

We're all getting there.

She smiles at JOHN. They sit like that for a while, lost in their little worlds. They seem like schoolchildren, kicking their feet feeling their hearts quicken for the first time.

A sleeping, lightly drooling old woman on a self-operated purple wheelchair drives by behind them. NANNA and JOHN don't let it bother them.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME BREAKROOM

MARY and the kids sit, watching POPPY. There seems to be nothing there, nothing hiding behind the vacant space of POPPY'S eyes. He gazes at TOM and ANNA, or in their direction: His eyes aren't focused on anything, instead slowly drifting completely without recognition.

We cut into a close-up on ANNA, her face filling the frame:

ANNA

Are... how are you, Poppy?

The name is ridiculous, and she knows it- but maybe he'll recognise it, maybe he'll recognise *her*. We cut in on POPPY'S face, blank and staring. His mouth is open, yellowed teeth jutting out from under his unshaven lip. We cut to TOM, just as close: he is crying, silently. He doesn't want to, didn't expect this. He's too old for crying, isn't he? We cut back to POPPY, who sticks his tongue out at us.

INT. FRANKS ROOM - EVEN LATER

FRANK

We're all getting there.

He picks at his fingernails, sniffs.

FRANK (cont'd)

Some of us more than others, it looks like.

There's a melancholy hidden in the usual cruelty of his smile.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

We cut suddenly from the darkness, the screen now dominated by a young woman's face. This is LAURIE HARPER, JOAN HARPER's older sister.

LAURIE is being filmed by someone, filmed close: we are watching her through some type of camcorder, shaky and grainy. The camera remains centred on her face, no matter how she moves. There is complete love in the way she is filmed.

None of the rest of her is shown, nothing other than her is allowed in: we watch her, and we fall in love with every little movement that dances across her face.

She seems to be strumming a guitar and, laughing, she sings:

LAURIE

My love gave me a cherry, it had no stone
My love gave me a chicken, it had no bone
My love gave me a story, that has no end
My baby gave me a baby, with no cryin'

How can there be a cherry that has no stone?
How can there be a chicken that has no bone?
How can there be a story that has no end?
How can there be a baby with no cryin'?

A cherry, when it's blooming, it has no stone
A chicken when it's pipping, it has no bone
The story of our love, it has no end
And when a baby's sleeping, there's no cryin'

LAURIE looks up into our eyes when she finishes, a teasing smile spread over her face. Suddenly her eyes turn to horror, widen:

BANG.

A deafening gunshot from behind the camera. We see her scream, rush towards us. She calls our name, but we don't hear her anymore.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. FUNERAL RECEPTION - 14:00

FADE IN

LAURIE'S small frame draws a shadow across high windows, cold light hitting from behind her. She is wearing a black dress, not particularly well fitting. To her right stands a huge banquet table covered in cold cuts and cheeses. A massive ham sits at the very right of the screen, and a small sign welcoming you to the funeral reception sits within view.

JOAN HARPER rushes in, hugging onto LAURIE as hard as she can. LAURIE, who seems to have been keeping it in until now, starts crying. A low, tormented wail escapes her lips as she sobs into her little sister's hair.

It is unclear who is helping whom to stand. Gingerly, their mother enters frame. She watches for a moment as her daughter's cry into one another.

MOTHER

I-

LAURIE

(looking up at her)

Don't- please, mom... don't even-

She is interrupted by JOAN fiercely pressing her head into her chest. JOAN seems defiant of her mother, hateful even.

LAURIE

He's not- he's not even here. I loved him and now he's dead. He *shot himself*, mom, and my *FATHER* couldn't show-

MOTHER

(brusquely)

Something came up.

LAURIE stays silent. MARY GINA HARPER, along with TOM and ANNA, enters frame. She rushes in to hold LAURIE and JOAN, their three bodies resembling the BANDINI PIETÀ. Other people, unknown to us, start moving into frame to get food. Some try to offer condolences to the three, but are stopped by how obviously unwelcome their presence is. The rest just mill around, ignoring the scene in front of them. NANNA and POPPY move in with the collective, POPPY grabbing at snacks. NANNA smacks his hands away from taking the whole ham.

We cut close to LAURIE'S face, viewed from 3/4. She blinks hard and fast, keeping the tears back. All the noise from the others tones out, leaving us with dull chatter. All of it is meaningless, deafened by the gunshot we heard. We watch as a single tear rolls down LAURIE'S cheek.

INT. FRANKS ROOM - LATER STILL

FRANK stands on a chair, adjusting the projector that is apparently above us. His shirt is drawn up, exposing a hungered stomach. He doesn't seem to be wearing any underwear. Having pressed a button that reduces the screen to grey static, he gets off the chair slowly, standing with his back to us. Suddenly, in some fit of rage or frustration, the chair is thrown to the side. He turns to us, violence in the slowness of his movement. The camera moves in, his face filling the frame just as LAURIE'S did before.

FRANK

I don't know... I don't know why he did it. Maybe she does. Maybe it was her- maybe she cheated on him, maybe he loved her too much. Maybe it was just all too much.

(beat)

None of it ever makes sense, does it?

INT. BUS - THE DAY AFTER THE FUNERAL

JOAN HARPER sits in a skirt and leather jacket, looking at her phone. An old man in his 90's sits next to her. This is PHILIP: PHILIP wears a jacket too warm for the weather. His hair is frizzy, sticking up above his ears: his hands, long and veined, grip at his legs. There is nothing but kindness in his eyes.

Some sort of CENSURE TAKER is moving down the crowded bus, showing a QR code to the passengers. Some scan it, some irritately motioning for him to go along. Some don't react at all. The CENSURE TAKER makes his way up to PHILIP and JOAN. He stands with his back to us, head and shoulders out of frame. PHILIP smiles at him hopefully, excited for interaction.

PHILIP

(In a quiet voice)

What is this you're showing me here?

CENSURE TAKER

(Unintelligible)...survey. For the bus service.

PHILIP

Oh! ok- let me...

PHILIP tries to open his jacket, but his hands are shaking too much to hold the zipper. He tries again, an apologetic smile on his face. The smile disappears when he looks up, evidently seeing something in the CENSURE TAKER's expression. His face turns to shame as he tries again to open his jacket. JOAN looks up for a second, then looks down. PHILIP looks to her, hoping to catch her glance, but fails. His ears red, he looks back at the CENSURE TAKER. Stammeringly, he tries to make some explanation. The CENSURE TAKER moves on, cutting him off.

PHILIP is left to sit, ashamed.

INT. FRANKS ROOM - TOO LATE

FRANK sits slumped against the wall, screen barely reaching the top of his hair. He is crumpled, staring at the ceiling. FRANK stays there for a while, blinking faster than he used to. Gazing at us from above his cheekbones, he motions around

FRANK
Were you expecting more?

FADE OUT

INT. THEATER - 20:09

JACOB KLIMT sits on stage, still masturbating. After exactly a minute, he finishes. Wiping his hands with the handkerchief and tossing it aside, he buttons his pants and gets up. His fly is left open. Walking down the steps, he strides up the alley. He is heading for the camera, moving towards us: he climbs over a row of chairs, then another, moving carelessly over the men who sit in them. They all turn to watch as he goes by, the last man one row ahead of us. We see their faces now, perplexed and wondering. JACOB KLIMT gets right in front of the camera, staring us down. Everything is silent now, the apprehension of the audience bleeding into our own.

JACOB KLIMT
I *am* God.

CUT TO BLACK