

GET SCHLOSSED

An Original Screenplay
(loosely inspired by real
events)

by

Stewart A Fergus

[PLEASE NOTE: This was
written in BRITISH English]

BLACK SCREEN

"As the old saying **ALMOST** goes:

Others may wage war; you, happy Austria, make wine."

FADE IN:

INT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

We see a wall of celebration, with a shelf proudly displaying, full-frontal, 3 books, all by Rainer Müller:

* Book 1: "The Schizophrenic Eagle" cover: 2 headed-eagle of Austria.

* Book 2: "The Grapes of Ruth" cover: idyllic vineyard.

* Book 3: "The Fourth Man Speaks" cover: Black+White 1950s-style silhouette of a man in a long coat wearing a hat, walking away under an arch (as in "The Third Man").

Two of the books have stickers with quoted endorsements.

Beside the books is an award, an acrylic ink-pot and quill, and above it a photo of the author receiving it in a grand black tie ceremony.

RAINER (V.O.)

It all looks rather impressive,
doesn't it? It doesn't mean much
though, at the end of the day.

Next to this is another framed photo of the university literary set, with Rainer clearly front and centre. They are a pretentious bunch, poseurs, Young Fogies, some wearing cravats, some smoking pipes. His girlfriend, Uschi, is next to him, holding his arm lovingly.

RAINER (V.O.)

Don't get me wrong, I'm rather
proud of my humble offspring, but
they're all getting on a bit now.

Completing the shrine are several framed copies of worthy reviews, endorsing the novels with high ratings.

RAINER (V.O.)

What can I say? The well has run
dry. Maybe I struck lucky. Maybe
the gods were toying with me all
along. Who knows?

We follow the day of RAINER Müller, 30ish, fit, working from home. We see the clock at various times of the day.

He is propped up on the bed, laptop balanced on his knee. He stares at a blank page, fingers hovering over the keyboard.

RAINER (V.O.)
To be an accomplished author, with
longevity, one requires three
attributes...

Nothing. He closes the lid with a slight shake of his head. He rubs his stubbly chin and sleepy eyes. He yawns.

RAINER (V.O.)
Passion...

Still in nightwear, he sits at his desktop, consulting a well-thumbed note-pad. Scratching his head thoughtfully, his expression fluctuates between concentration and chagrin. He looks up at the heavens, pleadingly.

RAINER (V.O.)
... inspiration...

EXT. VIENNA STREET - DAY

Rainer ambles along, soaking up the sun. He parks himself at an outside café table. After gazing aimlessly for a while, he concentrates on his mobile phone.

RAINER (V.O.)
... and discipline...

INT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

Back at his desk, he pulls a paper from the printer, looks at it in disgust.

RAINER (V.O.)
Of course, a modicum of talent in
the mix would also help.

He scrunches the paper and tosses it to the paper basket. He shakes his head in disbelief as he misses... again.

RAINER (V.O.)
(sighs)
So, there you have it. One requires
three basic attributes, and I,
regrettably, appear to be lacking
in all of them - including a basic
grasp of maths.

He picks up a photo of himself and Uschi, very formally dressed at a gala event. They look the epitome of success. He smiles weakly, turns the photo face down, then enacts a silent scream of frustration, hands flailing in the air.

RAINER (V.O.)
Naturally, perseverance as well,
right?

He half-heartedly flicks through the channels on the TV.

INT. VIENNA OFFICE - DAY

USCHI, 30s, a power dresser, holds court in her beautiful corner office, with its magnificent view over Vienna's Old City Centre, with three of her creative team. They are all young and dressed impeccably.

They take turns to put up various glossy suggestions for her magazine's front cover, "Vienna Art & Culture". Uschi clearly loves what she does.

INT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

Rainer grabs the pages from the printer, casts a cursory glance over them, and puts them on the desk. He flops down on the sofa, and takes a nap.

INT. VIENNA STUDY - NIGHT

Uschi wakes up Rainer with a kiss.

USCHI
Good day?

He shrugs.

RAINER
Exhausting.

He grasps the air, as if trying to catch a dream with his fingers.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Just can't figure out what to...

USCHI
It'll come. Happens to the best of them.

RAINER
Not a complete waste, though.

He points to the article. She picks it up. It has a "Town & Country" post-it note on top.

USCHI
"Cats or Dogs?"... Deep.

RAINER

One of the burning issues of our day.

USCHI

Indubitably so. I was just saying to Ralf this morning, which should we get rid of first, cats or dogs?

RAINER

(smiling)

You've clearly caught the essence of my piece.

USCHI

The important thing is you're getting published - that helps keep your name out there.

With a mischievous smile, she starts to get undressed.

USCHI (CONT'D)

Seems a shame to waste the afternoon.

Rainer gives a pronounced mock sigh.

RAINER

Well, if I must...

She hits him with her blouse. He joins in the rapid disrobing, then suddenly pauses.

RAINER (CONT'D)

I don't mean to dampen the mood, but Karin called to remind me my dad's birthday's coming up.

USCHI

(sighs)

I suppose we'll have to go?

RAINER

Don't be like that. I visit your parents.

USCHI

Come on, Rainer. They live fifteen minutes away - not a hundred years ago. Your mum doesn't even have a dishwasher.

RAINER

(indignant)

Yes she does!

Uschi looks at him incredulously.

RAINER (CONT'D)
My father.

INT. VIENNA BEDROOM - DAY

Rainer puts down the phone, ashen-faced, tears in his eyes.

Uschi comes in from the bathroom, fixing her earrings. She is on autopilot and doesn't look at him.

USCHI
Have you seen my phone?

Rainer doesn't move.

USCHI (CONT'D)
Rainer!

She stops and looks at him.

USCHI (CONT'D)
Oh!

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Small country church, overlooked by a sprawling vineyard.

Dignified funeral, with a large turnout. FATHER JOSEF, a portly, kind-faced, red-nosed priest concludes the service.

FATHER JOSEF
For Thine is the Kingdom,
The Power and the Glory,
Forever and Ever,
Amen.

Everyone crosses themselves, except Rainer and Uschi.

ALL
Amen.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - LATER

Mourners disperse, shaking hands and giving condolences to Rainer and his sister, KARIN, late 20s. Father Josef clasps Rainer's hand solemnly.

FATHER JOSEF
Brother Hansi will be wining and dining with the Heavenly Host this evening... and our Lord Jesus knew a thing or two about winemaking - although he was known to take some unorthodox shortcuts.

He leaves to comfort Rainer's mother, LOTTE, late 50s, a comely woman who has clearly done manual work her whole life.

Karin wipes away a tear.

KARIN

He worked himself into an early grave. The doctor warned him...

Rainer comforts her, putting his arm around her.

KARIN (CONT'D)

You're going to have to come back and help for a while.

RAINER

What?!

KARIN

She can't cope alone. I'm doing all I can, but, - what with the kids and all - it isn't enough.

RAINER

Okay. I'll see what I can do.

KARIN

Come on, Rainer, you haven't published anything in years. You just faff about in Vienna. Mum needs you HERE... NOW!

Rainer is about to protest, but thinks better of it. Karin starts to CRY.

KARIN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I don't want to fight. I'm just so tired. I've been lumbered with two small kids at home, and two bigger ones here.

RAINER

You're right. I'll stay for a while. Help mum get back on her feet. Okay?

Karin nods, mouths a "thank you" and squeezes his arm.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - LATER

Dusk closes in. Lotte bids farewell to the final guests at the door. ERICH, 60-ish, a strong, thick-set man with an avuncular demeanour, clasps her hands.

ERICH

If there's anything you need, Lotte, just holler.

Lotte, fighting back a tear, nods her head. She gives him a hug, but can't speak.

Rainer, Karin, and Uschi are standing to one side.

RAINER

What are we going to do with the vineyard? Mum will never be able to manage it on her own.

USCHI

I'm very sorry about your father, but you two have to face reality.

She checks to make sure Lotte is out of earshot.

USCHI (CONT'D)

You've got to sell up and move on. It's the only practical solution.

They are horrified.

Uschi reads the situation, and heads into the house.

USCHI (CONT'D)

Ah. Okay. Not the right time... I'll, er..., just go and...

They watch her go, momentarily speechless.

KARIN

We can't turf mum out of her own home.

Rainer notices ANNA, late 20s, an attractive woman rather primly dressed for her age, meandering in the vineyard backing on to the terrace. Karin follows his gaze.

KARIN (CONT'D)

You haven't met dad's doctor yet.
(shouting)
Anna!

Karin beckons her to join them. She takes a few steps then unceremoniously falls headlong out of sight.

Alarmed, they start to move towards her, but she jumps back up and dusts herself down.

KARIN (CONT'D)

You okay?

ANNA

Sure. Not my best dive, but...

RAINER

I don't know. I'd give it a 9 out of 10 for artistic interpretation.

Anna smiles appreciatively.

ANNA

It was the dismount, right? I need to work on the dismount.

KARIN

Rainer, Anna Kuri. Anna, idiot brother.

They shake hands.

ANNA

Wow!

RAINER

What?

ANNA

Sorry. Not used to such soft hands around here. Normally they're like sandpaper. Ah, but, of course, you're an "author".

Karin smirks at him. Rainer gives a small COUGH.

KARIN

Don't you remember Anna from school?

He looks puzzled.

ANNA

No reason why you should. I was in the year behind Karin, so GENERATIONS behind you.

RAINER

(fake old voice)
Ooh, you younguns...

KARIN

I'd better go and check on mum.

She leaves them alone on the terrace.

ANNA

Sorry for your loss. I know everyone says that, but even with the practice I get, I never...

RAINER

Thanks. Not the most eloquent response, either, I'm afraid. I always feel awkward in these situations, but, hey, thanks for all you did for my father. We all appreciate it very much.

BEAT Anna is the first to break the awkward silence.

ANNA

He was quite the raconteur, your old man. You'd be amazed what goes on in this sleepy hollow.

RAINER

(smiling)

He was also a real blether.

ANNA

I suppose that's where you get your gift from. He was very proud of you, you know.

RAINER

What on earth for? I always figured I was a huge disappointment - I know Karin thinks so! I mean, my work... It's not what they would call *real* work.

ANNA

He loved to show me the pictures of you getting your Oscar, and meeting the Great and the Good.

RAINER

Sorry about that. My partner, Uschi, handles all that stuff - you know, social media, publicity and whatnot. All part of the game. I'm guessing the tale may have grown in the telling... a little bit... maybe even a lot.

ANNA

He gave me copies of your books. Quite insistent, actually.

RAINER

(expectantly)

Oh, really?

ANNA

Yes. They make great door stops.

She smiles.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Not bad for a country lad. He was very excited about your next one. Said you were planning a Big One.

Rainer wells up with tears.

RAINER

Oh, my God. He'll never see it now.
I've wasted so much... I'm sorry...

He shakes his head, turns away and stumbles into the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DRIVE - NIGHT

Rainer leans into Uschi's Mercedes, as she prepares to leave.

RAINER

It's just for a while. Mum's going
to need all the help she can get
with the bureaucratic shit storm
that's about to hit.

USCHI

(smiling supportively)
I get it.

Rainer notices two burly farmers helping a very unstable
Father Josef into the back of a car. He waves.

RAINER

Thanks, Uncle Josef.

Father Josef waves back weakly. Rainer turns back to Uschi.

USCHI

Uncle?

RAINER

Yup. Mum's brother. There's a black
sheep in every family. Why don't
you come down next weekend?

USCHI

Or you could come to Vienna?

RAINER

You've got the wheels.

USCHI

I'll see what I can do.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rainer clears up while Lotte sits nursing a coffee at the
huge rustic table.

LOTTE

Don't forget the lawyer this
afternoon.

RAINER

I won't, mum. You okay?

She is fighting back tears, refusing to show weakness. He comforts her.

LOTTE

It's just hitting me now. After all
the...

(sniff)

Isn't that stupid?

RAINER

Yes.

She looks up at him surprised. They both LAUGH. She hugs him lovingly.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Everything is now spick and span. Rainer, coffee in hand, exits to...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

...sit on a sofa. Suddenly, he is startled, nearly spilling his coffee, when he notices MAX, a wiry 30ish intense figure, fast asleep in a hammock.

RAINER

Jesus, Max. Do you want my mother
to go through another funeral? Max?

He prods Max. Nothing.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

Max gratefully devours a Wurstsemmel (Austrian sandwich) and coffee.

MAX

Thanks. I needed that.

RAINER

You DO know you could have slept
INSIDE, right? We've got plenty of
spare floors.

Max puts his hand to his heart, feigning emotion.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Great to see you again. My dad
always had a soft spot for you. No
idea why.

MAX

Me neither, but I really rated your
old man. A cool guy.

RAINER

You still working for that agri-
lab?

MAX

Jesus, no. That was years ago. Not
really my scene. All those rules
and regulations. I work freelance
now. Bit of this, a bit of that, a
bit of the other. Mostly the other.

