

Lost Identity

Is there a hope?

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Kapitel 2: Living together

Orlando and Ai had lived almost three days together, when she asked him one day: "Please, would you show me that place where you found me? Maybe it helps me to remember something, I don't know..."

Orlando, who got up half an hour ago, left his room. He was dressed in jeans and shirt and was looking for his watch, he had taken of and laid down somewhere the evening before.

"Of course, why not?" he answered. "But before I have to find my watch..."

"I guess you removed it when going to bed, so I suppose it is either in the bathroom or somewhere next to your bed...", the young woman said, giving him advice.

The actor disappeared into one of the rooms and Ai could hear a voice from away:

"How did you know? You were right!"

"Well, normally it's the same with me, so..."

She smiled and waited for him, until he was ready. Orlando took the leash of Sidi as well as the keys and closed the door. So they went for a walk. It was late in the morning, and a lot of clouds could be seen at the sky. A fresh wind was blowing, and Ai was glad, wearing a warm jacket. After some minutes it started raining.

"Great", the young woman just said sarcastically, putting on her hood.

"Well, that's the typical weather in London, but look", Orlando pointed to a big tree, whose branches almost hang on the ground. "That's the tree where Sidi and I found you."

After a while he added:

"It will protect us from the rain...", although he didn't seem to be impressed by it.

He was used to the bad weather, it was normal.

"I hope so", Ai answered.

Her clothes were already wet.

Sidi barked and ran straight to the tree, then disappeared behind the leaves. Ai and Orlando followed him, entering the dark shade of the big, old tree. The Labrador-cross was sitting in the long grass, waiting for them. He shook his coat, so that all the water got out of it. The young woman laughed and then looked around. She couldn't remember having been here before. Kneeling down, she listened to the soft dropping of the rain on the leaves of the big tree. There was nothing to be seen on the ground. There were no broken branches or damage at the tree, there was nothing. Ai stood up again and took a few steps towards the trunk, then suddenly stepped on something, lying in the grass. She looked down and Orlando, who was watching her, wanted to

know:

"What is it?"

"I don't know for sure...", Ai said, bending down and grasped at something, lying deep in the long grass.

When she took her hand out again, she was holding a blue dog leash. The young woman looked at it closely. There was something in her mind, telling her, that she knew this leash. Orlando took a few steps towards her, looking over her shoulder.

"Looks quite used..."

She looked at him, being deep in thoughts.

"That's mine...", she finally said, looking around. "But where then is my dog???"

The young man patted Sidi and said:

"Maybe he ran away? And maybe that's why Sidi ran towards this tree?"

Ai shrugged her shoulders.

"Maybe..."

They searched together in the long grass for some minutes, but didn't find anything else again. Sidi sniffed at the big tree, snooped around the grass, and then looked at them.

"The rain had almost stopped", Orlando reminded, and the young woman said:

"Then let's go back... I think I don't find anything else here..."

The actor nodded, kept open the branches for Ai and then followed her. Sidi was running in front. The air was fresh, the grass and bushes wet, but that wasn't annoying. Slowly and being deep in thoughts Orlando and the young woman followed the black dog back to the house.

The fact that she had an own dog didn't get out of her mind. Ai had recognized, that she could get along with Sidi very well, from the beginning. Orlando picked up her thoughts when saying:

"Ai, your dog must have been female, I suppose..."

"Why do you think so?" she wanted to know.

The actor explained:

"Because Sidi ran away from me very fast and then snooped around the tree... That's typical for male dogs, smelling a female one..."

"Makes sense", the young woman agreed, and then added:

"... and it must have had a different color than black..."

The young man raised an eyebrow and asked:

"Why that?"

Ai tried to explain:

"Well... that's got something to do with when I first saw Sidi here... I just remember wondering about the black colour of the dog... I for sure expected another dog, with another colour of coat, you know..."

"If you say so...", Orlando only replied, looking thoughtfully at Sidi.

The young woman was sure. She was silent for a while, then asked:

"Well, it's almost noon, what about cooking us some meal?"

She went into the kitchen without waiting for an answer. Orlando followed her, saying:

"Hey, that's a very good idea."

Searching in the fridge she thought for a while. After a while she took out some vegetables and then turned around. Orlando was standing in the doorway between

the living room and the kitchen, and watched her. When she turned around to him he asked:

"Can I help you?"

She smiled, and pushed him out of the room.

"Today I will cook for you, okay? And you aren't allowed to come in until I am ready."

