

The Maldives

A Screenplay by Inés Boughdadi-Larsen

Originally in French, translated in English.

SEQ 1. INT. HOTEL HALLWAY_DAY

A young man walks disdainfully down the hallway of a luxurious hotel. Through inserts, we catch glimpses of his beige loafers, *Montblanc* watch, religious pendant, and a Lacoste sweater delicately draped over his shoulders. He stops in front of the elevator and presses the button.

We finally see AYMERIC's face (25), who, while waiting for the metal cube to arrive, takes a small box out of his pocket, inside which a *Cartier* ring sparkles. Nervously, he discreetly checks that no one is around and starts to imagine his marriage proposal.

AYMERIC

(Whispering) Hey Mathilde... Will you marry me?

With a dreamy expression, he extends the ring into the air squinting his eyes and slightly biting his lip.

AYMERIC

No no... Look, Mathilde. We've been together for a while now. So I thought...Why not? No. Hey. You know you'll never find someone better than me. So what do you think? Huh? No...

Footsteps can be heard in the distance. AYMERIC jumps and quickly puts the ring and the box into his pocket.

MATHILDE (25) enters and kisses her beloved. She's wearing a bright red summer dress, heavy contour makeup, false eyelashes, fake nails and big glittery *Mickey* ears. AYMERIC frowns at the sight of them. He's clearly displeased by their appearance.

AYMERIC

When did you buy that?

MATHILDE

Earlier at the Gift Shop. They're cute, right?

AYMERIC doesn't respond. MATHILDE pulls out another, even more kitsch ears from her bag.

MATHILDE

I got you a pair too!

She places them on her boyfriend's head and takes out her

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phone to take a selfie.

AYMERIC

Stop it, it's embarrassing...

He pauses and forces a small awkward smile for the photo. Then his smile fades away and he quickly takes off the ears. MATHILDE takes them back and puts them in her bag.

AYMERIC

You know I hate this kind of stuff.

MATHILDE rolls her eyes as she edits her selfies.

AYMERIC

It's true, they encourage you to consume. It annoys me how people fall for it and end up raiding their ridiculous shops...

SEQ 2. INT. STUDIO ELEVATOR_JOUR

PART ONE : AN AWKWARD CONVERSATION

Ding. The elevator doors open. We see SIMON (23) and JULIE (23) laughing hysterically, wearing *Minnie* ears and playing with an oversized pair of *Mickey* gloves. Both have *Disney Premier Access* badges around their necks and twenty *Lilo & Stitch* pins on their *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* T-shirts. They turn towards the other couple, smiling.

AYMERIC and MATHILDE exchange a knowing look and enter the elevator.

SIMON

(With a slight French accent)
Good morning !

AYMERIC

Hello.

JULIE

Hi!

MATHILDE greets them shyly.

AYMERIC

(With a strong French accent)
Are you going down?

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SIMON

Yes!

AYMERIC presses a button. The doors close.

The two couples stand in silence. MATHILDE takes out her red lipstick and applies it carefully. SIMON, curious about the strangers next to him, slightly turns towards the couple.

SIMON

So. Where are you guys from?

AYMERIC glances at him out of the corner of his eye. He hates making small talk with people who aren't like him.

AYMERIC

France.

SIMON

(Enthusiastically) No way, us too! You should have said something earlier!

AYMERIC

Oh that's funny.

SIMON

And which city are you from?

AYMERIC

Bordeaux.

SIMON

Oh, nice! We're from the suburbs of Paris.

AYMERIC nods, looking away in order to avoid another question. MATHILDE puts away her lipstick.

JULIE

Is it your first time in Orlando?

MATHILDE

Yes! My boyfriend surprised me by buying the tickets. He knows how much I love *Disney!*

She looks at AYMERIC lovingly.

MATHILDE

What about you?

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JULIE

Oh, we're also really big fans. We
come once a year!

AYMERIC looks at MATHILDE with wide eyes.

PART TWO : AYMERIC'S PANIC ATTACK

Suddenly, the elevator stops. The four jump and look at each other, confused. The white ceiling light turns off, replaced by an aggressive flashing red light.

ELEVATOR ANNOUNCER VOICE

*Ladies and gentlemen, we are currently
facing a power cut. Please remain
calm!*

AYMERIC

(To Mathilde) What did she say?

MATHILDE tries unsuccessfully to translate. JULIE presses the emergency button. No response. She presses it again. Still no response. She turns to the group.

JULIE

Well, that's great!

MATHILDE looks at her phone.

MATHILDE

There's no service.

SIMON

Looks like we're stuck!

MATHILDE sighs. JULIE rests her head on SIMON's shoulder. AYMERIC looks at the floor. He starts to feel hot, sweating slightly from his forehead. In fact, AYMERIC is extremely claustrophobic.

