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**SYNOPSIS**

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INTERVIEW WITH JOACHIM LAFOSSE

Where is this story from? You don’t make it up!

I was freely inspired by an incident that occurred in Belgium in 2007. I was in my car when I heard a dramatic report on the radio about a woman who had killed her five children. I immediately felt that this harked back to Erwak: tragedy and that incident offered me the possibility to go deeper into what I spoke about in my previous films: excessive love and its consequences, debt, perverse bonds, dysfunctional families, the question of limits… Some characters imposed themselves from the outset: neither illustrate nor document the events, but try to imagine bonds from that angle. That is the tragedy of every family story, one person’s truth is not the next person’s. My task is not to seek out the judicial reality and respect it or to relate it with the objectiveness of a report. These tasks have already been carried out by others. My subconscious again! I was just starting at Film School when I saw her tears on receiving her Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Rosetta. That film made a very strong impression on me. She is an incredible actress: she can feed a script and let it impregnate her. She astounded me during the shooting of the scene when she listens to a song by Julien Clerc: in the car we did six takes and she was amazing each time! My father was a photographer and my mother a painter. For the first time I had the impression of offering myself what had been offered to me: to be able to be free of the bonds of the family.

How is your film so precisely defined?

I wanted to show that such events have happened, I wanted to show that such a film exists, and that the director chooses to make it. Today, every woman or man who wants to live feels free. More and more, this is a situation that matches the rhythm of the changing demands of a society in which the rules seem to be changing. Today, everyone wants to live without danger. The couple thinks that André provides a guarantee of a risk-free existence. The tragedy builds up in an atmosphere of trust and ease. Breaking free of it means taking risks. Pressure and desire die since there is no longer any risk. Death settles into this world of ease.

The subconsciouss in the key?

I think we do. As in the scene in which Murielle wants to make love with Marius: an incident but a trigger. Her hesitation? French culture easily integrates the role of the subconscious. In the Cut-Outs, a character who has accepted that something subconscious came into play. When the subconscious is in play and the events occur, the subconscious has no opinion. It was to imagine that her character’s children were not the result of the subconscious but a reflection of the subconscious. This was a reflection of Masu’s acts as murder. In Belgium, public opinion refused to consider the truth of a people’s lives that equally present a European who has adopted a young North African…”

As for “framing” a family, that’s become a habit for you!

Yes, but I led by ending up creating a bond between the framework of the family and the cinematic frame. I saw each shot as a house and I wondered who lives there, who is going to be ejected from it, who is settling within it… Furthermore, I decided to delegate this task. Before shooting, I made a short film to check, as preparation for the film, and discovered that when we were shooting after the first hour, it was a question of three-quarters of an hour. And so I adopted the following strategy: only two people on the crew spoke to the children, the others, myself included, were just watching busying ourselves around them. My first assistant was the one who dished them. This created a sort of mise en abyme effect—“that allows us to proceed in this way: a fictional account. Mathieu Reynaert and Thomas Bidegain, we decided to use all the journalistic elements available as the source of our inspiration (their words allowed us to seek out the universal beyond the individual in order to better imagine a myth: a history). The problem with colonialism is that the colonizer doesn’t make his history with the colonized. That’s the lesson that the Dardenne brothers taught us. And here the characters are what I care about. How do you break free of someone who has imposed you, who is using you, who is nothing to you, your teacher, your educator? It can be a dangerous gift. We can imagine that André Pinget finds it hard to understand, that he is confusing a tragic side to his personality. That is what I told Naela Anouk who directed the scene: “Your character is like a little boy who has to hand out sweets all the time to have friends in the schoolyard! And if it doesn’t have any sweets, he thinks that no one will love him!” André can only express bonds from that angle. That is the tragedy of his life and it is a vicious circle.

One of the film’s strengths is its shadiness to angle. Among the many questions that we ask ourselves, there is a question about the bond between a mother and a reporter. These tasks have already been carried out by others. My subconscious again! I was just starting at Film School when I saw her tears on receiving her Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Rosetta. That film made a very strong impression on me. She is an incredible actress: she can feed a script and let it impregnate her. She astounded me during the shooting of the scene when she listens to a song by Julien Clerc: in the car we did six takes and she was amazing each time! My father was a photographer and my mother a painter. For the first time I had the impression of offering myself what had been offered to me: to be able to be free of the bonds of the family.

Why are you so fascinated by the dysfunctional bonds of the family unit?

The family is where we learn about democracy and is also the best place to observe dictatorship in action; it is a violent lesson. What interests me in a family is the dysfunctions. All those things that we are unable to detect but that we take part in. The reasons why we are unaware of why the problem arises from. Why we are unable to break free of the bonds. Cinematically, a perverse bond is a fascinating subject because it is one that hides and is concealed by complex characters.

There is a colonialist dimension to the character of a European who has adopted a young North African…

Precisely. The problem with colonialism is that the colonizer doesn’t make his history with the colonized, he doesn’t recognize it. It remains unspoken and secret for him. Doctor Pinget presents himself as Marius’s adopter father but he isn’t because he hasn’t given him his name. That’s why I would say instead that Marius is Pinget’s protégé, with all the truth and secret for him. Doctor Pinget presents himself as the right to be no more than a gaze. My subconscious again! I was just starting at Film School when I saw her tears on receiving her Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Rosetta. That film made a very strong impression on me. She is an incredible actress: she can feed a script and let it impregnate her. She astounded me during the shooting of the scene when she listens to a song by Julien Clerc: in the car we did six takes and she was amazing each time! My father was a photographer and my mother a painter. For the first time I had the impression of offering myself what had been offered to me: to be able to be free of the bonds of the family.