RAINER

(smiling)

A buccaneering entrepreneur?

MAX

If you say so.

He pulls out a tin and offers Rainer a joint.

RAINER

Thanks, but I'd better keep a clear
head for this afternoon.

BEAT

RAINER (CONT'D)

Maybe one for later.

He takes one, hesitates, then takes a second.

MAX

That's my boy.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Rainer, Karin and Lotte meet with the LAWYER.

LAWYER

So, that's it. Very straight
forward really. He's left
everything to you.

He puts down the will. They show no emotion.

RAINER

Apart from the vineyard, do we know
what else there is?

KARIN

Rainer!

RAINER

What's the matter? I'm just being
practical for once. Mum's going to
need money until we get next
season's wine ready.

Lotte puts a reassuring hand on Karin's arm.

LAWYER

Actually, I'm glad you brought that up. Here's the rub. The estate's got very large debts, secured on the land and house. It's basically mortgaged to the hilt. Also, it's not been doing well recently - you know, your dad's poor health and all, plus the replanting...

Karin elbows Rainer.

KARIN

That's what I've been trying to tell you.

LOTTE

Shhh! Let him finish.

LAWYER

Thank you, Frau Müller. Because of his health, the last few years, Hansi sold most of the grapes to the cooperative, rather than make it himself. He's been dipping into his savings to keep afloat.

He ponders how to phrase things.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

The long and the short of it is: the cupboard is bare. He owes back taxes, and the banks may well call their loans now that the business is, er,... unviable.

Rainer and Karin are in shock. Lotte is far more sanguine. She gently pats them on the arm.

LOTTE

Something'll turn up. It always does.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Rainer & Max walk the fields. Rainer absentmindedly fixes things on the vines as he walks.

MAX

How's your mum bearing up?

RAINER

Keeping busy. Do you need any apricot jam?

Max LAUGHS.

RAINER (CONT'D)

I don't know how she stays so positive. She's basically bankrupt. According to the broker, the land value wouldn't cover the debts. She'd be left with nothing. We can't increase production until the new fields come on tap - and some of the others need upgrading as well. On top of that we have the bloody taxman.

MAX

Can't you help?

RAINER

You're kidding?

MAX

But, you're a successful writer.

RAINER

If only...

MAX

What are you talking about? The books, the awards. You must be rolling in it.

RAINER

They were successful... CRITICALLY.

MAX

You mean...

RAINER

Yup. I probably know half the buyers personally.

MAX

I enjoyed them.

RAINER

There you go - more than half! I've been trying to come up with something more commercial, but my muse has buggered off.

MAX

The bitch! Never around when you need 'em. What does Uschi make of all this?

RAINER

Got to give her credit, she's always believed in me, bless her cotton socks - even after - what is it now? - nearly two years, with Sweet Fanny Adams to show for it.

MAX

So, what's stopping you?

RAINER

Lack of talent, mostly.

Max smiles.

RAINER (CONT'D)

In a nutshell, I only make enough to pay my way, but that's about it.

MAX

Am I missing something here? Doesn't Uschi have a pre-existing condition: wealth? Can't she help your mum, you know, until everything's fixed. You can always say she's paying to keep your mother here, and not there!

RAINER

Cunning, but it's her dad that's loaded. We barely scrape by.

Max looks surprised.

MAX

What does she see in you then?

RAINER

I'm her bit of rough, I suppose.

They both CHUCKLE at the absurdity.

MAX

You know, that sort always reverts back to their own kind, eventually.

RAINER

Nooo. We're different.

MAX

Of course you are.

RAINER

No. We ARE.

MAX

She keeps you locked up all day in her apartment, only to have her evil way with you at night. Classic Stockholm Syndrome.

RAINER

She does take me for walkies, now and then.

MAX

Ah, ain't that sweet?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

They sit silently. Max looks thoughtfully at his glass of wine.

MAX

You remember HydroMaxilate, right?

RAINER

(chuckles)

That's a blast from the past. Your magic elixir in Uni. What about it?

MAX

Do you understand how your dad's business works? The money side, not the wine?

RAINER

My dad handled all that stuff - not particularly well, as we've now discovered. Why?

MAX

It's actually quite simple.

He sees Rainer's clueless expression, and looks to the heavens.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh, boy! Lord save us from artists. Not a clue about the real world. Now, pay attention. I'll try to explain this in a way even you can understand. You pay duty on every bottle you produce.

RAINER

(defensively)

I know that. We have to put those bloody stickers over the top of every bottle.

MAX

But did you know, the blood-suckers in the tax department don't trust anybody, so they have very clever tables where they calculate, based on weather, soil, age, etc., how much you SHOULD produce each year per hectare? You then have to have a VERY good argument to get away with less.

RAINER

What's that got to do with HydroMaxilate?

MAX

Isn't it obvious? If we - how shall I put it? - "supplement" your wine, you can get, say, 10% higher yield. Anything over a "normal" yield can "disappear", as far as the tax man is concerned - so free of duty, VAT and income tax.

RAINER

What would we do with the extra?

MAX

We sell it for cash, and refloat the business. And all very quickly. You're lucky all your wine's drunk young - you don't have to wait years for it to mature.

Rainer looks at his glass, alarmed.

RAINER

But the wine! How...?

MAX

Believe me, no one will notice.

RAINER

It's sacrilege.

MAX

So is your mother losing her home.

Rainer looks at Max.

RAINER

But, isn't it... illegal?

MAX

Illegal, smeagol. I prefer to look on it as... Creative Capitalism. You got any better ideas?

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

If you try to do everything by the book, you're screwed. Your family will lose everything.

RAINER

An incisive précis of our predicament.

MAX

(impatiently)

Don't go poetic on me now. Your old man worked his rocks off his whole life, paying all those taxes...

RAINER

...until recently.

MAX

Good point. But he never got anything back in return - he didn't even get to see his pension. They owe him, dude... at least a break. All I'm saying is, think about it. Try it for a while... until you come out from under.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

A beautiful baroque Town Square, with a highly ornamental monument (Pestsäule) to the Great Plague in the middle. Rainer is approached by PETER STADLER, the portly local tax man. He is a fastidious man, very carefully dressed, down to the pocket watch and chain. He is the same vintage as Rainer, but looks about a decade older. He has a habit of brushing imaginary fluff off his jacket, and rubbing his moustache.

STADLER

My, my. Rainer Müller. The prodigal son hath returned.

Rainer looks puzzled.

RAINER

Er... Hello. I'm sorry, do we...?

STADLER

We do indeed. We were in the same class together. I'm Peter Stadler.

RAINER

Stadler? Stadler? Oh, I remember now. Your dad was the postman, right?

Stadler perceptively bristles.

STADLER

Yes. The *postman's* son. I'm sorry about your father, but the affairs of state grind on. I assume you are aware that the estate's taxes are in arrears.

RAINER

You work for the Tax Office?

STADLER

I AM the Tax Office.

RAINER

No shit! That's great. A friend in the belly of the beast.

Stadler looks momentarily stunned.

FLASHBACK

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids return to changing room after exercise. A portly YOUNG STADLER, aged 10, is the last to enter.

INT. SCHOOL CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Stadler undresses for a shower, a towel around his waist. Some kids pounce on him. YOUNG SCHWARTZ, a bit of a Neanderthal, grabs his towel from behind and throws it aimlessly backwards.

POV YOUNG STADLER

He swings around just in time to see YOUNG MÜLLER instinctively catching it.

The kids push him outside.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

A naked Young Stadler BANGS on the door.

YOUNG STADLER

Let me in, you bastards. Müller!
Stop fuckin' about!

The school bell RINGS, and kids pour out of the classrooms for break time. They LAUGH at Young Stadler, BANGING desperately on the door with one hand, while the other attempts to preserve his modesty.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

STADLER

A "friend", indeed. It would be a shame to lose such a beautiful vineyard.

Stadler doffs his hat and leaves. Rainer is puzzled by his coldness.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Rainer watches as his father's old car and machines are taken away. He looks at the cash disappointed. Max consoles him. They pass through the house to the terrace at the back.

MAX

Nice try, but this ain't going to last you five minutes.

RAINER

I should have focussed and written my novel, instead of farting about all this time. Then maybe I'd have some cash.

MAX

Now you know how the other half lives.

RAINER

I had no idea my dad was so hocked up to the eyeballs.

MAX

What can I say? A proud man. But he's left you in the shit. You've got to make a decision, Rainer. What's it to be?

RAINER

But the risks.

MAX

Do nothing, and your mother will be homeless by Christmas.

Rainer looks very worried, deep in thought.

MAX (CONT'D)

Look, we can start small, give it a try. If it works, then we'll be partners. I'll be honest - I need this as much as you do.

RAINER

I thought you were doing well.

MAX

Nah, not really. Didn't want to bother you with my problems at a time like this.

RAINER

Sorry, man. I didn't...

MAX

Doesn't matter now. It's time to shit or get off the pot, Rainer. What have you got to lose? You take care of the wine; I'll handle the rest. How does that sound?

EXT. FARMHOUSE TERRACE - DAY

Anna joins them.

ANNA

Hi, guys. I've been looking for you, Rainer. Your mum's had a turn.

RAINER

What!?

ANNA

Don't worry. She's fine. She felt a bit wobbly. She's been overdoing it, and got a bit dehydrated. Try to make sure she gets some rest.

RAINER

Jesus, why didn't she tell me? Thanks, Anna. I'd better go see how she is. Ciao.

He shakes her hand and rushes to the house.

EXT. FARMHOUSE TERRACE - LATER

Rainer comes out as Max and Anna say farewell. She waves to him as she gets on her bike; he waves back, with a weak smile. Max joins him.

MAX

Nice girl. Can't believe she's still single. How's your mum?

RAINER

Fine. Fine. I wish I could say she was resting...

MAX

Shocker! She's had a stressful time. Better keep an eye on her.

RAINER
(mildly offended)
Of course I will.

He rubs his chin thoughtfully.

RAINER (CONT'D)
The way I see it, I don't really
have much choice, do I?

MAX
We are where we are.

RAINER
One condition, though.

MAX
Go on.

RAINER
My mother and sister must never
know anything about this - just in
case it all goes tits up.

Max suddenly becomes animated like we haven't seen before.

MAX
Abso-bloody-lutely. I'm telling
you, this stuff is truly awesome,
even if I say so myself. All those
misspent years in the lab have
finally paid off. But we need a new
name, one that does justice to my
pièce de résistance.

RAINER
Hydromaxilate doesn't do it for you
any more?

MAX
Bleagh. And Ingredient X sounds
like something Wile E Coyote would
use to blow up a bridge.

RAINER
How about... the Max Factor?

Max beams.

MAX
I like it.

They shake hands.

INT. VIENNA STUDY - DAY

Uschi watches as Rainer packs a small suitcase, and some books into a cardboard box.

RAINER

Sorry about all this. We never knew my dad was in such a deep hole - and my mum has no idea about this stuff.

USCHI

And you do?!

RAINER

Not a clue.

USCHI

This shouldn't take long then.

RAINER

Luckily, Max is going to give me a hand.

USCHI

Is that wise? There's something a bit... I don't know...

RAINER

Beggars can't be choosers. Unless you want to come and help me...

USCHI

I'm sure he'll be a great asset.

RAINER

Thought so. I get it - he's a bit... unorthodox, maybe, but we've been friends since uni. I just want to get this shit sorted, make sure my mum's okay, and be back in your bosomly embrace as quickly as possible.

USCHI

What about the next War and Prejudice?

RAINER

(impatient)

I'm still working on it, okay?

Uschi comforts him.

USCHI

Sorry. I know you are. I know you are.

RAINER

It's just... Never mind. Look, why don't you come as well? Peace and quiet. Beautiful fresh air.

USCHI

You know my jobs here. Meetings. Schmoozing. Events. The commute would be a killer.

RAINER

I would so make it worth your while.

USCHI

Tempting as that is...

RAINER

How about weekends, then?

USCHI

You come HERE at the weekends, and I promise to make it worth YOUR while.

RAINER

When you put it like that... Clean air's overrated, anyway.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Rainer and Max stand on a hill overlooking a vineyard. It is a beautiful setting on a beautiful day.

MAX

Just keep telling yourself it's for the greater good. No one is going to get hurt, I promise. I've outdone myself - the new improved Max Factor is the Champagne of Adulteration. You'll see.

RAINER

Okay. Okay. Let's do this.

MAX

Wise man. We're going to have to do this carefully and discretely. No one can know what we're doing. We don't want any "misunderstandings".

Voice over as

EXT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Max inspects a small building in an industrial estate. He shakes hands with the agent.

MAX (V.O.)

