Short Cuts IV

Flores & Maurer, PIs

Women's Affairs

I looked around in our new office - Velda had found it while I recovered at home. Well, her argumentation for a new office was simple and striking. We needed no longer a room for a secretary, simply because we no longer had a secretary. We still had an anteroom, but only with a table and chairs at the wall, like the doctor for the case that someone had to wait. But the office as such was larger as before - well, we required space for two desks now. One to the left, one to the right, arranged so that we could see each other. They were angularly placed regarding the walls. In between was a larger but lower table with six chairs so that we could speak with our clients there. A coffee machine, a water boiler for tea, a fridge for water and other beverages, like orange juice, completed the interior. We could even offer some snacks. Should I start to mention the color of the walls, the pictures that hung on the walls, the color, and the fabrics of the draperies and curtains - yes, we had draperies and curtains! What about the floor with the various carpets? The vase with fresh flowers on the table? A placemat thereunder? Not like my office was before. This office was so much brighter, cozier, and simply nicer.
Women would be our favorite clientele from now on, their concerns and issues. This did not mean that no man could come, but we would focus on the needs of women from now on. And we had certain agreements, like that Velda would ask our female clients whether it would be okay for them if I joined the conversation when they came to us, so as a man. Or if they preferred to speak with a woman, Velda, only. There was a very charming diner on the other side of the street. Velda entered the office. She had waited for a while in the anteroom to allow me some time to take a look at the new office. She looked at me.
"And, Peter, too feminine for you?"
"Well, this office looks much bighter, cleaner, tidier, and cozier than mine before. I will like it, Velda."
"And our agreements are okay for you? That my name is the first on the plate, and all the other agreements?"
"Sure, it's time to stop this stupid macho private dick demeanor. I will sell my .45 to buy me a more useful gun. And I will still need some time to recover further on. Paperwork, making coffee, and brewing tea - such matters will be best for me for now."
"We will have a meeting with our first client tomorrow. I have waited a bit with opening the office until you are fit enough to be here, Peter."
"Thanks, Velda. A man or a woman?"
"Important for you, Peter?"
"Not necessarily, but could be, Velda."
"A woman, 10 a.m., Peter."
"And what will be my role, Velda?"
"To bring in your expertise as a senior private investigator, Peter. Be yourself, Peter. Not more will be needed."
Well, I had to confess that I was scared shitless off tomorrow at 10 a.m.

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P. M.
Private Investigator

A Tough Man Is Hard To Find

I looked around and was satisfied. A desk on one side, a small table with four chairs on the other side. A coffee machine to have something to drink and a diner on the other side of the street if more would be needed. I loved it plain and simple. I was no fan of this excessive small talk gibberish. Maybe this was one of the reasons why I was not much attracted by politics. Whereby, we lived in interesting times. It seemed, after an increasing turn to the right, that it could be that the pendulum would swing to the left now. It started in Europe, Poland for instance, and South America, Brazil, and now it even seemed to have reached the United States. But at least what the last example concerned: we talked about the Democratic Party of the United States then. Left but not too left - someone could name you a socialist! As if this would be something like a plague, as if being a socialist would be the same as being a fucking communist - okay, this needed more intellect than most hillbillies would ever have. The United States of America, the wealthiest nation on Earth ever, built on a genocide and endless greed that had lead to the most unequal distribution of wealth ever. The richest man of Earth, together with an enormous precariate - oh, come on, not even a million people were homeless in this wonderful nation. And I loved the few pictures on the wall, as well as the simple wooden floor - Alanis was pansexual. Wow, I had to ask the internet what this should yet again mean! She loved everybody - fine. Bowie had been bisexual and cool when he shoved the stroller dressed like a woman, and his girlfriend aside looked like a boy. This had been a time when such things killed the philistines. Today the youth were the philistines. Pempered spoiled crybabies that were no longer able to bare the slightest critique. Like Pete, who got impeached by his people now - what a tough pussy he was. Unbelievable what wankers could be in government nowadays. Okay, was it better at any time? Bill and Hillary, this could be the title for a splatter horror movie. Two phoney career-obsessed figures of horror. But it was as it was, and so my smartphone lay on the desk, a screen, and a keyboard as well - as well as several STABILO markers and lead pencils. A pencil sharpener and an eraser as well. Yeah, the new stuff. But not necessarily all old was outdated. Colorful notepads. It all was to make life easier - what a scam! It all became more complicated every day. I needed two dozen passwords and had to identify myself all the time. And when there was a disturbance, nothing functioned anymore. Now it was even possible that hackers killed the fridges in supermarkets because everything was linked together - who had believed this two decades ago? And your car transferred data to your car dealer without your intervention. My car was over twenty years old. Was the bonsai on the table disturbing? It had been a gift, and I was every so often a bit sentimental. A tough guy would potentially have it simply thrown away, but it had been a gift. I still had an envelope with drawings and such like from a then four- and five-year-old girl, which they had gifted me around thirty years ago. I simply was unable to throw them away. Milena stood on the envelope.
"Sorry, what have you been worried about?"

