

The Giraffe (2017)

Dimen Abdulla

Duration 60 minutes

CAST

JAJA

THE VOICE ON TV

THE JOURNALIST

ACTOR

BEHIN

PIER

MALVA

THE VOICE ON TV speaks in past tense.

JAJA and the others speak in present tense.

EXCERPT

JAJA

they're going to drag you down to their level
those journalists and cultural figures and the middle class
and trample you to death
cannibalize you and your stories
until you are all used up

THE VOICE ON TV

It turned out BEHIN was no one, not at all who JAJA thought
JAJA thought BEHIN was someone
But not a traitor

JAJA

A backstabber
Now she's erased
death to her!

THE VOICE ON TV

The air is fresh and cool
JAJA hears her breathing
and says nothing

JAJA

I can't stay here

THE VOICE ON TV

she's suffocating

how she can't stand people

how her hands tremble as she inhales the cigarette poison

deep into her lungs

she stubs out the cigarette

and inside herself she hears

a silent scream

but she has no voice

no one can hear you

JAJA

no one cares about me

THE VOICE ON TV

JAJA hears her own breaths step by step, with her back to it, on down the street home

stops at the crosswalk and sees the door where PIER lives

PART 2

The front door of Pier's building

THE VOICE ON TV

JAJA felt a sudden urge to see if the door code still works

this was where she had decided to go, but she passes by.

she turns back to the door after a few hundred meters.

She WAS a mysterious figure, a point in the night.

A glowing firefly who prostituted herself for the money and for the fame. Who lived under the night sky.

She takes out a pack of cigarettes, strikes the lighter,

stands still as a statue before a shop window.

They couldn't make sense of her

They were curious, interested

They saw something in her and they liked her

She had given her body to them, laid herself bare, told them her sob stories

how she lived in a different world

about mami and papi, her brother and the cliché of living on welfare

JAJA

to explain to them

JAJA'S affected voice:

how hard it is to survive

for regular people there's

often no safety net at all
JAJA'S regular voice:
how
regular people don't attain status
instead they took it
through diligence and hard work
and they said
you should know it's an accident to be born into a role
in a sheltered existence
to compete with your parents
and their achievements
the fear of failure

THE VOICE ON TV
and she felt sympathy for them
as they passed their marble sculptures in the garden
sunning by the pool, under a palm

THE VOICE ON TV
they said:
THE VOICE ON TV'S affected voice:
what little wiggle room there was
with these demands
the pressure and the difficulty breathing
it was an emotional handicap

JAJA
I was always fascinated by Malva and Pier
They could talk about meaningless things as if they were the most meaningful
A banana could be an endless topic of debate, with decorative intertwining of colonialism

THE VOICE ON TV
JAJA wasn't like them
and they
they loved it
and JAJA was given a place in the sun and in her other voice she said, with a certain amount of
exaggeration, posing, and affectation

JAJA
I grew up in the real world.
It wasn't easy to deal with.
I don't want anything to do with reality and the world
it seems like nothing but death and darkness
ugliness and suffering

why should I go to the sea
to the shore
I don't want to be there
my body drowning in its waves
how could anyone want to go to sea
when you can go by land
flap your wings and fly
I want to learn from a lion, how to hunt

THE VOICE ON TV

Fascinated by her authenticity, they lapped up her colors with a suction-cup lust
the cliché
the confirmation of their world view
as she claimed to be
It is also who she is
It is also how she likes to be
they shone spotlights at her most sensitive sides
in other social settings a person would have taken care not to reveal so much
but JAJA did so gladly
she had begun a romance with them
she had felt the sex and their eyes on her
She had been welcomed with fairly open arms
into their eight tentacles
they offered MDMA
a rolled-up bill
amex silver to divide the powder
endless lines
endless nights
it was wonderful too
totally totally wonderful
who would want to go home
She was drawn to them
and they to JAJA
She wanted more
They wanted more

JAJA

Before I thought the middle class was so fucking exciting
But not anymore
Now the upper-class is interesting
it seems so exotic
And I think they're all attractive
They're also impressed by success
while the middle class is more boring, maybe

the middle class is quiet and withdrawn
Maybe they just don't have the imagination
But I don't know
maybe I just don't give a shit about them
I guess I'm awful judgey
Sometimes I don't mean to judge...
Also I think the upper class doesn't give a shit about me
bastards
In fact, they shit all over me
That's the sick part
They shit all over me, so I shouldn't be so interested in them
Maybe it's a little sadomasochistic
And that's what I'm drawn to
Because it's so goddamn fucking unfair
I also feel like fuck u all whatever
I think I'll just say screw it
First I just think I'll survive
I'm so fucking tired of that
Do you know what money does to you?
It fuckin' handicaps you
It makes you incapable of doing anything for yourself
Do you know how fucking retarded you get when you're so fucking rich
Do you understand how handicapped you are
It's a claustrophobic hell
Consumption is for damn sure the worst
It's such a terrible addiction
The upper class has a different kind of know-how
know-how imprinted on them through breast milk
they sat with the president and skinny-dipped with Palme
Imagine!
Skinny-dipping with Palme
They do that
They're in the middle of it!
every time I think
You know what
FUCK IT ALL
I don't mean fuck it all
like hygiene and stuff
But like control over how things should be
I had to build up defenses
a method or strategy
or deny the person I became

THE VOICE ON TV

JAJA looks at herself in the reflective surface of the shop window.
She stands there for ages, studying her body, twisting and turning in front of the mirrorlike window.
That.
That thing she does when she's taking on a role:
She warms up. Emotionally preparing herself. Preparing herself to stand before them.
She warms up.

JAJA

I've even started that whole hair-straightening thing
Imitating these people I had nothing in common with
I felt like I was being bullied
In their world you're nothing but a freak
I'm wearing sweatpants with a pattern
a colorful clown among these people
That I'm allowed in these spaces, in these clown clothes
Everyone adapts by refusing to open their eyes to what's going on
around here
I'm playing someone else
You adapt by playing down what happens in the real world
But even if your eyes are truly open and you dare to look at this drama
it's not out of the question that you'll adapt anyway
that you'll accept
that you'll acclimatize to the humiliation
I try to accept the unacceptable
so I
I used to practice going to littala
it was a way to move from thought to action
Practice
Conversing and appearing urbane
acting normal
no being different, no being heard
being being whole and pure

THE VOICE ON TV

Alit in the glow of
blood dripping from her nose
drip
drip
drip
SHE was fucking angry, for the first time in her life she felt murderous
JAJA wanted to hit them
SHE imagined herself pounding and pounding them with her fists
how SHE bit them with her teeth

how SHE kicked them with her feet
and hit and hit and hit and hit
Her lust had led her down the wrong track
she had flown right into the sun
like Icarus
and had been scorched by the sun
She decided to stop basking in their sun
it was the last time

JAJA
that I can bear it

THE VOICE ON TV
that she can bear it
that she can stand it

JAJA
that I can stand it

THE VOICE ON TV
and one more time
and one more time and suddenly no more

JAJA
never again