We need space somewhere far away from the village because everyone here knows everyone else's business. It must be anonymous.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Max takes delivery of parts.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

The building looks like a warehouse, with lots of boxes. Behind them, Max constructs a large still, out of sight.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

The still is working. Max and Rainer wait as the first drops fall into a beaker. They embrace happily, if nervously.

MAX

You're going to have to do something about your marketing. Your dad was a brilliant vintner, but a crap marketeer.

He holds up a simple label - a black and white line drawing of a humble cellar and the words "Keller Müller" on it.

MAX (CONT'D)

My mum puts better labels on her home-made pickles.

RAINER

What? You want colour?

MAX

It's all about image. A better picture. A new name. Make it sound grander than it is. You know, like the French call any old shed a château.

RAINER

You mean, something like Château Lafite Rothschild?

MAX

That's taken.

RAINER
(feigning shock)
Oh, no!

Max sarcastically puts a consoling hand on Rainer's shoulder.

RAINER (CONT'D)
SCHLOSS Lafite Rothschild?

MAX
Right track, but...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

A several storey high May Pole has been erected, with half a dozen or so circular garlands around the top. The town is in festive mood. Stalls have been erected in the square selling wine, beer, sausages, and so forth. Many people are in traditional costume, especially the kids. Father Josef is doing the rounds, never without a glass in his hand.

Stadler, beaming obsequiously, approaches Anna.

STADLER
Dr Kuri. Nice to see you relaxing.
May I invite you?

Anna smiles politely.

ANNA
Thank you, Herr Stadler.

STADLER
Peter, please.

Anna sees Father Josef bump into a lamppost, trip and fall into a bush. She nods in his direction.

ANNA
Sorry, Herr Stadler. Duty calls.
Another time. Thank you, anyway.

Disappointed, Stadler starts to walk away.

STADLER
(to himself)
Peter. Please call me Peter!

He stops dead in his tracks, wide-eyed, when he sees Anna single-handedly lift the portly priest back to his feet. He mouths a silent "wow" to himself.

A brass band marches past Rainer's stall, followed by an orderly procession of kids. Rainer and Karin are busy serving wine out of unlabelled green two-litre bottles.

Uschi puts her hands over her ears.

USCHI
(shouting to be heard)
Could this be more cliché?

RAINER
(thick yokel accent)
What can Oi say? We country-folk
don't like no fancy music.

While everyone's attention is distracted by the band, Erich, clad in overalls in the next stand, stealthily exchanges some full bottles for empty ones in Rainer's stand.

USCHI
Oh my god, Rainer. In no time at all, you've gone from celebrated author to farm worker to... to barman. What next? When will this nightmare end?

RAINER
We're broke, Uschi. This is the last of my dad's wine. We need the cash. When my mum's safe, everything'll go back to normal.

Uschi looks at him sceptically.

Lotte, all decked out in traditional Dirndl, arrives with her black poodle, Schiko. They all greet each other, but it is Erich who gives her a glass of wine before they can.

LOTTE
Thank you, Erich. Always the gentleman. How's it going?

ERICH
Not bad.

He points to their bottles.

ERICH (CONT'D)
Them not so good. Probably 'cos Rainer's overdressed. It intimidates the punters.

Rainer, dressed in jeans and t-shirt, looks at him incredulously.

LOTTE
Never did like getting his hands dirty, that one.

RAINER
Pardon?!

LOTTE

You're welcome. I'm going for a coffee. Can you look after Schiko for me?

ERICH

May I invite you?

The kids look very surprised. Lotte is flattered.

LOTTE

Why, thank you, my noble knight in grubby overalls.

Erich beams, then hesitates.

KARIN

We'll watch things here. You go.

Lotte and Erich head off into the throng.

USCHI

I think I'll go home. I've got a big deadline coming up. I'll see you next weekend.

She gives Rainer and Karin each a peck on the cheek and leaves.

KARIN

(to Rainer)

You're not the only one who doesn't like getting his hands dirty.

Anna saunters up, with a big friendly smile. Karin gives her a glass of wine. She tries to pay, but they refuse the money.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - EVENING

The festivities are over. Max helps Rainer pack up. Karin is counting the money.

KARIN

I don't get it. How did we make so much?

RAINER

Maybe you calculated wrong.

KARIN

Never. I've been doing this for years and...

Erich interrupts.

ERICH

Me and some of the guys are going
back to my cellar. Want to join us?

RAINER

Sure. Thanks, Erich.
(to Max)
Come. This'll be fun.

KARIN

I've got to get home, but, you two -
play nice with the big kids, okay?

INT. ERICH'S CELLAR - NIGHT

Half a dozen guys, including Father Josef, are sitting on benches around a rough wooden table, with lots of glasses and simple food. One of the guys is KARL, the local policeman. They cut off bits of meat, some feeding scraps to Schiko.

Using a long pipette, Erich sucks some wine out of a wooden barrel.

ERICH

(proudly)

THIS is the Riesling. My best yet.

He fills everyone's glass from the pipette.

Max tugs on Rainer's sleeve. His speech is a little slurred.

MAX

I'm not sure I can drink any more.
How many different bloody varieties
can one guy have?

RAINER

This always happens when you visit
these guys' cellars. It's a ritual.
You've got to try all their stuff.

MAX

Why aren't you pissed?

RAINER

You're not supposed to drink the
whole glass!

MAX

NOW you tell me.

He watches Rainer sniff the wine, swirl it in the glass, take a sip and wash it around in his mouth. He nods appreciatively, then pours out the remainder under the table.

The camera pans under the table. Schiko is drinking from a water bowl. The dog YELPS as he is nearly hit by Rainer's glass. The wine lands in the bowl. The dog resumes drinking.

EXT. ERICH'S CELLAR - NIGHT

Erich bids farewell to his guests. Two of them support the priest into the back of a car and drive off with him. Most are okay, but Max is very unsteady... as is the dog.

RAINER

I'd better take you home.

MAX

You can't drive like this.

RAINER

Why not? You think Karl's going to stop me?

He points to the policeman slumped over the table.

EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Max has been dropped off. Rainer drives slowly, straddling the central line, hunched forward in concentration. He tousles the dog, sitting in the passenger seat.

RAINER

Did you have fun, old boy?

They drive around a corner.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Oh, oh! I've got to go.

He swerves the car off the road to the side, opens the door, and stumbles out. He staggers to a tree to relieve himself.

Schiko slides out of the car and wobbles over to the same tree.

CLOSE UP ON DOG - SLOW MOTION

Schiko unsteadily lifts his hind leg.

He totters.

He topples over backwards.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Rainer is lying peacefully splayed out on his bed, still dressed.

Suddenly Lotte barges in, and swipes him with a wet towel.

LOTTE

What did you do to my poor dog?

An angry dog with a very sore head lies flopped at the door staring at him.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Anna watches Rainer pruning some vines.

ANNA

Hi.

Rainer nearly jumps out of his skin.

RAINER

You scared the shit out of me.

ANNA

Sorry. I was passing by. Thought I'd check in on your mother. Should I be more concerned about you?

RAINER

I'm beyond help, I fear. How's she doing? Strong as a horse, that one.

He resumes pruning.

ANNA

You said it.

RAINER

I can definitely confirm her lungs are in fine working order. I got well and truly bollocked yesterday.

ANNA

I know. I had to check the dog as well.

RAINER

I...

ANNA

Hey... say no more. I don't need to know the sordid details.

RAINER

Probably wise. Not for the squeamish.

Anna smiles and watches him work for a moment.

ANNA

You seem to know your stuff.

RAINER

Amazing - everyone seems to think
I'm useless.

ANNA

That is what they say.

Rainer straightens up sharply and looks at her. She smiles.
Her phone RINGS. She raises her hand in apology.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Kuri... yes... what?... but...

(sighs)

Okay. I'm about 10 minutes away.

She hangs up.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Are you busy? I mean, could you
give me a hand?

RAINER

(surprised)

Sure.

INT. BARN - DAY

Anna is wearing rubber protection, standing behind a cow,
lying on the ground. She puts on arm-length gloves. Rainer
hovers nearby, not a clue what to do. The FARMER kneels at
the front of the cow, trying to keep her calm. Anna lifts the
cow's tail, and sticks her arm in.

ANNA

Rainer, hold her steady.

Rainer awkwardly struggles to stop the fidgeting cow from
moving. Anna moves her arm around inside, pushing and shoving
the unborn calf into the right position. She inserts a noose.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Okay, this is it.

She braces herself, pulls hard on the rope and slowly the
calf's front legs come out. Once the head is out, the rest
follows quickly, and the cow springs to its feet, turns
around, and starts licking her new calf. The farmer is
delighted.

Rainer looks at Anna in a new light, as she removes the
gloves and protective clothing.

RAINER

Do you do this a lot?

ANNA

If it's an emergency, like this.
The vet lives over an hour away.
Thanks for your help. They can
really kick when they want to.

RAINER

Do you deliver babies the same way?

ANNA

Always. Especially the stubborn
buggers. Tell you what, why don't
you come round for dinner tomorrow
night. It'll be nice to talk with
someone who has actually been out
of the village, for once.

RAINER

I'm being used, I see.

INT. TAX OFFICE - DAY

Rainer signs a document, passes it over the table to Stadler,
who then signs it with a flourish. He rubs his moustache as
he pulls the official stamp and ink-pad out of the drawer.

STADLER

I don't know why you're bothering.
You're just postponing the
inevitable.

RAINER

Surely you're a man of faith,
Stadler?

STADLER

Of course.

RAINER

Then I'm sure you'll be praying for
my success as well, like the good
Christian you are.

Stadler shrugs. Rainer looks at his watch.

STADLER

In a hurry? Well, so am I? We have
a council meeting this evening.
Some fool wants to build more
playfields for the kids. Waste of
money, if you ask me - they're all
hanging on their phones all day,
like zombies.

RAINER

Maybe if they had playfields, they
wouldn't be.

With a look of annoyance, Stadler bangs the stamp on the ink-pad, then meticulously places it on the document, and the copy. He applies blotting paper to dry it.

STADLER

Okay. Done. By law, we have to give you this extension - with interest, mind - but I am also required to remind you that, if you fail to meet the payment schedule, we will foreclose on you. Is that understood?

Rainer nods in the affirmative. Stadler hands Rainer his copy of the agreement. As Rainer disappears, Stadler takes out the survey map of the Müller farm. He eyes it covetously.

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - NIGHT

The table is only set for two.

RAINER

Oh, I didn't realise it was just the two of us.

ANNA

Not afraid, are you?

RAINER

There's safety in numbers! Who'll hear my screams?

ANNA

No one. The walls are padded.

He hands her a bottle of wine.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(impishly)
Spanish, is it?

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - LATER

The meal is over. They sit at the table, nursing wine glasses.

ANNA

I'm no expert, but this is... not bad at all.

RAINER

My dad was a master. A simple soul, but a genius in his own way. He taught me and my sister, but it wasn't for me.

ANNA

Are you still writing, you know,
while you're...?

RAINER

Mostly begging letters, I'm afraid.
Maybe it's the wine talking, but my
biggest fear right now isn't my
mum's vineyard - it's that I may
have already peaked as a writer,
and there's nothing left. Isn't
that selfish?

ANNA

(reassuringly)

No. I get it. I see it a lot. Fear
of impotence.

Rainer looks surprised.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Come on, Rainer. Enough with the
self-pity. It'll happen. No reason
why it shouldn't.

RAINER

Thank you - I think. I just can't
get... inspired. In the meantime,
while I wait for the apple to fall
on my head, I churn out short
stories and articles for
prestigious magazines, like Busty
Maidens and Pig Monthly.

ANNA

I never miss an issue. Don't worry.
It'll happen when you least expect
it. Let's drink to inspiration.

They CLINK their glasses.

RAINER

Okay, your turn. My life story took
a whole five minutes. How about
yours?

ANNA

Nothing much to tell. I trained as
a medic... obviously! One of these
days I might even sit the exams.

RAINER

Please, don't. You'll only go and
charge more.

ANNA

I knew there was a reason I should
have gone on and finished!

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I then did a couple of years with Doctors without Borders in Africa - Senegal, actually.

RAINER

Obviously.

ANNA

Then a couple of years in Boston, USA. That was great.

Rainer is both impressed and puzzled.

RAINER

Why'd you come back?

ANNA

My mother got sick.

RAINER

Oh, sorry to hear that. How is she?

ANNA

She's hanging on - thank goodness. She's all I have left.

RAINER

So, we're basically in the same boat. This must be Dullsville for you, though, after the Third World... and Africa.

ANNA

It's... beautiful countryside.

Rainer LAUGHS.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They may be simple folk here, but they're decent folk.

Rainer nods in assent.

RAINER

I'll give you that.

ANNA

Okay, your turn again. Tell me about your girlfriend.

RAINER

You're not trying to tell me you haven't already heard more than I probably know?

ANNA

Just that she only comes out at night and is afraid of garlic.