AYMERIC

This can't be happening.

Out of nowhere, he moves forward and bangs on the metal doors.

AYMERIC

HELP! HELP! WE ARE FRENCH !! CALL THE
EMBASSY!! S.O.S, WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION!! GET US OUT OF HERE!
DO YOU KNOW WHO MY FATHER IS??

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MATHILDE

Are you out of your mind?

MATHILDE pushes him away from the doors. AYMERIC, out of breath, remains frozen in place, trying to calm down.

MATHILDE

Do breakdowns happen often here?

SIMON

Yes but don't worry, it doesn't usually last more than ten minutes.

AYMERIC doesn't like small spaces. But AYMERIC also doesn't like to show his weaknesses. MATHILDE doesn't know that AYMERIC dislikes small spaces.

SIMON

Which park are you visiting today?

MATHILDE

Magic Kingdom !

SIMON

Oh, *the Happiest Place on Earth!* It's our favorite park with Julie.

JULIE

That's actually where my Prince Charming proposed to me.

SIMON

Right under *Sleeping Beauty's Castle*, in the middle of the fireworks. And my princess said yes.

They give each other an Eskimo kiss. AYMERIC is feeling very hot. AYMERIC is sweating a lot. AYMERIC is suffocating.

MATHILDE

Oh, that's so sweet! I've been trying to hint to Aymeric for months that I want a proposal in the Maldives, but he doesn't seem to get the message haha.

JULIE and SIMON smile. AYMERIC feels dizzy.

AYMERIC

(In a small voice) Maldives ?

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JULIE

It looks beautiful. I'd love to go there someday!

MATHILDE

Yeah me too, it's my dream...

AYMERIC feels his throat tightening.

AYMERIC

(Mumbling) Your dream? The Maldives? The Maldives??

MATHILDE

Yeah the Maldives! If it's not that, I'll say no!

She turns to him laughing but sees that he isn't reacting.

MATHILDE

Are you okay, baby?

AYMERIC

(Whispering) I think I need to sit down.

AYMERIC leans on his girlfriend and lets himself slide to the floor. The red light starts flashing aggressively again. MATHILDE's eyes widen. She kneels down and hugs him, trying to comfort him. AYMERIC pushes her away once. She hugs him again.

SIMON

Is he alright?

MATHILDE

Uh... I think so.

AYMERIC feels oppressed. He starts hyperventilating and feels the walls closing in on him.

AYMERIC

THAT'S ENOUGH, LEAVE ME ALONE
MATHILDE!

MATHILDE steps back, shocked. SIMON bends down and empties his gift bag filled with *Disney* goodies. He hands it to AYMERIC.

SIMON

Here, breathe into this. I read an

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article that said it helps with
hyperventilation.

AYMERIC snatches it from him and breathes aggressively into it. After a few gasps, he starts to regain his breath. Ah, much better! The red light turns off, replaced by a yellowish emergency ceiling light.

He takes a deep breath and then throws the bag on the ground. Feeling ridiculous and terrified of compromising his *alpha male* image, he slowly stands up.

MATHILDE, still on the floor and clearly irritated, picks up the goodies in silence, assisted by SIMON.

MATHILDE

Thank you.

SIMON

No problem!

JULIE watches AYMERIC, who is smoothing out his shirt and wiping his sweaty forehead with a handkerchief.

PART THREE : AYMERIC AND LOVE

With the figurines and toys neatly put away, MATHILDE stands up and gives her boyfriend a cold look. JULIE sits down to join her partner and tenderly strokes his hair.

JULIE

This is taking a while.

SIMON

(Smiling) I've got some karaoke tracks
downloaded on my phone if you want!

JULIE

Oh, great!

SIMON takes out his phone. A childish, joyful instrumental track plays. JULIE claps her hands, delighted. They both sway their heads to the rhythm of the music.

AYMERIC watches them out of the corner of his eye. He hates karaokes.

SIMON

♫ When I saw you, I immediately knew
that you were the one for me...

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JULIE

*When I saw you, I got butterflies
instantly...*

SIMON

*And I knew that it was you that I
wanted to grow old with.*

JULIE

*I wanna spend my whole life with
you...*

SIMON

With you....

JULIE

With you...

They laugh and continue singing in the background. AYMERIC rolls his eyes and turns to his girlfriend... who is sulking.

AYMERIC

(Whispering) What's wrong?

MATHILDE

*(Whispering too) Did you see how you
behaved? I'm actually shocked. What
the fuck.*

AYMERIC sighs heavily. MATHILDE looks at him, surprised by his condescending reaction.

JULIE

*♪ ...And my heart beats really strong
whenever I'm with you.*

SIMON

*And my heart fills with joy when you
finally smile at me...♪*

AYMERIC

*Are you seriously giving me the cold
shoulder over this?*

MATHILDE

You clearly disrespected me, Aymeric.