He laughed and said:

"As long as you don't burn off my kitchen. But hurry up, I am curious!"

"Yeah, don't admit that you are hungry!" Ai said and laughed.

But before Orlando could reply the young woman went back into the kitchen and remained smiling.

"If you can't find something or want to know anything just ask me.", the young man said.

"All right I'll let you know", she answered, closing the door.

Orlando sat down next to his dog on the couch, saying:

"Well buddy, what are we gonna do now?"

Sidi looked at him, and then laid his head down on Orlando's legs.

Orlando leaned back and said:

"Man, am I full! Where did you know that I used to be a vegetarian?"

Ai smiled and answered:

"Did you forget that I read that magazine with your face at the cover? But I would have cooked vegetarian anyway, because I do not eat meat, either."

"That's cool", Orlando was pleased and then added:

"But I am not as strict being a vegetarian anymore, like I was some years ago. Once I quit a pal's friendship because he ordered calf's liver!"

"Really?" Ai said, taking a swallow of her tea and then wanted to know:

"So you are eating meat, too?"

Orlando said:

"Yeah, usually once a week, because I had a bad accident..."

Ai looked at him and asked:

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Sure", the actor said. "Everything started eight years ago with visiting some friends. They had a roofed terrace that needed to be opened, but the door was warped by the weather. It was on the landing below their apartment, and it needed to be kicked open from the outside. I could have jumped straight across from the window, but instead I got onto this drainpipe and fell...."

He paused, and Ai looked at him, being really frightened.

"And... then?" she managed to ask after some time.

"Well, I couldn't move. I couldn't walk", Orlando continued. "I had no strength in my legs. I crushed one of my vertebrae, scratched a few of the others. I bruised my spinal cord, but I didn't tear it or anything. It was all such a mess that a normal X-ray wasn't cutting it for the doctors. I thought for four days that I would never walk again, and then I knew I would always have problems with my back... "

He was silent for some minutes and seemed to remember everything very clearly. Ai could imagine how he must have felt that time. Then Orlando looked at her again, and continued:

"Well, they did a neuro scan and saw that they could operate, but they weren't sure

how successful it would be. They operated, and I had this miraculous recovery. I managed to walk out of the hospital - on crutches - like 12 days after I had the accident. They thought I would be on my back for at least six months. I couldn't remember how to walk at first, and so I had to relearn that."

"I can imagine", Ai said. "But so fast, that's a big miracle!"

Orlando nodded, and then remembered Ai's question from the beginning.

"To your question why I eat meat once a week: The doctor that operated me at the time, told me later that my back was cured. My back might have been cured, but I kept an annoying pain. When we shot "The Lord of the Rings" I went to an expert. He told me, that one steak a week would lighten the pain. It is a complicated medical story, but it does work! Since then my pain is gone."

"Really? That's cool!!!" Ai said without expecting an answer and Orlando nodded.

Then he told her:

"An accident like that really does change you. To be honest, it was one of the best things that ever happened to me because it made me realize that life is precious... and that we're all human and precious."

He fell silent, and Ai thought about what Orlando had said. His last words made her thoughtful.

When the actor was away, or had something else to do and didn't take his dog with him, Ai went with Sidi for long walks, always having the hope of finding her own dog. But she had no luck.

During the days she was happy, drawn and had fun with the dog and good conversations with Orlando, but in the evening, when it was getting dark, she lost her energy and turned pessimistic and sad.

So Orlando saw her almost every evening sitting near the window and looking outside, having that sad look in her eyes. At the beginning he talked to her, trying to comfort her and taking her mind off her worries, but all his efforts wouldn't help. He didn't even know if she was listening to him or realized the words he was speaking. She didn't move or say anything. Then he decided to leave her alone, hoping that she would change her behaviour on her own.

But today the actor couldn't resist going to her and trying to comfort her. He wanted her to be happy and not to be as melancholy. So he took a seat next to her, saying:

"Come on, I can't see you, being so sad. Don't let hope go, everything will be all right again, I am sure. I know that waiting is hard..."

But she only nodded, didn't say anything and just stared out of the window.

The actor thought for a while about what to do. The only thing maybe was to do something together with her, to go somewhere or to do something. She simply needed distraction.

After a while he had an idea and he decided to ask her, if she could draw his dog, who was lying next to them on the ground. As he could see later that was the only right thing to do.

So Orlando asked her, and after a long time, where the young man didn't know if she had heard him or not, she turned her face towards him.

"Pardon?", she asked with this sad look, telling him that her thoughts were far away.