RAINER

Ah, you've been talking with my sister! No, Uschi is very bright. A successful editor. Driven. Going straight to the top - wherever that is.

ANNA

So, what does she see in you?

RAINER

Ha, ha! So, the gloves are off, I see! I suppose it must be my charm, sophistication, and panache.

Anna nearly chokes.

ANNA

No, seriously?

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Rainer harvesting the grapes with Karin and casual labor.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Rainer brings in a load of grapes to the cellar.

Barrels line the walls. There are now some new extra large metal cauldrons.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Fermentation tanks. Max working on the still.

INT. VIENNA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rainer visiting Uschi, but distance starting to grow.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Rainer transfers grape must to barrels of different sizes.

END MONTAGE

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Rainer has fallen asleep in front of his laptop.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

TIME LAPSE The Cellar rapidly fills up with barrels.

RAINER (V.O.)
We need more space.

EXT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Max opens the door surreptitiously. He checks the coast is clear, then brings out a cart of dirt.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Rainer, in shorts and vest, is excavating, hacking at the back wall with a pickaxe.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Rainer and Max carefully ensure the roof and walls are well-supported.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Rainer hides the extension with a false wall of shelving. Max brings two glasses of wine.

MAX
To a job well done.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rainer locks up for the night. He spots the cover on the electricity meter has fallen open. He is about to close it when he notices that it's whirring round like a dervish.

RAINER
That's odd.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Max rolls in a wooden barrel with an X marked on the side.

RAINER
Subtle!

The moment has arrived. Rainer takes some wine out with a pipette. They experiment with the mix.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Sure it's safe?

Max takes a big sip, swirls it around his mouth, and swallows.

He collapses on the floor in a seizure. Rainer nearly has a heart attack. He goes to help his friend.

Max stops flailing, sits up and looks at him, with one eyebrow raised.

MAX
Happy now?

RAINER
Wanker!

Rainer tries the wine nervously. He licks his lips. He is impressed.

MAX
I've been tweaking the formula. Not bad, eh?

RAINER
What about side effects?

MAX
Besides the hairy feet, nothing worth mentioning. Relax. I've been drinking this stuff for years. It hasn't done me any harm.

RAINER
Scholars differ on this point! Okay, let's do this.

MAX
Did you get new labels?

Rainer pulls out a label, emblazoned with a magnificent castle.

Schloss Hapsburg-Müller

They both CHUCKLE at the conceit.

The camera pulls back as they get to work filling bottles and applying the labels.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler is watching Anna walking in the town square from the door of his office. He times it perfectly so that he exits just in time to bump into her. He raises his hat courteously.

STADLER
Good morning, Dr Kuri.

ANNA

Good morning to you, Herr Stadler.

Stadler winces with disappointment at the formality.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You seem very chipper today.

STADLER

And why not? It's a beautiful day.
And things are going my way.

ANNA

Really?

STADLER

Yes. I should be acquiring a very
nice property soon.

ANNA

How nice for you. Which one?

STADLER

I wouldn't want to jinx it, but
it's a substantial...

Anna sees Rainer enter the cafe on the square.

ANNA

Sorry, Herr Stadler, I've got to
rush. Good luck with your property.

Stadler watches crestfallen as she rushes to join Rainer.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rainer and Max finish for the night. They sit down with a
glass and some sandwiches. They are exhausted. Max notices
the floor around the cupboard looks disturbed.

MAX

That's odd.

They investigate, pulling the cupboard away from the wall. It
moves remarkably easily - it is on small casters. There is a
passage. Rainer is surprised. He fetches a torch, and finds a
light switch.

They are amazed to find a concealed room with an extensive
hydroponic marijuana installation.

MAX (CONT'D)

Respect!

RAINER

I'm beginning to wonder if I ever
really knew my old man.

MAX

Ironic though, isn't it? Your dad spent hours killing weeds outside, only to have a weed plantation inside. Kudos.

RAINER

Plantation!?! Get real. This is... what's the phrase they use? Oh, yes... for "recreational" purposes. It's bad enough what we're doing with the wine - we're not going into the drug trade as well.

MAX

You're not going to throw it away?

RAINER

Are you crazy? Because I'm not.

They light up one of the joints piled in a neat stack.

LOTTE (O.S.)

What are you two doing?

They nearly choke. Instinctively, they flap their arms to disperse the smoke. They turn to see Rainer's mum, disapproving expression, arms crossed, tapping one foot.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

Fat lot of good that's going to do.

Lotte stares at them sternly. They look like kids caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

Well, aren't you even going to offer me one from my own stash?

RAINER

Your STASH!?! Who are you?

He passes her his joint, and she takes a deep drag. Rainer and Max look at her, hugely impressed.

EXT. YARD - DAY

They have opened a Heurigen (wine pub) in the yard, with Karin's help, serving cold platters, etc. The place is packed.

CUSTOMER 1

Great wine, Rainer.
Congratulations.

CUSTOMER 2

Hansi would be so proud.

ANNA

You did it, Rainer. Your very first
own vintage.

She raises her glass to him.

ANNA (CONT'D)

And a decent drop of plonk it is
too.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rainer is asleep in front of his laptop. Piles of scrunched
up paper lie around him. Lotte covers him with a blanket. She
peeks at the screen: the page is headed "Dedication",
followed by "To my father, who never lost faith in me,
despite everything!". She smiles and wipes away a tear.

INT. VIENNA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rainer and Uschi are in bed. She is reading a magazine.

RAINER

You should have seen it. We
couldn't get everyone in.

USCHI

That's great, Rainer. Soon your
mother'll be back on her feet and
you can come back to the city.

Rainer amorously moves closer. He slides his hand under her
negligé and grabs her breasts. She recoils.

RAINER

(alarmed)
What's the matter?

USCHI

Do you have any idea how rough your
hands have become?

EXT. WINE FESTIVAL - DAY

Rainer receives award for his wine. Max watches from the
wings, very satisfied. Anna APPLAUDS. All his dad's cronies
congratulate him heartily.

Stadler looks on, very surprised and annoyed.

MAX

Congratulations, dude.

RAINER

To both of us, Max.

MAX

Bullshit, Rainer. It's your wine that's winning. I just thin it out a bit. You know what we should do now, don't you?

RAINER

Quit while we're ahead?

MAX

No, you wally! We should jack up the prices - at least 10 - 15%.

RAINER

We'll price ourselves out of the market!

MAX

(frustrated)

Firstly, no we won't. We plaster some "Award Winning" stickers prominently on the bottles. There are always enough snobs ready to pony up extra for that shit. Secondly, who cares? We're making the real money on the bulk stuff.

RAINER

(confused)

So how does that help us?

MAX

Optics, my friend. Optics. Don't look now but Stadler is eyeing you very suspiciously. You're paying down your debts faster than anyone expected. This gives you at least a plausible explanation.

RAINER

You're quite the Machiavelli, aren't you, Max?

MAX

I'll take that as a compliment...
It is, right?

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Rainer sits pensively at the table with his trophy.

MAX

What on earth's the matter? You won an award. For the first time in your life, you're actually making some real money.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

And you look like you've just been diagnosed with erectile dysfunction.

RAINER

That's the problem.

MAX

What?! You can't get it up?

RAINER

No, idiot. Isn't it all just a little too easy?

MAX

My God, aren't you a killjoy! Who would've thought the world would have ended on a Wednesday!?

Rainer looks at him, less than amused.

RAINER

I know. I know. But, besides feeling like a fraud, we've got another problem. How do we hide all this extra cash we're making? I only repay Stadler and the bank what I can reasonably explain.

MAX

You're right. Stadler's watching you like a hawk. He really doesn't like you, does he?

RAINER

The feeling's mutual, I assure you.

MAX

Where's the cash now?

Rainer points to the floor. They push the table aside, pull up a plank, and extract a large plastic bag of cash.

MAX (CONT'D)

I see what you mean.

RAINER

We can't use it without attracting attention, so it's got to disappear somewhere safe. Can you sort this?

Rainer gives Max the bag.

MAX

You're okay with that? Don't you want to count it, or something?

RAINER

Bit late now not to trust you.
You've already turned me to the
Dark Side. What more could you do?

INT. TAX OFFICE - DAY

Stadler comes out of his office into the general office. He sees Rainer leaving.

STADLER

What did he want? More time?

CLERK

No. He paid two installments.

STADLER

What?! His wine got a sympathy
vote, that's all. No way he's
making that much cash.

CLERK

Maybe he got a loan? His
girlfriend's loaded.

Stadler shakes his head dubiously. He becomes even more annoyed when he sees Rainer outside chatting with Anna.

EXT. CELLAR - DAY

Stadler pulls up outside Rainer's cellar. He gets out of the car and looks around carefully, stroking his moustache, looking for clues. He enters without knocking.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Rainer is washing bottles, his back turned to the door.

STADLER

Müller!

Rainer YELPS. He fumbles a bottle, saving it just before it could crash on the floor.

RAINER

Jesus, Stadler.

STADLER

You're very jumpy.

RAINER

Wouldn't you be? Why didn't you
call, or at least knock? Aren't
there rules about breaking and
entering?

STADLER

Not if we have probable cause.

RAINER

Probable cause for what?

STADLER

Fraud.

He wanders around, looking in every crevice. Rainer follows him. He gets visibly more nervous when Stadler passes the false wall.

RAINER

What're you talking about?

STADLER

You made a suspiciously large payment yesterday.

RAINER

I would have thought the government would be happy about that.

STADLER

Where'd the money come from?

Rainer gestures around the half-empty cellar.

RAINER

Where do you think? Look for yourself. Sales have been great since we won the medal, and my mum's a simple soul. She hates debt. She wants it off her back as fast as possible.

Stadler scans the cellar once more then stares at Rainer.

STADLER

I know you, Müller. Ever since we were kids, you and your type always thought you were better than the rest of us. But you're not.

He points to the cellar.

STADLER (CONT'D)

This was all your father's. HE was a brilliant winemaker. Everyone said so. Which is why I don't buy this sudden success story.

Rainer starts to protest. Stadler puts his hand up to stop him, then taps his nose.

STADLER (CONT'D)

Don't. I have a nose for these things. Something's going on. I'll find it, you'll see.

INT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Max bounces in and tosses Rainer a velvet bag which CLUNKS as he catches it. He looks inside. Gold coins.

MAX

Much less space, and safer. Hide them well, my friend. Now, what's all the drama you couldn't tell me over the phone?

INT. FARMHOUSE - LATER

Max and Rainer sit sombrely over the remains of a snack.

MAX

A real pain in the arse, this friend of yours. And what's with the Kaiser moustache?

RAINER

He's no friend of mine.

MAX

And there's the problem. What did you do to piss him off so much?

RAINER

No idea. Never really had much to do with him. He's always been a prickly bugger.

MAX

Whatever the reason, he's chomping at the bit now.

RAINER

Maybe, but he does have a point...

MAX

What?!

RAINER

Come on, Max. We can justify what we're doing however we like. I know I am! But it is - how shall I put it? - what might be considered, in some circles, somewhat "fiscally irregular".

(MORE)

RAINER (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is, Stadler, pissed off or not, is doing his job, and we'd be fools to underestimate him.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Lotte and Erich head out on a date, as Max enters.

RAINER

Behave yourselves. Make sure you have her back by midnight.

ERICH

(surprised)

Okay.

As the door closes behind them, Max tosses Rainer another bag of gold coins.

RAINER

You're not buying these in town, are you?

MAX

Give me some credit. Far and wide. Untraceable. Below the radar. Are you hiding them well, VERY well, just in case of a search?

RAINER

Yea, they're...

MAX

Don't tell me. If I don't know, I can't say.

RAINER

Okay. So, what's this brilliant new idea you've got?

MAX

Good news. The still is churning out Max Factor at a prodigious rate, much more than we're using. So, I've been thinking. Let's double the dose.

Rainer LAUGHS.

RAINER

You're kidding, right?

Max looks at him in all seriousness.

MAX

Before you say anything, I've tried it, and it's perfect.

Rainer hesitates.

RAINER
What about the logistics?

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

More excavations, new walls and ceilings.

MAX
We're going to need extra
reinforcement for this one - we're
going out under the road.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Scrupulously they put in much solider reinforcements, then
build a new shelving unit to hide the extension.

INT. FARMHOUSE - RAINER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lotte comes in and pulls back the curtains.

LOTTE
Come on, sleepy-head. You can't
spend all day in bed.

Rainer PROTESTS.

LOTTE (CONT'D)
Your own fault. You shouldn't stay
out all night. Besides, what must
Uschi be thinking of all your
gallivanting around?

Rainer GROANS.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INTERCUT Idyllic views of a year in the life of a vineyard,
to pastoral/bucolic music such as THE SHEPHERD'S SONG, from
Canteloube's Songs of the Auvergne.

- Rainer interacting with Anna, laughing and smiling
- Rainer with Uschi, always in the city, and with growing
detachment
- Rainer with Max, the best of friends
- Rainer with Karin, a visibly improving relationship as the
old tensions melt away.