AYMERIC

But I was panicked, it's not my fault!

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MATHILDE

That doesn't excuse your unpleasant behavior.

AYMERIC

Don't you think you're overreacting?

MATHILDE

You don't say thank you, you're condescending... I knew you were arrogant, but I didn't realize it was that bad.

AYMERIC looks at her, surprised. Arrogant? Him?

MATHILDE

Anyway, I don't even know if I wanna go to the Maldives anymore...

She sits down, leaving AYMERIC speechless. The other couple, now done with their singing, share yet another Eskimo kiss. MATHILDE smiles at them.

MATHILDE

You're so cute. How did you two meet?

SIMON

At *Comic Con Paris 2017* ! I was dressed as Peter Pan and she was Tinker Bell.

MATHILDE

Wait I'm confused. Is cosplay like your job?

SIMON

Oh no, unfortunately not! I just started working in accounting, and Julie is finishing her studies in psychology.

MATHILDE

Do you already know what you want to specialize in?

JULIE

I'd love to be a couples therapist!

MATHILDE

Oh, what a coincidence!

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She glances briefly at AYMERIC, who, not liking to feel excluded from the conversation, sits down next to her.

MATHILDE

So, what exactly do you do in couples therapy?

JULIE

There are a lot of exercises and methods. It all depends on the patients. But it's very common to do role-playing exercises, where, for example, one partner takes the other's place... It helps build empathy and better communication within the couple.

MATHILDE

Oh, that's interesting. (*In a very deep voice*) Aymeric, nice to meet you. I say I have big ambitions in life when in reality, I plan on taking over Daddy's business.

AYMERIC

I don't talk like that!

MATHILDE

(*In an even more exaggerated voice*) I don't talk like that!

AYMERIC offended, gives her a withering look.

JULIE

I really don't think that's how it's done...

AYMERIC

(*In a high-pitched voice*) Nice to meet you, I'm Mathilde. Since I've been in a relationship, I've basically lost the use of my wallet!.

JULIE

Like I was saying, it's a very effective exercise, but when it's done seriously and...

MATHILDE

Okay, no worries. Let's do it seriously then.

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She takes a black pencil out of her bag and crudely draws a mustache on her face.

AYMERIC

What are you doing?

She scribbles all over her chin and cheeks. Watching her, AYMERIC grabs his girlfriend's lipstick and draws circles around his lips. He also takes the *Mickey* ears and puts them on his head.

SIMON looks uncomfortable.

JULIE

You know... This exercise is usually done in therapy, in a calmer environment. In class, we learned that there are protocols to follow, etc. I really don't think this is the best...

MATHILDE

(In a deep voice) I'm going to cut you off right away because I love doing that, especially with my girlfriend. And...

AYMERIC cuts her off.

AYMERIC

(In a high-pitched voice) I'm so sorry for Aymeric's unpleasant behavior, he can be so ANNOYING!

MATHILDE

(In a deep voice) Yeah, sorry, sometimes I can be a real JERK.

AYMERIC

(In a high-pitched voice) And I can be a huge BITCH!

MATHILDE turns to him.

MATHILDE

Then why are you even with me?

PART FOUR : AYMERIC WITHOUT A RING

The emergency light goes out, replaced once again by the harshly flashing red light. JULIE and SIMON exchange surprised glances as AYMERIC and MATHILDE continue to argue

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loudly, completely oblivious to the couple in front of them.

MATHILDE

YOU LOVE TO ACT LIKE A BIG AND TOUGH
GUY, BUT YOU'RE A CHILD AYMERIC! I
FEEL LIKE I'M BECOMING YOUR MOTHER!

AYMERIC

OH REALLY?? BECAUSE MY MOTHER PAYS FOR
HER OWN STUFF! DO YOU? I DON'T THINK
SO!

MATHILDE

STOP YELLING, YOU'RE SPITTING ON ME!

They start mutually spitting on each other. Feeling ridiculous with the smeared lipstick and spit on his face, AYMERIC pulls out a handkerchief from his pocket. But in his clumsy movement, he accidentally drops the ring box on the floor. At that precise moment, as if by some cruel twist of fate, the elevator light switches back on, and the doors open. Under the watchful eyes of the four characters, the ring continues its slow descent until it slips through a gap in the floor.

AYMERIC stands there, stunned. MATHILDE delicately picks up the box and examines it silently.

JULIE and SIMON share a knowing look before quietly exiting the elevator.

JULIE

Bye, enjoy the rest of your trip.

After a few moments, MATHILDE hands the box back to AYMERIC.

MATHILDE

I... I need some air...

She gets up, gives him one last look, and leaves. AYMERIC remains sitting on the floor, alone, without a ring and without a girlfriend.