Orlando repeated the question:

"Would you like to draw Sidi? Well, I have a lot of photos, but a picture of him would

be great."

It took a while, until she knew what he ment, then she answered listless:

"I don't care... but I need paper and pencil..."

"I'll get you that", Orlando answered with thirst of for action and walked out of the room.

Ai looked out of the window again and didn't move.

When the young actor entered the room again he put down paper, pencils and an eraser, then he placed a chair in front of the young woman and called his dog. He pointed to the chair and said:

"Come Sidi, jump."

The dog jumped and sat down on the chair, when his master told him so.

"Stay", Orlando commanded him, then he went to Ai and said with a smile:

"He is waiting for you."

She turned her head around and first looked at him, and then at the huge black dog. Slowly she took a pencil and started drawing, without saying a word.

For some time Orlando watched her, but then he decided to read a book and leave her alone. But he couldn't really concentrate on the text he was reading. His thoughts always turned towards the young woman. What else could he do for her? If she had a dog, where was she then? Orlando leaned back on the couch, laying the book aside and watching Ai. She was now really concentrated on drawing and Sidi seemed to know that he played an important role, because he didn't move, just his head a little bit from time to time.

'Maybe her dog ran away?', the young actor thought. 'Then she has to be here somewhere... Maybe she's at an home for animals? We should watch out tomorrow, maybe we are lucky... '

At this moment Ai layed down the pencil, took the paper and said to the dog:

"All right Sidi, you can go to Orlando. Thank you."

The dog barked shortly, jumped off the chair and ran towards his master, who patted him on his head. Then the young man got up and went to Ai, who gave him the drawing. Orlando looked at it and was surprised. The dog at the picture was Sidi, without doubts. He could only praise her. The young woman watched him and smiled shortly. She said:

"I know you want to comfort and divert me, thank you for that, it helped a little."

She was silent for a while. Then she stood up and said:

"I am very tired, I think I will go to bed..."

Orlando nodded, watched her leaving the room and answered:

"Good night...", before she closed the door.

The next day Orlando suggested:

"Let's go a bit outside, go for a walk with Sidi."

"Okay, yes, why not?", Ai agreed.

So they went outside. The sky was cloudy, but it wasn't raining at all. Orlando showed her the part of London he was living at, and she was interested in everything the actor said.

Suddenly Sidi barked and wanted to run forward, but Orlando kept him on a short leash and the pushed off.

"Hey Sidi, what's up, my boy?", the actor wanted to know, but the dog didn't listen to him.

It was still early in the morning and nobody was at the street. Everything was quiet, besides the barking of the Labrador-cross.

At this moment Ai saw her. A Golden Retriever lady, who came through some bushes across the footpath. Just at this time Orlando wanted to run with his dog, but when he saw the other dog, he kept his dog on a short leash and walked slower. He commanded:

"Sidi, stay!" then he realized, that Ai was running towards the Golden Retriever, shouting:

"Goldy!!"

The dog ran towards her, being very excited and licking off her face when the young woman knelt down to hug her dog. She was about to cry.

"Everything okay?" Orlando asked carefully, and Ai nodded.

"Yes... But I still can't remember everything..."

Being deep in thoughts she touched her dog and the young man tried to calm Sidi down, which he managed after some minutes. Then he took a few steps towards Ai and her dog, holding the leash very short. He looked closer at the Golden Retriever and realized:

"She looks dirty, look. Her coat is dusty and covered with sand. And she seems to be hungry..."

"Yes...", the young woman could only say, not knowing what to do.

There were some minutes of silence, where the dogs watched each other, then Orlando finally said:

"You don't remember where you are living, do you?"

She shook her head and looked down, being deep in thoughts.

"Well", he continued, "when the dogs come along with each other it is better to bring your dog to my house to clean her up and give her some food. She can't stay at the street..."

Ai stood there, looking at her dog, who was really glad to see her, and said:

"It is the best thing to do, I suppose..."

There were many things which wanted to come back into her mind, and she saw pieces of former events, that didn't make any sense.

So she followed Orlando and Sidi. Her dog listened to every word she was saying and stayed close by her side.

The two dogs got along surprisingly well. Goldy had been adopted by Sidi as a kind of mother, because she was some years older and the Labrador-cross was glad about being in another dog's company.

After Ai had bathed Goldy and brushed her coat, the Golden Retriever looked very good. When the sun was at the sky, her coat was shining like gold. And after having some meals Goldy was really fit again. Orlando liked her, and she accepted him, too, although she would first listen to Ai.