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The Master of The Doors

Suddenly Famous

"I have to say that I'm very pleased that you agreed to an interview, Mr. Maurer. It's not so easy to meet you for an interview, especially on such a day - June the Thirteenth, 2045. It's your eightieth birthday, and I have to say that you're still looking much younger."

"Yeah, inside maybe, but my body tells me every day that I'm now a really old man. You do not have to flatter me."
"Okay, it's a common saying that you like it always straightforward. Would you allow me to ask you some specific and perhaps also personal questions?"
"You can ask everything, but do not expect an answer always. Go ahead."
"You get called "The Master of The Doors" regarding this enormous writing where you connected layers of simulations, multiple kinds of doors, doorkeepers, and whole metaverses together over a period of nearly two decades now - you are still writing almost every day. Apart from all your other activities like music, photography, and graphic arts. But how is it for you that especially this aspect of your work has become so much resonance and not, for instance, all the crime stories, hard-boiled stories, that you have been writing for an even longer time?"
"You cannot read any book from any author. You cannot listen to every song of every musician, and you cannot look at every painting of any painter - you have to narrow it down. And it seemed as if more people decided on this aspect than on the aspect of crime, or other aspects of my doing. Well, I still love meeting Swantje from time to time. Over a thousand times now. But that's me, and I'm not the measure for others and their preferences."
"Can it be said that one aspect of this profound interest regarding this specific writing is that it has also a philosophical dimension. That it asks very fundamental questions about humanity?"
"I would say that this is a bit too much. It's simple in the end. If you start to ask if everything could be a simulation, a dream, or whatever, then you're lost forever. First, the answer has to be: Yes! Could it be that I'm only a brain in a vat? Yes, of course. And nothing could rescue me anymore. All the arguments against it are corrupt and hypocritical. They only try to find a way out when there's no way out. You start it, and you have to bear the consequences now. There's no way out anymore."
"This moment when in one of the novels the protagonist sees a whole metaverse in front of himself, the simulation of a whole metaverse, and he asks: Where could this all end?"
"Yeah, the story from a species that simulates a whole metaverse and thereby can no longer be sure if they are also not more than a simulation on a higher level."
"Do you think that our universe could simply be a simulation?"
"I think that you should be aware that it could be so - like swimming as a brain in a vat. But, and this appears to be important, as long as there's no deeper reason to believe it, you should not consider it. If you simply believe in it for a feeling, then you can believe in everything or nothing. It's a nice intellectual game, not more."
"But it can be captivating as your novels and short stories. Doors to travel in time, doors to cover any distance, even regarding universes and metaverses. The doorkeepers as guardians of the doors - all merge into a colossal narration, and for many, to the question if God "ran" this all-encompassing simulation."
"I do not believe in God, or any transcendental entity. And again, if there were God running this all-encompassing simulation, he had to ask himself quickly how likely it would be to be also nothing more than a simulation. As said, starting with it, you will never go out anymore. It's like with Hotel California."
"Another question before we start - if it's okay for you - to dive a bit deeper into this world of doors and simulations?"
"Yes, and yes."
"What was the most wonderful moment for you when becoming famous and recognized?"
"That the story "Tamara" got cinematized by young Japanese artists as a manga. I loved to see her in the movies."

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Surrealistic Pillow

Crêpe Suzette

There was only a table, a round table with possibly ten or somewhat more people around it. A very sophisticated table with not only one simple cloth on it. Eloborated table decoration dominated the middle. Flower, flowers, silver, maybe even an ice sculpture. Extremely expensive china on underplates made of gold. Golden cutlery as well. And around, on sumptuous chairs, men and women sat in flamboyant evening attire - especially the women, of course. The men were decorated with exuberant watches, and the women with eye-catching jewelry of indeterminable preciousness. Yet all seemed to be static.

