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A WEEKEND IN LOGATEC
BY EVDOKIMOS TSOLAKIDIS

Characters

Markos, 49 years old
Elena, 48 years old
Young Markos, 19 years old
Stelios, 19 years old

Scene One

A hotel room in Logatec, Slovenia. A Sunday afternoon in late July. Markos is asleep. There's a knock on the door.

Markos: Who the hell can it be at this time of day? Yes, one moment... I'm coming... one moment... (on his way to the door) fucking up my nap the fucking shit... (opens the door, shocked, seeing his wife in front of him). How did you get here? (Pause) What are you doing here? (Pause) Where are the kids? (pause) Is anything wrong with the kids? (pause) Say something (pause) Why aren't you speaking? (pause) Why are you looking at me like this? (pause) Will you fucking answer the question? Are the kids alright?

(Elena enters the room, Markos closes the door)

Elena: The kids are fine.

Markos: How did you get here? When did you arrive?

Elena: In the morning.

Markos: You've been here since the morning?

Elena: I landed in Ljubljana in the morning. From the airport, I went straight to the train station, got the first train and came here. I've been here for around two hours, maybe three.

Markos: Your stuff?

Elena: My stuff! I just have a small suitcase, the black one. I left it at the hotel.

Markos: Which hotel?

Elena: There aren't many. It's just two of them. Don't worry I'm not staying here, I'll be at the other hotel.

Markos: Worry? What are you talking about? Why would I worry?

Elena: I'm ruining your plans.

Markos: What plans, honey? What plans? (pause) Why are you here?

Elena: Why do you come here?

Markos: You know why I come here.

Elena: No, I don't. For three years now, right before we go on holiday you want to spend a weekend in Logatec.

Markos: Honey, we've been through it so many times. It never seemed to bother you before. Both you and the kids have seen it as dad's weird habit and have laughed and joked about it. I don't understand what's the matter now. Once a year, for just a fucking weekend, I want to be alone. To make a resolution, see where I stand, plan the year ahead. I arrived yesterday and I'm going tomorrow. Every time, you pick me up from the airport and we all go on our holiday. It's what we would do tomorrow. I don't understand what's the matter this year.

Elena: Why Logatec?

Markos: You could ask this about whichever place I chose to go.

Elena: Yes, but why here?

Markos: I just wanted to make sure I'd be completely alone and would not meet any friends or acquaintances. I remembered that one time with my course mate from college, Stelios, when we were returning to Ljubljana from

Koper by train. We had stopped here and I had thought that everyone passes by here to get to Pyrin, Isola and Koper but no one ever stops here but the locals. And that was it. When I decided to find a place to be by myself, Logatec was the first one that came to mind and I picked it without thinking twice.

Elena: To be by yourself? What have we done to you to make you want to be by yourself?

Markos: Come, sit down. (*Elena sits*) Do you want to eat anything? Do you want me to order something? Would you prefer going out?

Elena: I saw you taking a walk at the woods.

Markos: You stalked me?

Elena: I didn't stalk you. I saw you randomly and came after you. And then I saw you going to the restaurant. You ate all by yourself. You never eat alone. You always wait for me to come back from work, even when you're starving, just because you don't like to eat alone. How could you do this? How could you?

Markos: Do what? How did I eat alone once in my lifetime?

Elena: Who did you eat with yesterday? And who are you having dinner with tonight?

Markos: It seems that I'm having dinner with you. Yesterday I dined by myself. Two times, then, twice and not once, I ate by myself.

Elena: So, now, I ruined your plans?

Markos: What plans?

Elena: I mean your peace of mind, your need to contemplate on the year that went by.

Markos: Don't be sarcastic. You didn't ruin anything for me. On the contrary, I'm happy to see you because I was starting to get bored. I was surprised, of course, but still happy. Maybe two nights are too many in the end. From next year on, I'll be coming on Saturday and leaving by Sunday.

Elena: You said you will not come back.

Markos: Okay, I'm not coming back.

Elena: Promise?

Markos: Promise. (*they kiss*) Where are the kids?

Elena: At my mother's.

Markos: What did you tell them?

Elena: The truth. That I'm going to meet dad. The only lie I told was that you knew I was coming. They wanted to come with me. I promised that we can all go together next year. So, you get to come one more, last time. (*laughter*)

Markos: I don't like your suspicion. Normally I should be very upset now. I don't know how you can always change my mind like this.

Elena: And I don't like your need for contemplation of the year that went by and being alone.

Markos: So, I do not have the right to have some time, some moments, to myself?