But there were more and more times when Ai suddenly held her head and closed her eyes. She had to sit down for some minutes, and after a glass of water she would open her eyes again. Orlando watched Ai, being concerned about her, and after he had seen this situation more often, he asked her what the matter was.

"I have a terrible headache", she answered. "I don't know where it comes from..."
"Shall I get you some medicine or call a doctor?" the actor asked, being worried, but the young woman shook her head and answered:
"No, that's not necessary, they will be gone soon..."

But two days after they had found Goldy, Ai didn't get up in the morning, and Orlando was surprised, because normally she woke up very early, got up and made breakfast. So he knocked carefully at the door of the room she was sleeping in and asked, if everything was okay. When he didn't get an answer, and just heard Goldy barking, he opened the door and stepped into the room. Ai was lying in the bed and stared at him, but didn't recognize the young man. She was sweating and her face was pale. Being shocked, Orlando stood there for some seconds, then he went to the bed and touched her forehead. It was hot.

"You have a temperature!", he said and remembered how she often had had headaches.

Immediately he ran to the phone and called the same doctor, who had examined Ai after Orlando had found her. The doctor promised to drop in as soon as he could.

After the call the actor went back to the young woman, sat down at the edge of the bed in which she was lying and watched her being very worried. She had her eyes closed now and was talking from time to time. The only sentence Orlando could understand, was:

"Help me know my name!!"

The young man didn't know what to do and patted Goldy, who was nervous and realized, that something was wrong with her mistress. She often looked at Ai and tried to move her with her nose. Orlando only looked at her. He had prevented Sidi from jumping at the bed, and his black dog was now lying to his feet at the carpet, feeling that something was wrong.

Finally the door bell rang and Orlando jumped to his feet and hurried to the front door. He opened it and led the doctor in, to the room where Ai was still lying. He examined her and the young actor told him about the headaches she had had before.

"Did she get her memory back?" the doctor asked, looking at Orlando, who answered:
"No, just pieces of it. This Golden Retriever is her's, we found her two days ago, and that was when the headaches started, I guess..."

The doctor nodded and said:

"Okay. Hm, that's no wonder. I suppose the dog caused memories, but too many at one time. That's why her body reacted with headaches and fever."

"What can I do?", Orlando wanted to know.

The doctor took a pack of pills out of his bag and explained:

"These are against headaches, and I will give her an antipyretic, too."

The young man nodded and said:

"Okay, thank you!"

When the doctor had finished the medical treatment he said when leaving:

"All she needs is sleep and enough to drink. Warm and fresh tea is the best you can give her. And she shouldn't be allowed to think too much about her past or to try to remember things. That will come all alone."

"Okay, I will tell her when she wakes up. Thank you again for helping."

"That's why I am there for", the doctor said and then left.

It almost took a week until Ai was fine again. In this time Orlando had cared for her and did everything for her to get healthy again. He made tea, gave her the medicine and read books out for her, so that she didn't have to think about other things. She was very grateful. He also went for a walk with both dogs and cooked. She often layed on the couch in the living room and watched him.

One time she suddenly asked:

"You are such a smart and diligent young man, how comes, that you do not have a girlfriend?"

He stopped tidying up and stared at her. It took a while until he answered:

"Well... I had a girlfriend. We were together for about two years and we were very close. But, you know it's very difficult to hold down a relationship when you are travelling around the world. She is an actress, I am an actor, you know. It's hard when you travel. It makes relationships a challenge. It's simply the fact that you are often apart, and at this time I was shooting one movie after another, we simply couldn't meet each other very often, although we tried of course. So we decided to take some time out. She is shooting some other movies, I took a downtime. But of course it took a long time for me to come over that and realize that I am single again..."

He looked at her, and she only said:

"Oh... I am sorry. It must have been hard for you...", and looked down, watching the dogs.

"Well...", Orlando didn't know what to say.

Ai changed the topic when saying:

"It's so great that the two dogs get along so well."

The young man nodded and agreed:

"Yeah, that's pretty cool."

There was a silence because nobody knew what to say.

"I had an idea", Ai said after a while, and Orlando, who had been deep in thoughts looked at her.

She continued:

"Maybe Goldy can show me the way back to wherever I live..."

"Maybe...", the young actor answered, then said his thoughts aloud:

"But why then didn't she return? Why did she live at the street?"

The young woman thought for a while and then admitted:

"I have no idea... But it's who trying it, isn't it?"

"Well, of course, why not?", was the answer.