END MONTAGE

INT. DOCTOR'S PRACTICE - DAY

Anna finishes tapping patient notes into her computer.

ANNA
(shouting)
Next!

Stadler enters.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Herr Stadler. What can I do for
you?

STADLER
A flu injection, Doctor, if you
please.

ANNA
Of course.

As they speak, Anna gets the vaccine from a small fridge, and puts it in a syringe, while Stadler takes off his jacket and rolls up his sleeve.

STADLER
There's a social next week at the
tennis club, Doctor. I was
wondering if...

ANNA
That's very kind of you, Herr
Stadler. Not really my thing.

STADLER
(nervously)
Maybe, dinner one night.

ANNA
(feeling awkward)
Again, Herr Stadler. Very kind.
But...

STADLER
Is it because of Müller?

ANNA
Of course not. You're my patient,
Herr Stadler. We're not allowed...

STADLER
But everyone here is your patient.

ANNA
You see my predicament.

Stadler, annoyed, fidgets just as Anna administers the injection.

STADLER

Be careful with him, Doctor. OUCH!

Anna applies a plaster over the puncture. Stadler angrily grabs his jacket and leaves.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler, still putting his jacket on, rushes out into the square and bumps into Rainer.

RAINER

Sorry, I...

Stadler scowls at him, then storms off. Rainer is puzzled.

ANNA (O.S.)

Psst!

He turns to see a skulking Anna beckoning him to come in.

INT. DOCTOR'S PRACTICE - DAY

Anna and Rainer sit in her surgery.

RAINER

What a strange thing to say!

ANNA

He doesn't like you much, that's pretty clear. A few weeks ago, he mentioned an incident at school, when we were kids. I'd forgotten all about it until then, but I remember coming out at break and he was naked, banging on the door of the changing rooms. WE all thought it was hilarious, but he might not have thought so... in hindsight.

RAINER

Oh, yes. I remember. That was Fredy Schwarz. He was a real bastard. I wonder what happened to him.

ANNA

Well, he seems to blame you.

RAINER

I had nothing to do with it. Why's he blaming me?

ANNA

Who knows? Whatever happened, he's still pissed about it... and you.

RAINER

O-k-a-y. Not sure there's much I can do about that now, what, twenty years later. Besides, he was no saint. I remember he put dead bugs in Ingrid Beilner's sandwiches once. He thought it was hysterical. It even grossed out Schwarz!

ANNA

Kids are bastards.

Rainer looks at her surprised.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I see them all the time. Trust me. Disgusting critters.

RAINER

Everyone at school got picked on at some point. Buggin's turn. The rest of us just let it go. But he...? What kind of psycho holds on to a grudge all these years?

ANNA

I know, he's weird. Anyway, be careful. He's got his eye on you.

RAINER

Thanks for the heads up. Scary for you, though - he clearly has "feelings".

Her face betrays her disgust at the thought.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Better make sure you file your tax return on time!

He is about to leave when he stops and turns back.

RAINER (CONT'D)

If that's right about doctors and patients? In a small place like this, how do you ever...?

ANNA

Where there's a will...

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Max and Rainer stare thoughtfully at the cellar, stuffed to the gills with filled bottles.

EXT. 2ND CELLAR - DAY

Max shakes hands with a dealer and they exchange contracts on a new cellar.

INT. 2ND CELLAR - DAY

The cellar has been equipped in a much more industrial, rather than artisanal, way. There are huge metal tanks lining the walls. This one oozes serious business.

RAINER

That was lucky. These cellars come up once in a blue moon. Ours has been in the family since Adam was a boy.

MAX

The best bit though - it's far away from prying eyes.

RAINER

Have you figured out yet what we're going to do with all the extra production? We've really reached the limit of what we can sell locally without raising eyebrows.

MAX

Way ahead of you. Everything's under control. You'll see tomorrow night.

EXT. 2ND CELLAR - NIGHT

A large milk tanker with Italian script and plates has backed up to the cellar. A hose leads from the tanker into the cellar. A pump WHIRRS.

Rainer and Max watch approvingly. They slap each other on the back as the driver packs up to go.

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - NIGHT

Small soiree. Rainer, Max and half a dozen others. Everyone appreciates the wine, and congratulates Rainer. He beams. Max pulls out some joints. He nods questioningly to Anna.

ANNA

If it's for medicinal purposes...

She opens the windows. Everyone joins in.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(taking a deep drag)

Wow! Good stuff! From the big, bad city, I suppose? Wouldn't mind getting some... you know... the next time you... for medicinal purposes, of course.

RAINER

Of course. Here, take these.

He hands her a few joints. She is surprised by his generosity. She puts them in a jewellery box, then sits next to him. His hand is on the back of the sofa.

As they get higher, she snuggles up to him. Rainer's arm absentmindedly moves down from the sofa onto her shoulder. Max looks at them a little surprised, then ignores it.

INT. VIENNA DINING-ROOM - NIGHT

Pretentious candlelit dinner party for 12, served by hired caterers. All are dressed formally, except Rainer, in a simple but smart polo shirt. While Uschi and Rainer are still warm with one another, Rainer seems less at home in this environment than he used to be.

Next to Uschi sits FRED, early 30s, sporty and very successful looking. Their body language is very informal. Uschi proudly holds up a glass of wine.

USCHI

THIS is from Rainer's first harvest.

FRED

Congratulations, Rainer. This is great stuff. I'm going to buy some for the bank. They'll love it.

RAINER

Thank you, Fred.

USCHI

But it's keeping him from his true calling, his next novel. He's only managed a few articles in months.

FRED

Maybe THIS is his true calling.

Uschi is horrified at the thought. She grabs Fred's arm.

USCHI

Don't even go there!

Fred rolls the wine around in his mouth.

FRED

I can't... I can't place the grape.
Usually I'm very good at this.

RAINER

My own secret blend.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Rainer plants saplings in a cleared field. Erich comes over.

ERICH

Makes my heart glad to see what
you've done with the old place.

RAINER

Thanks, Erich.

He takes a deep breath, and admires the scenery.

RAINER (CONT'D)

I never thought I would enjoy being
out in the fields so much.

ERICH

What's your secret, son?

Rainer looks surprised and defensive.

RAINER

Secret?

ERICH

Yea. Hansi was one of the best
hereabouts. But you come in, and
suddenly the place is booming.

RAINER

I learned everything from my old
man. Besides, we all know the prize
was a sympathy vote.

ERICH

No, it wasn't. It was a blind
tasting. I was one of the judges.

RAINER

(surprised and proud)
Really!?

Erich hesitates.

RAINER (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

Erich looks embarrassed.

ERICH

The truth be told, things ain't going too well. I was wondering how you do it...

RAINER

I don't know what to say, Erich. It's just application.

ERICH

(disappointed)

Yea, of course it is. I'm clutching at straws.

(frustrated)

It's... it's just been so difficult to make ends meet ever since they let in all that cheap crap from eastern Europe... or even the other side of the world. How can they make it and ship it so cheaply? I don't get it.

RAINER

I know what you mean. And no one cares about supporting local producers any more.

ERICH

Dead right. And I'll bet you anything you like they ain't got all the rules and taxes we got.

INT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - NIGHT

Max and Rainer are in a huddle.

MAX

This is not a good idea, Rainer.

RAINER

Mum says Erich was always there for my old man when he needed help.

MAX

Then help him the same way. Or give him some money.

RAINER

He's way too proud to take money.

MAX

It's too risky.

RAINER

He's in a big hole, just like dad.

Max can see he's lost the argument.

INT. ERICH'S KITCHEN - DAY

Rainer & Max give Erich the good news. His eyes tear up.

ERICH
Thank you. Thank you.

MAX
Remember: you can't tell a soul,
not even your family.

Erich zips his mouth.

ERICH
Promise.

RAINER
Especially not my mother.

ERICH
Promise.

INT. ERICH'S CELLAR - NIGHT

Erich is excavating his cellar.

EXT. KARIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Rainer skips out of a new mid-sized car and, with a sweeping gesture, proudly presents it to Karin as she hangs the washing on the line.

RAINER
Voilà.

KARIN
Nice. Very nice.

Rainer tosses the keys to her.

KARIN (CONT'D)
I don't have time to take it for a
spin now.

RAINER
No. It's yours.

KARIN
What!?

RAINER
Yea. One condition, though.

KARIN
(warily)
What?

RAINER
You drive me home.

KARIN
I can't take this.

RAINER
Of course you can. Just don't dent it - it's leased. It's my way of saying how much I appreciate all you've done for mum and dad over the years... with precious little help from me. I'm sorry it all got dumped on you, sis, really I am.

She gives him a hug. Rainer is visibly moved.

INT. ERICH'S CELLAR - NIGHT

Finishing touches to false wall.

EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Stadler is walking when he spots an Italian milk tanker and gets suspicious. He stops a passer-by and points at the tanker. The passer-by shakes his head.

INT. ANNA'S MUM'S HOUSE - DAY

Anna lets Rainer in.

ANNA
Thanks for coming.

RAINER
No problem. Where's the birthday girl?

Anna points to an old lady, wrapped in a blanket, sitting in a rocking chair in front of the fire.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, Mrs Bates.

MRS KURI
What!?

RAINER
(louder)
I said, "Happy Birthday, Mrs Kuri".

He hands her a bottle of wine.

MRS KURI

Finally, a present I can use. Thank you, young man.

She hands the bottle back.

MRS KURI (CONT'D)

Well, don't just stand there!

Rainer looks at Anna. She nods approval. He opens the bottle and pours a glass for the old lady.

MRS KURI (CONT'D)

Not bad. Not bad.

Rainer gestures with the bottle to Anna. She shakes her head.

ANNA

Thanks. I've still got surgery this afternoon.

Rainer puts the bottle down the other side of the room. Mrs Kuri points at the small table next to her.

MRS KURI

Hey, not so fast, sonny!

Rainer brings the bottle back. Anna shrugs.

ANNA

There are worse ways to go.

She takes him aside.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I don't know if it's important, but Stadler is asking around about some milk tankers. Weird, no? Why would there be Italian milk tankers here, of all places?

RAINER

Weird, indeed.

ANNA

After he apologised for his peculiar behaviour the other day - stress, he said - he's ramped up the creepiness to Factor 11. I can't even cross the square, without him suddenly pouncing out from nowhere.

RAINER

Tell him to bugger off.

ANNA

I've felt like it, believe me, but he's not the sort of guy to get on the wrong side of. You want to know what else is surreal? He's now a big fan of your Uschi. Praises her all the time.

RAINER

Uschi?!

ANNA

Yea, right. He talks about her a lot, how successful and rich she is, how good you are together, how she's made your career.

RAINER

Someone's been doing his homework. Huh! Maybe it isn't me he's fixated on. It's you.

Anna grimaces.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Would explain a lot. He thinks I'm standing in his way with you. How absurd.

Anna flinches. She puts on a brave face.

ANNA

Of course it is. How ridiculous - never *could* stand the sight of you.

RAINER

(with a warm smile)
Ditto, obviously.

He turns towards the door.

ANNA

There's something else. My assistant's cousin works in his office. Apparently he plans to buy your vineyard out of bankruptcy.

Rainer's face lights up.

RAINER

Now everything's making more sense. THAT'S why he's so pissed we're paying off the debt.

ANNA

Rainer... DO you know anything about these milk tankers? He thinks you do.

RAINER

I have a vineyard, not a dairy farm.

ANNA

That's what I told him. I'm so relieved.

She grips his arm in relief. In the background, Mrs Kuri surreptitiously refills her glass.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Rainer & Max look worried.

MAX

The tankers are our weakest link, but I can't think of any other way to get the stuff out. Can you?

RAINER

Business is good, but someone might notice if we build a pipeline to Italy.

MAX

It's virtually all gone now. Let's shut things down for a while.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

An intimate party. A few birthday balloons decorate the place. The birthday cake is half finished.

Max hands Rainer a beautiful ornate walking stick. He LAUGHS, and picks up a glass.

RAINER

Cheers! I'll soon be needing this.

Anna goes up to Uschi.

ANNA

Hi, I'm Anna Kuri. The doctor. Haven't seen you here since the funeral.

USCHI

I remember. Rainer told me you've worked abroad. Don't you find this place a little... quiet, boring?

ANNA

It's really not that bad, if you give it a chance.

USCHI

But there's nothing going on. No theatre. No opera. No...

ANNA

Maybe so, but people here are happy.

USCHI

But you must intend to move on. There can't be many opportunities here. What's your plan?

ANNA

Plan? Don't really have one. My mother...

USCHI

That's sad. You should always have a plan. Mine is to be the top publisher in Vienna; Rainer's is his novel - which he'll finish as soon as he moves back to the city.

ANNA

He's leaving?