Elena: No, you don't. I'm still too in love with you to leave you alone. If you want to be by yourself, you can go upstairs to your room and spend not only a weekend but the whole week if you like, just by yourself. But I want to know where you are, I want to feel you and smell you. (*she kisses him*)

Markos: Let's go get your stuff from the hotel. I hope they don't charge us since you didn't stay. And then, I can show you the town while it's still daytime. There's nothing great to see, just some old castle's ruins and two or three churches, but it's nice and quiet. In the evening, we can have dinner where you saw me eating earlier. They make a great mushroom soup. Let's call the kids. (*Takes out his mobile phone*)

Elena: Let's go, we'll call them on the way. God, what a mad man I married!

(*exit*)

Interlude (Morrissey and Siouxsie song)

Scene Two

Same hotel room thirty years ago. Summer evening. Door opens, Markos and Stelios enter with their stuff.

Markos: Mate, how did we fuck up like this?

Stelios: It's your fault.

Markos: My fault? You insisted to get off with them!

Stelios: You kept telling me that they're flirting with us all the time, now jerk off alone, you jackass.

Markos: But you could see them staring and smiling you had already decided which one each of us will fuck, now you jerk off asshole!

Stelios: But I told them 'Hi, I'm Stelios and this is my friend, Markos' and they smiled!

Markos: They smiled but they didn't even tell us their names.

Stelios: Didn't you see the one I liked, literally putting her tits on my face when she was getting her stuff? Why would she do that? For her friend? She was looking at me!

Markos: And this was reason enough for you to get off the train! Even if they liked us and they wanted to hit it off with us, where would we do it, asshole? In the fields?

Stelios: Here, in the hotel, dickhead.

Markos: You're out of your mind! They wouldn't come to the hotel, jerk, they are not whores! It's a small town and everyone knows each other. We were lucky not to have got our asses kicked by the guy who picked them up with his car.

Stelios: It must have been my girl's father. Did you see how they were laughing in the car? We made complete fools of ourselves. We have to promise we're not saying this story to anyone ever!

Markos: I don't give a shit, mate. The only thing I care about is not to miss the flight tomorrow. When is the first train from here?

Stelios: At 7am. We have enough time. We take off at 11am, we may even have time to see Ljubljana a bit. What's this place's name again? Loupadec?

Markos: Logatec, you dickhead, not Loupadec!

Stelios: Do you think there are any open bars at this time? Wanna have a drink or something?

Markos: You go if you want I'm beat, I'll take a shower and go to sleep. It's already 10pm.

Stelios: Good idea! I go first. *(Takes his clothes off and runs into the shower first. Markos does the same. They meet at the bathroom's door and start fighting naked. At some point, Stelios immobilizes Markos with a grip and Markos attempts to give him a blowjob. Stelios pulls away abruptly).* What are you doing, you cunt? What are you doing? *(Stands up and nervously starts putting his clothes back on).* You a faggot?

Markos: Calm down, nothing happened, please calm down.

Stelios: I should have realized you're a faggot. *(Packing his stuff).* I'd fucking kill you if I could. Fuck off, you fucking faggot. *(Spits on him and goes away).*

Markos lights up a cigarette while lights dim. Nothing Else Matters (Apocalyptica cover).

Scene Three

Same hotel room, the way it looked in Scene One. Late night. Enter Markos with Elena and her stuff. They have eaten, had drinks and are in a great mood.

Elena: He just could not believe that I'm your wife! I don't get it, what have you told him?

Markos: Nothing, we've never spoken to each other. But he saw me eating alone last night and earlier today and it was probably a surprise for him to see me again with a woman.

Elena: The previous years, when you came alone, did you usually eat at his tavern?

Markos: Yes. You think he remembers me from last year and the year before?

Elena: I have no idea. But these people are like detectives, they observe everything. He almost asked us for our passports! (laughter). It was so nice! I wasn't expecting my visit here to go so well in the end. I was ready for the worst.

Markos: What do you mean?

Elena: I expected to find you with another woman. I was ready to scratch her eyes off!

Markos: Please, not again. Even if I had a mistress, why would I bring her to Logatec?

Elena: Maybe she was from this town.

Markos: If she was local I'd tell her to meet me in Ljubljana. Logatec is not Paris after all!

Elena: You men are so weird. I'll never understand you.

Markos: Are there any other men, apart from me, who make it difficult for you to understand them?

Elena: Only one is enough! You are the best representative of them all!

Markos: I'll go take a shower.

Elena: I go first! *(They take off their clothes fast in order to make it to the shower and meet at the door. They teasingly push each other and start kissing. Change of lighting. They make love. Rockwell's Knife is playing).*

Lights back on. Markos lying on the floor. Elena in the bathroom.

Elena: What time does the train leave?

Markos: 7.

Elena: Nice, we can easily get 6 hours of sleep. Tomorrow is going to be a tough day. I hope we get to see some of Ljubljana before we get to the airport. *(Comes out of the bathroom)* What time do we take off?

Markos: At 11. We must pick up the kids from your parents', go home and pack, it will take all day.

