

My Mother is a Murderer

Roles:

ELIAS - guy 16

MOTHER 15 - girl 15, a young version of THE MOTHER

ULLI - girl 15

MOTHER - female 45

... marks a line that continues to hover in the air.

[] marks words that are missing, not said out loud.

- marks that the subsequent reply follows immediately without a break

MY MOTHER IS A MURDERER.

The names of the roles are determined by the director and team.

... marks a line that continues to hover in the air.

[] marks words that are missing, not said out loud.

- marks that the subsequent replica cancels, comes without any pause.

MY MOTHER IS A MURDERER.

A rural soundscape. It's summer. ELIAS is recording.

ELIAS

If I close my eyes, I know exactly where I am. Birds, raindrops from the roof, down into the grass, even though it long ago stopped raining. The creaking of floorboards as my mum moves around the kitchen. The clock, the wind, a fly, and the distant lapping of the black lake. I record **continuously , to be able to return without moving my body.** *(I make recordings, capture moments in time, to be able to return without moving my body: author)* It's the last time I'll be here at grandma's house, because the only way to get here is with mum and she'll soon be in jail. Because of me. My name is ELIAS, I'm 16 years old and my mother is a murderer. Listen.

ELIAS presses the play button on a cassette recorder. A short mash up of music from the early 90's are played. The music stops abruptly and a recording begins. The Mother (15 laughs). ULLI is serious.

MOTHER 15

Ulli, say that again.

ULLI

What?

MOTHER 15

Go on, say it again.

ULLI

Why? Are you recording?

MOTHER 15

No I was just going to put on some music, but it doesn't seem to be working. I'm hoping I'll get a new one tomorrow.

MOTHER 15 presses buttons on the cassette recorder. The recording is turned off and on again.

MOTHER 15

Ah yes. (TO ULLI) So you're afraid of me?

ULLI

I'm not coming tomorrow.

MOTHER 15

But it's my birthday?!

ELIAS presses the stop button on the cassette recorder.

ELIAS

This is a cassette recording from 1991. That's written on the case. That's my mum making the recording - she's going to be 15 tomorrow, and her friend, Ulli, is about to die that night; the night before. I came across this recording one night in a box from my mother's childhood, high up in the closet, here in her old room. The box had the words "mix tapes" or something on it. When grandma was still alive, she told me about Ulli – Ulrike - mum's best friend who sort of drowned herself in the

Dark Lake. Now I can see why my mother never wanted to talk about it. It wasn't a suicide. The sounds speak for themselves. **Something's about to happen.**

ELIAS presses the play button on the cassette recorder.

ULLI

Hey, it's late. Your mum's not home yet?

MOTHER 15

This is about what happened last time.. that's why you're scared.

ULLI

You shouldn't have done it. And I shouldn't have-

MOTHER 15

(interrupting) So I'm evil?

ULLI

We're not good for each other.

MOTHER 15

Possessed by demons?

ULLI

(whispers) No... What are you doing? (stops whispering) This must be the last time we see each other.

MOTHER 15

Oh I promise. The last time.

ULLI

You'll be the death of me.

MOTHER 15

Shhh...

ULLI

(whispers) What are you doing to me? No. I can't... Breathe...

Groans and sounds of heavy breathing / gasping and thuds that can be interpreted as the MOTHER 15 strangling or somehow killing ULLI.

ULLI

(approximately) ... No... Ah... Oh, my God. You have to stop... I can't get any air. Ah. Let go, I... I... Ah... Ah...

The cassette player falls to the floor and the recording is abruptly interrupted just before the murder sounds reach their climax. The cassette tape continues to whirr and hiss faintly in the background. *(The sound of a cassette tape when it has a recording on it but the thing that was recorded happened far away from the device. E.i. has low volume. Maybe buzz: author)*

ELIAS

There's nothing more. **Just the sound of the black water.** Mum must have dragged her body there [that night]

MOTHER

(interrupting) And that's what you think happened?

ELIAS

How long have you been standing there?

MOTHER

I had no idea that that... That it...

The cassette tape murmurs.

ELIAS

Why, did you kill her?

MOTHER

What's that moving there?

ELIAS

That? Oh, it's the waveform on the screen. I've forgotten to stop the cassette playing and it's recording directly into the laptop, but hey? Hang on...

ELIAS types on the keyboard.

ELIAS

There's something else here.

ELIAS presses the stop button on the cassette recorder. The murmuring stops.

ELIAS

Here. Let me turn it up...

ELIAS clicks on the computer and turns up the volume. A noise is heard and then, an almost inaudible voice.

MOTHER

What was that?

ELIAS

It sounded like ... Let me turn it up some more.

ELIAS taps on the computer.

ELIAS

Now perhaps

tELIAS presses play. The sound is heard louder and then, ULLI'S clear but ghostly voice.

ULLI

Are you sleeping? (pause) Can you hear me? (pause) I'm sorry I ruined your birthday. I... (pause) I love you. I (inaudible)

The girl's voice disappears. The cassette roars with tape hiss. MOTHER takes a deep breath. ELIAS presses the off button. The sound stops.

ELIAS

I thought Ulli died the night *before* your birthday?

MOTHER

It can't be [true]. She did.

ELIAS

How could she have ruined it, your birth... [-day]

MOTHER

I'm sorry love, we'll talk later... I...

MOTHER goes out, closes the door.

ELIAS

I need a break.

ELIAS switches off the recording. Time passes. The sound of rain. ELIAS starts recording again.

ELIAS

It's raining again. (pause) My mum and I never talked again about what we'd heard Maybe it was too big and unusual and kind of incomprehensible. How do you talk about things you don't follow, things you didn't think were there but still are? (pause) Maybe you don't need to talk, or understand, sometimes it's enough to kind of open up and just really... listen.

ELIAS clicks. The ghostly voice of ULLI is heard again (the same recording as before).

ULLI

I... (pause) I love you. I (inaudible)

The noise of the cassette tape.

End