USCHI

Of course he is. You don't expect him to waste his talent here, do you? Once he's sorted out his dad's mess, he's out of here.

Anna puts on a brave face, but can't hide her disappointment.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Half a dozen people sit in the pews waiting for the confessional. An old woman leaves the box. Erich takes her place.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSION BOX - DAY

ERICH

Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It is four years since my last confession.

FATHER JOSEF (O.S.)

Hmmm. Four decades, more like. What is your sin, my son?

ERICH

I have lust in my heart, father, and I am sinning in my work...

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The waiting parishioners are becoming impatient. Some are pacing; others keep checking their watches.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSION BOX - MOMENTS LATER

FATHER JOSEF
Your sins are truly forgiven. Go in
Peace.

ERICH (O.S.)
Thanks be to God.

We hear Erich leave, while Father Josef is deep in thought, rubbing his chin. Another PARISHIONER enters.

PARISHIONER (O.S.)
Bless me, father, for I have
sinned. It's been three weeks
since...

FATHER JOSEF
Your sins are truly forgiven. Go in
Peace.

PARISHIONER (O.S.)
(surprised)
Don't you want to hear them?

FATHER JOSEF
HE knows them already.

PARISHIONER (O.S.)
O-k-a-y. Thanks be to God.

The parishioner leaves. Father Josef leaps out of the box.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The waiting parishioners look confused when Father Josef rushes headlong for the door. He suddenly stops half way and turns back towards his flock. He makes the sign of the cross.

FATHER JOSEF
Your sins are truly forgiven. Go in
Peace.

ALL
(on autopilot)
Thanks be to God.

Father Josef rushes out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - AFTERNOON

Max hands Rainer another roll of gold coins. They sit, sipping scotch and smoking cigars.

MAX

Life is good, my friend.

RAINER

Indeed it is.

Rainer lifts up the whisky bottle.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Do you think we could...?

They both look thoughtful for a moment.

MAX

You know what, it'd probably work.

RAINER

Yea, but let's not tempt fate. Sales are good. The tax repayments should be cleared on time, and the bank debts are coming down to more manageable levels.

MAX

Agreed. Let's not push our luck.

They CLINK their glasses in a toast.

RAINER

Thanks, Max. Thanks for everything. Especially for my mum.

MAX

Hey, thank YOU. It takes two to tango. If you weren't such a wizard with the wine, this wouldn't work.

He spots Father Josef approaching.

MAX (CONT'D)

Good afternoon, Father.

RAINER

Hi, Uncle Josef. Mum's not here at the moment.

They stand up out of courtesy and offer him a chair.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Scotch?

MAX

Cigar?

FATHER JOSEF
(licking his lips)
It would be impolite to refuse.

Sitting down, the priest gratefully accepts the whisky and cigar.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)
Your health.

MAX & RAINER
Cheers.

The priest savours the whisky very thoughtfully.

FATHER JOSEF
(mischievously)
Excellent brew. Your own?

MAX
Father?

FATHER JOSEF
I haven't seen you in church with your sainted mother since you came back, Rainer.

RAINER
I'm not here most weekends.

FATHER JOSEF
Ah, *that* must be it.

The priest puffs on his cigar thoughtfully.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)
Do you believe in God, my son?

RAINER
(uncomfortable, and clearly lying)
Of course, uncle.

FATHER JOSEF
And you, Maximilian?

Max nods.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)
It's a cliché, I know, but I really do believe God moves in mysterious ways.

Max and Rainer look at each other, puzzled where this is going.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)

You see, the collection plate barely covers the church utilities these days, let alone anything else.

RAINER

(guiltily)

Of course, uncle, if you're looking for a contribution, we'd be happy...

FATHER JOSEF

Surely you don't think that's why I came and accepted your kind hospitality?

Now they feel even more guilty.

MAX

Sorry, Father.

FATHER JOSEF

The thing is, the church has a small vineyard, and the modest income from that helps keep us afloat. As you know, wine prices are...

(he crosses himself)

...shit, while costs keep going up.

RAINER

We'd be happy to help in any way we can, uncle.

FATHER JOSEF

That's very kind, my son, but I believe the help I need goes beyond the vines themselves.

Rainer and Max start to feel uncomfortable.

MAX

You've lost me, Father.

FATHER JOSEF

We already have more than enough faithful parishioners who volunteer in the vineyard. No, I believe the Lord has chosen you, in our time of need, to save the church.

They look surprised. The priest takes another appreciative sip of the scotch, then a puff on the cigar, taking his time.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)

He has sent you with your miracle potion just in time...

INT. CHURCH WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

A very sweaty Max and Rainer dig an extension at the back of the church cellar.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The Priest stands with Rainer and Max at the altar. He pours each a glass of wine from an unmarked bottle. Rainer and Max pick up a glass each, but put them back guiltily when the Priest starts to pray.

FATHER JOSEF

Dear Heavenly Father, we give thanks for our bounty. Bless the endeavours of your humble servants, Rainer and Maximilian, as they selflessly work to save your humble house, and help us serve your will at all times. Amen.

MAX & RAINER

(crossing themselves)

Amen.

Tentatively, they sip the wine. The Priest nods approvingly.

FATHER JOSEF

Impressive. May God bless you!

Erich shuffles in and lights a candle. He notices them at the altar and tries to sneak away. Max spots him.

MAX

(loudly)

Hey, Erich. Join us.

(sotto voce)

Sorry, Father.

Erich reluctantly approaches. Guilt is written all over him.

RAINER

Ah, ha! Mystery solved. It was *Erich* who told...

FATHER JOSEF

It was God's will, my son.

He gives Erich a glass of wine.

ERICH

I promise, I haven't told anyone... human. Sorry, Father.

FATHER JOSEF

It seems my mother has some explaining to do.

RAINER

No harm done, I suppose. Cheers.

They toast each other.

ERICH

Is this...?

The others all nod.

ERICH (CONT'D)

It's good.

MAX

How's your own?

ERICH

Great. It's amazing. Makes me wonder what I've been doing all these years. All that hard graft to scrape a living, then Max comes along with his magic potion and... Bob's your uncle - suddenly I can breathe again.

RAINER

(worried)

Remember what we said about...

ERICH

Don't worry. I'm doin' what you said: payin' down the debts. The Ferrari won't arrive until next week.

MAX

What!?

Erich shakes his head with a smile. He turns to Rainer.

ERICH

The thing is, I've got a couple of friends, your dad's friends as well... who really need...

Rainer and Max look alarmed.

MAX

But, we... The risks...

Erich turns to Father Josef, who smiles at them benignly. Rainer's and Max's will melts away.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Max attends to the still, which is now much bigger. Lots of barrels, with a big "X" on them, are piling up by the walls.

INT. ANOTHER CELLAR - NIGHT

Lots of excavation and building work.

INT. YET ANOTHER CELLAR - NIGHT

More excavation.

INT. TAX OFFICE - DAY

Rainer hands Stadler a cheque.

RAINER

That's it, I believe. The final instalment.

Stadler is really pissed. He hands over the cancelled lien documents to Rainer.

STADLER

It's just not feasible how you managed to pay that off so quickly.

RAINER

What can I say? Friends and family stepped up in my mother's hour of need.

STADLER

Yea, right.

Rainer leaves.

STADLER (CONT'D)

I'm not finished with you, Müller. Something here's not kosher. I'll find out, you mark my words.

An ASSISTANT KNOCKS on the door.

STADLER (CONT'D)

(angrily)

WHAT?

ASSISTANT

(timidly)

Your poster, Herr Stadler.

He unfurls an election poster onto Stadler's desk. It is a pompous photo of him, with the rubric:

"Stadler for Mayor. A Safe Pair of Hands"

Stadler's demeanour softens as he twirls his moustache and admires his portrait.

INT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Simply laid out for a celebration. No one is there. The camera pans to the bathroom.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The family, Max and Anna are all squeezed in.

ANNA
This is a first.

RAINER
Mum. Mum, come here.

Lotte pushes her way to the front.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Mum. You do the honours.

Over the WC is a picture, covered with a towel. Rainer makes a FANFARE noise. Lotte pulls the towel away to reveal the cancelled lien document, beautifully framed. She gives her son a big kiss and a hug. She wipes away a tear.

LOTTE
I knew you'd do it.

KARIN
I underestimated you, big brother.

RAINER
It was a group effort.

They all stumble out of the bathroom. Anna holds back until only she and Rainer are left. She gives him a big hug and a longing kiss on the cheek.

ANNA
Congratulations, Rainer. I'm so proud of you.

RAINER
Thanks, Anna. You've really helped me a lot, these last few months.
I...

ANNA
I'm going to miss...

Rainer looks puzzled.

LOTTE (O.S.)
Rainer, leave the poor girl alone,
and get back in here.

Rainer hesitates.

RAINER

I don't understand. Are you...?

LOTTE (O.S.)

Come on, Rainer. You're being a very poor host.

RAINER

(Shouting)

Coming, mum.

He pauses, confused, then rushes out.

RAINER (CONT'D)

How can anyone in this place NOT know how to open a bottle of wine?

INT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

USCHI

Thank goodness that's over. Was starting to think this day would never come.

RAINER

Thanks for the vote of confidence!

USCHI

Hey, you're the one who made it out to be Armageddon and the Rapture rolled into one. I have to admit, I thought you were on a fool's errand, but you did an amazing job.

She actually sounds quite proud of him.

RAINER

Thanks.

USCHI

You've done your bit - now you can move back here. I've missed you, teddy bear.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Erich finds Lotte sweeping the floor.

ERICH

You're a picture of loveliness today, Lotte.

LOTTE

(flattered)

Get out of here, you old fool. Blind, as well as stupid.

Erich puts on his glasses.

ERICH
You could be right.

She playfully WHACKS him on the arm.

LOTTE
Okay, what're you after now, Erich?

ERICH
We wanted to run an idea by you.

LOTTE
We?

ERICH
The farmers' cooperative.

LOTTE
What are you old goats up to now?
No good, I'll bet. Smoke?

ERICH
I don't smoke. Oh...

She offers him a joint.

LOTTE
Helps me think more clearly.

Erich NODS in accord. They take a puff each.

LOTTE (CONT'D)
What harebrained scheme you got
now?

MONTAGE

Now there are a dozen farmers in the scam. We see excavations, Max delivering barrels of Max Factor in the middle of the night, a row of Italian milk tankers waiting in a motorway lay-by for nightfall.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Rainer and Max are walking towards the bank.

GÜNTHER (O.S.)
Hey, boys. Thanks.

Bewildered, they turn to see GÜNTHER driving away erratically in a brand new BMW, waving out the window. He waves to another farmer in a brand new SUV.

MAX
(shocked)
What the...?

RAINER
What an idiot! They're going to
pull him over, driving like that.

MAX
They're going to pull US over, if
those idiots start flashing their
cash about like that. Stadler can
crack those morons with one twitch
of his moustache.

RAINER
Shit! We bloody warned them.

Stadler watches the scene intrigued. He strokes his
moustache. A smug grin appears on his face.

Anna appears from nowhere.

ANNA
You look happy this morning, Herr
Stadler.

Anna follows his gaze towards Rainer and Max.

STADLER
Indeed. Indeed.

He makes a slight bow and is about to leave when he pauses
and points at one of his posters in a shop window.

STADLER (CONT'D)
I hope I can rely on your support,
Dr Kuri.

Anna smiles unconvincingly.

ANNA
Naturally, Herr Stadler.

STADLER
Of course, I'm not taking anything
for granted, but I'm told my
prospects are good.

ANNA
I'm very happy for you, Herr
Stadler.

STADLER
I don't suppose there's any way you
might reconsider my invitation to
dinner some...

ANNA

That would be lovely, Herr Stadler.
I am flattered, but, as I
explained... you know, as your
doctor... I'm sure you understand.

Stadler smiles begrudgingly.

INT. HERMAN'S TERRACE - NIGHT

There are a dozen farmers there, all looking more prosperous
than we've seen them before.

Max is excited, pacing up and down. The guys look sheepishly
guilty, and stare at the floor.

MAX

Are you guys nuts? What did we say?
NO ostentatious spending. PAY-DOWN-
YOUR-DEBTS! That was the deal. Not,
go fucking wild!

GÜNTHER

But I needed a new car.

MAX

(restraining himself)
Then get a VW, Günther, not a
bleeding racing car. And you,
Herman...

Herman points to himself surprised.

MAX (CONT'D)

What's this?

He points to a big hole in the garden.

MAX (CONT'D)

A bloody great swimming pool! A
huge one at that. What's the matter
with you people? It stops now.
Understand?

GÜNTHER

But the car... I need it.

RAINER

Trade it in.

GÜNTHER

But...

RAINER

Your call. You guys don't keep your
side of the agreement, we stop
delivering. What's it to be?

(MORE)

RAINER (CONT'D)

Tell folk you were just test-driving these cars for a few days.