But in a ring around the table stood numerous maîtres behind their gueridons and all prepared the same dish in an intoned choreography - it seemed as if for every guest one maître. Well, possibly I had to say now that I was not so much a fan of this kind of show at the tables. I had the impetus that cooking was for the cooks in the kitchen and serving was for the waiters in the restaurant. Okay, maybe a few exceptions, like in Portugal, when they served a whole fish on potatoes for a complete table. But this appeared to be natural, not this affected French demeanour. And hey, what I saw here was more than affected.

Anyway, obviously the meal as such was over because all the maîtres prepared crêpe suzette in perfect accordance. Thus, they all had finished her priggish fuss at the same time to serve the result - one could get the impression to be witness of something sooooo special, not only of cooking pancakes in orange sauce. But then something weird happened. They did not put their crêpe suzette on the plates of their guest. They simply took their pans and threw the result on the middle of the table. I may have had to say that the middle of the table was suddenly empty, all the elaborate table decoration had disappeared, and the maîtres did not stop. More and more crêpe suzette got thrown on the middle of the table. It nearly seemed as their pans never got empty. This happened so long as a massive mound of crêpe suzette piled up on the middle of the table - orange sauce dropped everywhere on the floor. But the people around the table still did not show any movement. At least until the maîtres stopped - it seemed as if enough crêpe suzette had been piled up. At least for the moment. The maîtres stood behind their gueridons now, and they showed no movement anymore. Not so the people around the table.

Like in the reaction of an unable-to-be-heard signal, they all grabbed simultaneously their forks, knives, and spoons and rammed them into the giant mound of crêpe suzette to upload them on their plates. Not one or two, sometimes also only a fraction of one, because two or three frokes and knives had penetrated the same crêpe suzette. This happened so long as everyone had a stack of crêpe suzette in front of oneself, so large that the plates were no longer to be seen, not even the underplates. But it was still important to get as much of the orange sauce as possible, scraped up with their spoons from the cloths. But then, suddenly, all was over so far. Even though at least a few crêpe suzette still remained in the middle of the table, some flowers were there now as well. Five seconds maybe.

It seemed to be a matter of decency, not to start immediately, but then they started. They no longer needed forks, knives, or spoons, and if pig had had to see it, they would have been disgusted. It was repulsive to see how they started to eat - well, they were not eating. It was simply an unsovory guzzle. Had I said that I always thought that crêpe suzette was a totally overrated dish? Sure, pancakes - not the disgusting American perversion, but the European versions. So, sure, pancakes were always nice, and orange as well. But to fry something to cook it in a sauce then seemed a bit nonsensical to me. Like Germans who liked to eat their grispy schnitzel with a lot of mushroom sauce on it. That the crispy breading could wonderfully macerate. Well, a thin and grispy pancake in European style instead, with marinated filets from oranges? What a delight! Should I ponder on this dream now? No, but maybe I should prepare myself some pancakes over the coming days. With marmalade or something.

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Philosophic Overkill

Questionable Dumbness

It sometimes seemed as if humanity showed especially one major idiocy: to be total loonies. That means even if it were possible for them, at least today, to offer everybody a good and secure life, they would not do so. This shows in some elementary and basic aspects. And we have to say that it always revolves around one topic: men! Men as such around the world.

Men aren't capable of accepting women as equal. This starts with topics like unequal income for the same work and reaches out to topics like questioning their right to vote. The point is that this is regarding your people, no immigrants or other ethnic groups, where you could talk about being biased. No, it's about that European men cannot accept European women as equal, and Iranian or Afghan men cannot accept Iranian or Afghan women as equal. It seems as if the idea that someone could be equal to you is the greatest threat and daunt, especially to men. But finally not only for men, but for women too. We need separation and to be something special, to be unique. But we are billions - only to see that it's not so difficult to find someone who looks (nearly) the same as you throughout history. Only as one fact.

Is it so challenging to accept that others are also capable, maybe even to a higher degree as oneself? And that perhaps this is falide for everything? No question, there are people who are playing the piano better than I - okay, nearly everybody. But I'm also not the best cook, not the best observer of variable stars, not the best writer - I would say that I'm in nothing the best. However, would this be a problem? Okay, I'm a man, so I'm superior to all women. I'm white, and so I'm superior to all the other non-whites. Do we really need this kind of shit? The simple answer is: obviously - when looking at the world. This is all so stupid.

We have developed a culture - we do not discuss natural matters - where we have to be better, have to achieve more, and where we have to be distinct to the highest degree. And even if it's only the car that got customized, or whatever. This all seems a bit crazy. I own some bonsai, not so common in Germany, but not so rare in Japan. Many millions of people own bonsai around the world. I have no concern therewith. I do not get it.