Elena: No worries, it's all sorted. Our stuff is in the car. Dad is going to drive the kids to the airport in our car and mum will follow him in their car. They'll leave everything at the airport and go home. How do you find me?

Markos: Extraordinary!

Elena: Extraordinary and loving you *(she kisses him)*.

Markos: I love you, too.

Elena: Won't you take a shower?

Markos: I will *(Elena goes to sleep and Markos walks to the bathroom naked. As he approaches the bathroom's door he becomes aware of the audience's presence, looks at his wife, takes a chair and brings it to the proscenium. He sits down and the space becomes darker. There's a light on Markos, who speaks to the audience, naked).*

I love my wife. There is no one in the world that I love more than my wife and kids. However, there is a shadow, a shadow within me, it's been there for as long as I remember myself, I try to make it go away with work but it doesn't, it just becomes greater, it suffocates me. It sneaks in my dreams and doesn't let me breathe. I work all the time, without stopping, without a schedule, I go to the office in the morning and return home at night. Most of the time I work at the weekends, too. So that I don't think of anything else but work. And I'm good at it, not thinking. I don't think of anything that could destroy my life, hurt the people I love or put me in trouble. I'm scared. Yes, I'm scared of myself. My fucking self and its passions, I'm scared of it so much. That's why I work without ever stopping. That's why I love my wife. That's why I love my wife and kids more than anything else in the world. So that I can hate myself, uninterrupted. So that I can hate myself completely, to the point where I'd spit him on the face and harm him severely. Exactly like Stelios spat on me, exactly like he wanted to beat me up 30 years ago, in this very room. And I, like a fucking coward, I told him 'Calm down, what's the matter? Calm down'. I let this little shit ridicule me in the worst possible way, I let him spit on my face and the only thing I could muster was 'Calm down'. The following day I saw him at the train station and was petrified and felt so relieved when he got on another wagon. Later that day, at the airport, the thought that we'd sit close to each other on the plane horrified me and I was pleased to see he sat 20 seats ahead of me. And after that, I had to go through the nightmare that he might tell everyone at the university. I was talking to course mates and constantly suspected that they knew, was meeting him and wanted to vanish. And instead of wanting to hurt him for how he made me feel I wanted to hurt myself. So, I hooked up with Marianna at once, as I knew she liked me anyway. I did the same with Dina and Stella, to clear the air. All these years I've seen people being the way they feel like being, despite all the ridicule, bullying and social exclusion, just because they accept themselves. And there I was, jerking off, thinking of Kostas, Nikos, Bill and George while fucking Soula, Toula, Koula and Voula. I forgot about Stelios, it's funny, right? Most of the times I jerk off I think of Stelios, my conqueror. Then, I read about the Stockholm Syndrome and all my questions were answered. I also read that most homophobic people are secretly gay so I decided to become gay friendly, to clear the air again. All my life I've pretended I'm straight but gay friendly. What a bloody fool! (pause) How did I get here? Good question. You've heard people saying that the murderer always returns to the crime scene. That's what I did. Three years ago, I went to see my son playing basketball and guess who I found sitting next to me? It was Stelios, who had come to see his own son playing in the opposing team. We had a warm conversation, only after I rushed to show him

my son, just to assure him that everything is alright with me and he has nothing to fear. The game finished, we left and never saw each other again. That day, I felt like I needed something badly. To come back here. To get closure. I did not know how, I just thought that coming here would somehow give me perspective, stop that event from growing in my head, stop it from coming back to haunt me in my sleep. The first time I didn't feel anything, it was like I had been lobotomized, I was like a zombie not feeling a thing. I went away feeling disappointed and guilty for having left my family alone for two days. Last year, I felt angry, I relived the whole thing from the beginning, in every detail and left in fury, wanting to find Stelios and crush his face. I never found the courage to do it though, so I came back this year, in hopes to feel even angrier, go back and finally confront him, get the closure I've craved for 30 years now, be free of the guilt and the nightmares. But feelings don't come as we like. The whole thing seemed pretty ridiculous this time and I decided to never come back and accept the idea that I'll live my whole life in weakness and guilt. For the first time, I felt that I can somehow accept myself and maybe even love myself a little. And then, Elena showed up. There are no coincidences. I could wake her up right now, tell her everything and finally live the rest of my life in line with my desires. Be my true self for the first time. (pause) I won't do it. I'll carry on living the conservative life I've chosen since my adolescence; I'll keep my great secret to myself and take it with me when I go. In a parallel universe, I may even be living like a real person. In this one, I'll carry on living like a puppet, I'll keep on living in the way other people want me to be and not how I want to be. It does not matter. What matters is that I love my wife and I love nothing else in the world more than my wife and my kids. This is what matters. Only this. Nothing else.

He stands up, puts the chair back to its place, there is dim light in the room now, he goes to Elena who is asleep and kisses her and walks into the bathroom. Sound of the shower.

Darkness.

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