MAX

You do realise what's at stake here, right? I'd probably get away with aiding and abetting, but you guys - a long holiday at the government's expense.

HERMAN

What about the pool? My kids were looking forward to...

MAX

It stops now. Say you ran out of money, or something. Or you dig it yourself - literally yourself.

RAINER

Everyone got that?

Subdued, they all nod reluctantly. Erich brings out some election posters.

ERICH

Seeing as we're all here, no harm in taking a gander at the posters.

Rainer is puzzled and then surprised when Erich unrolls an election poster.

ERICH (CONT'D)

Your mum said yes.

Rainer shakes his head in disbelief.

RAINER

What about me?

ERICH

If you want to argue with your mum...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler stands, puzzled, outside his office door. Günther drives past in a modest Volkswagen. There are no more brand new status cars. Anna greets him as she passes. To her surprise, he simply GRUNTS and retreats inside.

She spots an election poster in an upstairs window opposite, promoting Rainer for Mayor.

RAINER

Recognise him from somewhere?

Surprised, she turns to see Rainer next to her.

ANNA

Good God. You're getting as creepy as Stadler.

RAINER

No need to get mean!

She looks around.

ANNA

That poster *really* pissed him off. He didn't even hit on me.

RAINER

Do you think I've lost his vote?

ANNA

Are you sure you're doing the right thing, running against him for mayor? You're just pissing him off even more.

RAINER

Everything'll be fine. I'm just going through the motions. The boys cooked this up with my mum. They want me to split the vote to help Werner win. NOBODY wants Kaiser Bill as Mayor.

ANNA

I don't get how that helps, but...

RAINER

Nor do I, to be honest. But it's given my mum a new lease of life. She's having a ball, chewing the cud with her mates over the manifesto for the campaign.

ANNA

Campaign? What campaign?

RAINER

Exactly. She and her witches' coven have put together a nice touchy-feely platform on kids' playgrounds, community facilities and eco-tourism. My mum's quite the closet liberal, deep down. Who knew?

ANNA

What about Kaiser Bill?

RAINER

There's no way I'm going to win.
There are five in this race, and
I'm clearly about tenth in
qualifications, experience and
suitability, so...

Anna looks disappointed.

ANNA

What'll happen if you lose?

RAINER

Why the glum face?

Anna composes herself.

ANNA

You don't really want Stadler to
win, do you?

RAINER

I didn't realise you hated him so
much.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler electioneering, glad-handing people as they walk by.
People are polite, although some swerve to avoid encountering
him. The other three candidates are also active - all except
Rainer. All are wearing rosettes and giving out leaflets.

Max saunters passed Stadler, staring at his mobile phone.
Stadler thrusts a leaflet into his hand.

STADLER

Grüss Gott. I'm running for mayor,
on a platform of fiscal prudence. I
hope I can count on your vote.

Max looks up, initially taken aback.

STADLER (CONT'D)

Ah, you're Müller's friend. It's
disgusting what he's doing?

MAX

(confused)
Running for mayor? That's
democracy.

STADLER

No. What he's doing to Dr Kuri.

MAX

(even more confused)
Dr Kuri? You've lost me.

STADLER

Don't act dumb. You know what he's doing. Leading that poor woman on, while he's got his rich girlfriend in Vienna. Who does he think he is? The Sultan of Baghdad?

MAX

It's got nothing to do with you - or me, for that matter. No one is leading anyone on, Herr Stadler. I fear you are greatly misinformed.

STADLER

That's bullshit, Herr... whatever your name is, and you know it. That poor girl...

INT. WINE BAR - NIGHT

Noisy bar. Max relates the tale of his encounter with Stadler to Rainer. Rainer's expression goes from surprise to disgust to a shrug. As they sit there, people come up to Rainer to shake his hand. The difference in popularity is evident.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Church service. Father Josef's body language is very supportive. Rainer reads the lesson.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler spots another milk tanker. He rushes towards his car. Father Josef, ambling nearby, realises what's happening. Without looking, he pulls out his mobile, sends a message, then skilfully blocks Stadler's way.

FATHER JOSEF

Good evening, Herr Stadler. I do hope all is well this fine day.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Rainer receives the text message:

"Praise the Lord"

He immediately sends out another.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Stadler struggles to extricate himself diplomatically from the priest's clutches.

FATHER JOSEF

How is your campaign going, my son?

Suddenly, the square is filled with the PING of text messages being received. Everyone looks at their screens.

STADLER

Shouldn't you get that, Father?

Father Josef manages to turn Stadler away from his car as a kid comes along and slashes one of the back tyres.

FATHER JOSEF

I wouldn't want to appear rude.

With the kid clearly safely away.

FATHER JOSEF (CONT'D)

I'm sure I've taken up enough of your precious time, Herr Stadler. May God be with you.

Stadler reflexively crosses himself and jumps into his modest car. He pulls out his mobile phone. He makes a call.

STADLER

Karl. Meet me at Müller's cellar... immediately. You got that?

INT. CELLAR - DAY

CLOSE UP of policeman Karl on the phone.

KARL

Sure thing, Herr Stadler. Right away.

The camera pulls back to show Karl with half a dozen others in Rainer's cellar. Rainer pours him another glass.

RAINER

Everything ok?

Karl shrugs.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The car only advances a few metres, before grinding to a halt. He leaps out and becomes as deflated as the tyre.

STADLER

Fffffff....

He thumps the car roof, winces, then tries to smooth it over.

He flags down FRAU MINOR, a dear old lady, 70s, driving his way. He bounces into her car without asking.

STADLER (CONT'D)
Follow that milk tanker.

Frau Minor looks miffed.

FRAU MINOR
Manners, young man. A "hello" would have been nice, let alone a "please".

Stadler looks exasperated.

STADLER
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Good evening, Frau Minor. Nice to see you, etc etc etc. Now can we PLEASE follow that milk tanker?

FRAU MINOR
That's better, young man.

She then takes an age struggling to get the car into first gear. Stadler can't believe it. With a jerk the car starts.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

The car crawls along.

STADLER
Can't we go any faster? We're losing him.

FRAU MINOR
Losing who, dear?

STADLER
The milk tanker.

FRAU MINOR
Well, that's unusual, isn't it? You don't see many milk tankers in these parts, do you, Herr Stadler?

STADLER
I know. I know. Shit! I can't see him anymore.

FRAU MINOR
Herr Stadler! If that's how you're going to talk, I shall have to ask you to leave my car.

STADLER

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Let's go via
Lindenweg.

FRAU MINOR

That's better. Which way is it?

STADLER

What? How can you not know? Turn
left here.

Frau Minor turns right.

STADLER (CONT'D)

That's right, not left.

FRAU MINOR

Oh, I thought you meant YOUR left.

Stadler is flabbergasted. He gets out.

STADLER

(under his breath)
Quicker to walk.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Stadler flags down another car, driven by a TEENAGER. The car
ROARS off, the g-force visible in Stadler's face. They reach
a turn-off.

STADLER

Turn here.

The car flies passed the turn-off.

TEENAGER

You gotta give me more notice than
that, man.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

A couple of farmers flag down the milk tanker, directing it
off the road, parking it behind a barn, out of sight.

EXT. CELLAR - DAY

The car pulls up and Stadler jumps out. He turns this way and
that, looking for the milk tanker. He is furious.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Stadler enters to a convivial affair.

RAINER

Herr Stadler. How gracious of you to visit. See, gentlemen, this is what makes our democracy so great. Even political opponents can put aside their differences and join together over a convivial glass of wine.

Stadler sees Karl.

STADLER

What are you doing here?

KARL

You told me to be here.

STADLER

Where's the tanker?

KARL

What tanker?

STADLER

Imbecile.

Furious, he storms out.

KARL

He does know he's not my boss, right?

RAINER

Sadly, probably not.

INT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

Rainer and Lotte enjoy a Brettljause (snack).

LOTTE

You're not really taking this election seriously, Rainer.

RAINER

Mum, you know this isn't my thing. I'm no politician. You asked me to do it to help Werner, so I am. So, what's the problem?

LOTTE

Didn't you hear? Werner's been a naughty boy - got another family in St Pölten.

RAINER

So, he was married before. Big deal.

LOTTE
Er, nope. Same time.

RAINER
Oh.

LOTTE
Yup. Oh, indeed. He withdrew last night.

RAINER
That was convenient timing, wasn't it?

LOTTE
That weasel Stadler found out about it. Werner's a moron - been claiming for both families.

RAINER
Stadler can't use that - that's unethical.

Lotte shrugs.

LOTTE
Too late now. With him gone, we've got a problem. We've only got a week to sort this.

EXT. POLLING STATION - DAY

Election day. Stadler actively smooching the populace, with a slight air of desperation. Rainer mixes, friendly and calm, with the voters.

INT. POLLING BOOTH - DAY

Rainer stares at the voting slip in disbelief. There are only 2 names on it - his and Stadler's.

EXT. POLLING STATION - DAY

Rainer pulls his mother aside.

RAINER
What happened to the others? Do they have secret families as well?

LOTTE
Course not. Don't be stupid. They withdrew yesterday.

RAINER
Why?!

LOTTE

To stop Stadler. It was the only way.

RAINER

Did you make them an offer they couldn't refuse?

Lotte smiles enigmatically.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

A packed hall. A bewildered Rainer is declared the winner, to wild cheers. Stadler VERY begrudgingly congratulates him. Much kissing, hugging, hand-shaking and back-slapping of Rainer. Max smiles impishly at him.

RAINER

Shit. What am I going to do now? I told Uschi I was nearly finished here. I didn't even tell her about the election because it was supposed to be a foregone conclusion. She's going to go ballistic with this.

MAX

The best laid plans of mice and men...

RAINER

Don't you have another potion that can fix this?

Max shrugs. He wanders off, greatly amused.

A thrilled Anna rushes up and hugs him.

ANNA

So, what plans for the first Müller Administration?

RAINER

I wasn't really ready for this, but, off the top of my head, I reckon we declare war on the USA, lose, and get zillions in aid to rebuild our shattered economy.

ANNA

A man with a plan.

RAINER

If that doesn't work, I suppose I'm going to have to build those damn playgrounds I promised with such reckless abandon.

ANNA

I guess this means you'll be staying a while longer then?

Rainer glimpses his ecstatic mother, surrounded by happy well-wishers.

RAINER

(deep in thought)

'Twould appear so.

Anna looks pleased.

RAINER (CONT'D)

And you? I meant to ask...

ANNA

Me? Why me?

RAINER

I thought you were going to...

Erich SLAPS him heartily on the back, knocking him into Anna. She catches him. Their eyes lock.

ERICH

Herr Bürgermeister. How does that sound?

RAINER

Scary.

ERICH

(laughing)

Get used to it. Your inauguration is at the Wine Festival next week.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The fallout from Karin's birthday party is everywhere. Only Rainer & Anna, both well-oiled, are left, sprawled on a sofa.

ANNA

Only 2 days to go and you'll be the lord of all you survey.

RAINER

I will expect absolute obedience.

ANNA

Naturally, my liege.

She moves in a bit closer.

RAINER

Much more important than all this nonsense is the Wine Festival. That's what really matters.

ANNA

Word is you're one of the favourites again.

RAINER

Really?

ANNA

I'm so proud of you.

BEAT

She kisses him. It heats up.

RAINER

Oh, Anna. I...

They start tearing at each other's clothes. Suddenly, she breaks away and draws a deep breath.

ANNA

What am I doing? I'm sorry. I can't do this.

RAINER

(confused)
What...?

ANNA

Be the other woman. What about Uschi?

RAINER

Good question. Uschi. What about Uschi? We've been so long together, I can't remember what it was like without her. But we...

Anna, upset, gets up and rushes out. Rainer unsteadily tries to stop her but she is gone.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Anna. Wait. Let me finish. We haven't... I can't even remember...

He collapses back onto the sofa.

RAINER (CONT'D)

What the hell am I doing?

MAX (O.S.)

Screwing everything up, as usual. Always the last to see...

RAINER
(startled)
How long have you been...?

Max gets up unsteadily from behind the sofa.

MAX
Never mind that...

As he passes Rainer to leave, he taps him on the shoulder.

MAX (CONT'D)
You should fix this.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Rainer, looking extremely exhausted, throws a small suitcase onto the back seat when Stadler's car draws up.

RAINER
Sorry, no time now.

Stadler stands in front of his car.

STADLER
It is my duty, Mr Mayor... Mr Mayor-
Elect, I should say - my duty and a
pleasure, to inform you that we
will be initiating a tax audit
tomorrow... an audit of YOU.

He relishes that last word.

RAINER
You're a poor loser, Stadler. And I
know you intended to buy this place
on the cheap.

STADLER
I hope you are not impugning the
integrity of a senior government
official. That would be slander,
Herr Müller.

RAINER
Don't play games with me, Stadler.

STADLER
Or what, Herr Müller?

Rainer doesn't know what to say. Stadler moves out of the way of the car.

STADLER (CONT'D)
Exactly. We'll be here at 8 sharp,
in the morning. Be ready.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Rainer has to concentrate hard as he drives to the city. He tries Anna on speed-dial. He gets voicemail. The BEEP goes. He agonises over what to say.

RAINER
Anna... listen... it's not how...

The phone cuts off.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Shit.

He dials again.

INT. INDUSTRIAL BUILDING - DAY

Max picks up. Before he can even say a word...

INTERCUT Max & RAINER ON PHONE

RAINER
Max. It's Rainer. I just had Stadler at the house. They're going to start an audit tomorrow.

MAX
Okay. Stay calm. We knew this might happen.

RAINER
Stay calm? Easy for you to say.

MAX
Don't worry. We were very careful. He won't find anything. You might want to make sure your mother's... er,... herbal remedy... is well and truly out of sight... and smell!

RAINER
This is no time for jokes, Max. Did one of the guys talk?

MAX
Rainer. Relax. They would be pretty stupid to do that now, wouldn't they? If it'll make you happy, I'll get Father Josef to ask around quietly.

RAINER
We should have made Stadler a partner as well.

MAX

Are you crazy? Do you hear yourself? We'd be in jail for corrupting an officer of the state before our feet hit the ground. Calm down, Rainer. It's going to be okay. Really. Look, I'll come over and we can...

RAINER

Everything's going to shit.

MAX

No, it isn't. You're not thinking clearly. Stadler's not a problem, and you know it. We covered our tracks. You're emotional because of Anna. You can fix it.

RAINER

I don't know. I don't know. I'm so tired. Suddenly everything seems so complicated.

Rainer has to swerve back into his lane to avoid an accident.

MAX

Where are you?

RAINER

I'm on my way to see Uschi. I should never have listened to you. She warned me.

MAX

What?! Come on, now. Let's not forget your mother still has her house because of this, okay?

RAINER

I'm not cut out for this. The stress of all this secrecy and subterfuge is wearing me out. And now there's the Anna "situation".

MAX

Get a grip, Rainer. Stay calm and everything'll be fine. He won't find anything. We've been super-careful.

RAINER

(wistfully)

We should've stopped after we paid off the debts.

MAX

What? You selfish bugger. So, I was supposed to just quit with nothing once you had what you wanted? Well, thanks very much!

He hangs up.

RAINER

No. Wait, Max. I... Ugh!

EXT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

Rainer parks the car and bounds up the stairs, two at a time.

INT. VIENNA APARTMENT - DAY

Rainer rushes into the apartment when he notices 2 settings on the dining table, then discarded clothing scattered haphazardly over the floor and furniture.

He pauses, like a statue, in the middle of the room. His expression goes from surprise to anger to disappointment to relief to amusement.

INT. VIENNA BEDROOM - DAY

He casually saunters in to find Uschi in bed with Fred. Fred sees him first. He freezes.

FRED

Oh, oh!

Uschi looks between his legs.

USCHI

What? What's the matter? Where'd he go?

She turns and sees Rainer. Far from being ashamed, she is aggressive. She makes no effort to cover up. Fred pulls the sheet up to his neck and gives him a guilty wave.

USCHI (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? Don't you knock?

RAINER

I thought I lived here.

USCHI

Really? When were you last here?

RAINER

You know I've been...

USCHI

You've been WHAT? You abandoned me, Rainer. Do you hear me? YOU abandoned ME. You left here a polished, respected author, and now look at you... you're... you've become a peasant.

Rainer and Fred both wince. Even Uschi betrays a momentary unease at the word.

USCHI (CONT'D)

First, it was the debts. You PROMISED, as soon as your mother was safe, you'd come back. Then, as an afterthought, without even telling me, you run for fucking mayor - in a hick village, of all places! What the fuck's that all about, eh? What's that telling me? You want out, tell me to my face. Quit making pathetic excuses, you cowardly piece of shit.

RAINER

I'm sorry it didn't go as...

USCHI

Sorry? You're sorry? That's the best you can come up with? I would have expected something a bit more creative, but maybe your creative juices have withered on the vine - if you'll excuse the phrase.

RAINER

You may be right, but at least I didn't do anything as cliché as shacking up with a friend behind your back.

Rainer turns to leave. Uschi finally feels remorse.

USCHI

Oh, shit. Hey, Rainer, wait. I didn't mean...

Rainer turns back.

RAINER

Oh, Fred, seeing as you're here, we shipped your order yesterday.

FRED

Thanks, Rainer. Cheers.

RAINER

You're welcome. Carry on!

Uschi looks incredulously at them. Rainer leaves.
She SLAPS her head in frustration.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Three auditors sit at the table going through his books.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

Karin is scared and angry. She prods Rainer.

KARIN

(Angry)

What the hell is going on? Why have I got tax people questioning me about the car, and threatening me with jail if I don't cooperate. I can't go to jail - I have kids.

RAINER

Stay calm. There's nothing to worry about, you'll see.

KARIN

And Anna's really upset. Did you do something?

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The auditors leave. Rainer checks his phone. 10 missed calls. They are all from Uschi. He plays a voice message.

USCHI (O.C.)

Rainer, pick up. Please pick up. I'm sorry. I didn't want things to end this way. Let's talk. Kisses, Uschi.

He calls Max. It's his turn to leave a voicemail.

RAINER

Hey, Dude, come on - call me back. Sorry I freaked out yesterday. You were right, I was wrong. The audit grunts are nice enough, and they found diddly squat. Call me, or see you tomorrow at the festival.

He hangs up, paces up and down, then calls Anna. It also goes straight to voicemail.

RAINER (CONT'D)

Hi, Anna. It's Rainer. PLEASE call me. We need to talk.

He hangs up.

RAINER (CONT'D)
Why doesn't anyone answer their
damn phones?

His phone RINGS. It is Uschi again. He doesn't answer.

He looks at his leather-covered notebook and opens it -
empty. He SIGHS.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Hive of activity setting up the Wine Festival.

INT. DOCTOR'S PRACTICE - DAY

Rainer rushes into the reception.

RECEPTIONIST
Dr Kuri hasn't been in the last two
days - she's sick.

RAINER
What's wrong?

RECEPTIONIST
(primly)
I can't tell you that.

RAINER
What do the sick do when the
doctor's sick?

He rushes out.

EXT. ANNA'S FLAT - DAY

Rainer rings the intercom - no response.

INT. ANNA'S FLAT - DAY

Anna looks very grey and tired from lack of sleep. She
carefully watches through the curtain as Rainer leaves.

INT. FRANZ'S CELLAR - NIGHT

FRANZ (one of Max & Rainer's customers) selects some bottles.
We see some soil falling from the temporary ceiling.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The Wine Festival is in full swing. Virtually the whole town (plus the Austrian PRESIDENT) is there . Tables have been set up. The President bestows the Mayor regalia on Rainer, to considerable APPLAUSE. People crowd around to congratulate him. Lotte gives him a big hug, tears in her eyes.

LOTTE

If only your dad could...

She starts to sob, but then pulls herself together.

LOTTE (CONT'D)

Sorry. Sorry.

Erich puts a comforting arm around her. Max comes up from behind and proffers Rainer his hand.

MAX

Congratulations, Mr Mayor. Sorry if I overreacted the other day.

RAINER

Dude, I panicked. Pathetic, isn't it? I'm the one who should be apologising. Speaking of which, have you seen Anna?

EXT. WINE FESTIVAL - LATER

The judges pass from wine to wine, jotting down their findings. Rainer (now in Mayor regalia) pays no heed as he searches for Anna, absentmindedly glad-handling his constituents.

INT. FIRST AID TENT - LATER

He finds her tending to a small girl's injury.

ANNA

Why aren't you at your coronation?

RAINER

Because I've been trying for days to see you. I've been a fool. I've been so preoccupied with the vineyard, I couldn't see any further than my own nose. I've been stupid. I've been blind. Stupid and blind. All that time we...

They CALL out his name offscreen. She wipes a tear.

ANNA

Go. They're waiting for you. This
is your big day.

He hesitates.

RAINER

Don't go away. We're not finished.

Reluctantly he heads for the stage.

INT. FRANZ'S CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Franz picks up some more bottles. He is momentarily shocked
as some lumps of soil fall from the ceiling.

EXT. FRANZ'S CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Franz emerges from the cellar, directly into the main square.
He clears dirt off the bottles without thinking.

EXT. WINE FESTIVAL - CONTINUOUS

The President hands Rainer his trophy to generous APPLAUSE.
He is about to speak when there is a RUMBLING SOUND.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Street after street gives way. Some buildings collapse.

EXT. WINE FESTIVAL - DAY

Anna is startled. Rainer leaps down and grabs her.

ANNA

What the...?

RAINER

I should have done this months ago.
Anna, I love...

The collapse reaches Rainer and Anna and they fall in.

RAINER (CONT'D)

... you.

Covered in dust, they are lying side by side in the trench.
Rainer painfully turns to Anna.

RAINER (CONT'D)

What I was trying to say is: I love
you.

(MORE)

RAINER (CONT'D)

I think I've been in love with you from the moment I first saw you - just too stupid to realise it.

ANNA

I can't argue with that. But what about...?

RAINER

That's over. Truth be told, it's been over for a long time - as I said...

(tapping the side of his head)

...too stupid to see what was happening in front of me. I love you, Anna.

They kiss heartily.

ANNA

For the record, you had me at "Guten Tag".

The rumbling noise gradually subsides. Max rushes up anxiously.

MAX

Don't worry, it's an accident. They can't touch us for it.

ANNA

What's he talking about?

In the background, Stadler points out Rainer to a policeman.

RAINER

Timing. Never been my strong suit.

(sighs)

Before you say anything else, you may want to keep all your options open, considering what is about to happen next.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Rainer is being put into a police car. A baffled Anna is by his side.

ANNA

What the hell is going on?

RAINER

I am so sorry, Anna. So close. So close.

The policeman closes the door. The car is stuck - it can't go anywhere because of the collapse.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

The whole family is there, including Anna, Father Josef and Erich. The JUDGE pronounces the sentence. Max and Rainer are standing.

JUDGE

You have been found guilty of tax fraud, a very serious offence. In light of the character references I have received on your behalf, especially from...

(glances down at his notes)

... a Father Josef...

CLOSE UP on a rather embarrassed Father Josef.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I am inclined to take your word that this was an aberration, brought on by extreme, exceptional circumstances, and will not be repeated.

A glimmer of hope crosses the faces of Rainer and Max.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Nevertheless, under the penal code, a custodial sentence is mandatory and I therefore sentence you both to two years in prison.

MAX

Bollocks!

Lotte SOBS. Erich puts his arm around her. She snuggles up.

Karin looks crest-fallen.

Anna is shocked. As they are led away, Rainer turns to her.

RAINER

Anna. Marry me.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Rainer is writing in his leather-bound notebook.

INT. PRISON CHAPEL - DAY

CLOSE UP on a beaming Father Josef. The camera pulls back to reveal he is marrying Rainer and Anna. It then pulls back to reveal that this is the prison chapel. Max is Best Man.

They kiss each other.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

Anna and Rainer face each other across a table.

RAINER

Hello, Frau Müller. I do like the sound of that.

ANNA

Me too, Herr Müller. Only another month to go, and you can show me what you're made of! I'm running out of batteries.

RAINER

Frau Müller!!

ANNA

Hey, I've waited long enough! Enough of the coy, already. Just keep your nose clean.

RAINER

I blow it twice a day, just to be sure.

ANNA

Nice to see you in such a good mood. Bet I can make it even better.

She pulls a hardback book out of her bag.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Uschi did a great job, actually.

CLOSE UP ON BOOK COVER

"Get Schlosed"

RAINER (V.O.)

Truth be told, not exactly what I expected my Magnum Opus to be, but I finally found my inspiration.

He admires the cover.

RAINER (V.O.)
As I was saying, to be a great
writer, you need three things. But,
of course, a little luck in the mix
doesn't hurt.

DISSOLVE TO:

END CREDITS

INT. PRISON CANTEEN - DAY

Rainer is serving in the Prison canteen. He fills a
prisoner's water bottle from a big container, but there isn't
enough.

RAINER
Hold on.

He heads into the kitchen with the container.

INT. PRISON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He passes silently through the kitchen to the pantry.

INT. PRISON PANTRY - CONTINUOUS

Hidden in back is Max with a still. Without a word, Rainer
leaves the container and picks up 2 full ones.

INT. PRISON CANTEEN - MOMENTS LATER

Emerging back into the canteen, Rainer slips one container to
a sheepish-looking guard, then hands the other to the inmate.
The very grateful inmate licks his lips.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A copy of Rainer's book, in a seal-tight ziplock bag, has
been placed on Hansi's grave.

FADE OUT.