

Avoidance–Avoidance  
A Project of Transparency  
(script 7)

By  
Jesse Ash

Performance Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2014.  
With Maria Caterina Frani and Benno Steinegger

Marino Marini Museum  
Piazza San Pancrazio  
50123, Florence, Italy.  
Contact: Debora Ercoli

## Character Notes:

## Mary

Educated. Elegant and striking with noticeable stature, poise. Moves calmly, carefully with precision, like a dancer. She is a film maker. One of the early pioneers of experimental film making. A soft, confident woman. Thoughtful. Listens intently. Passionate when needs be. Determined to get what's necessary to understand the world and those around her. No children. Wanted them. Problematic relationship with her career. Feels she and her work were manipulated by external forces: art world, critics, society, companies. She has an 'aesthetic relation to politics'. Very serious about the politics of looking and trusting imagery. Interested in the spectator's visual experience and seduction and its emotional and psychological effects. Experimented with drugs and sex in the 1960's. Never loved in the way she would have liked to. Never allowed herself to 'fall' deeply in love. She was always too careful—scared of that vulnerability. Instead, she loved her work and thus feels cheated by it [she never got what she thought she could from it]. A kind woman, but fundamentally hurt by not loving enough—by not taking the most profound of risks. And now its too late. She feels she wants to put these things right by understanding them, speaking about them so she does not feel like she is hiding anything from herself as she approaches the next phase of her life.

Ted

A little younger than Mary. Cinematographer. More simple in temperament and ambitions. Moves a little more slower but not clumsy. Prioritizes more practical things in a straightforward way. People. Mechanics. Friendship. He is a 'family man' but never had children. Wanted them with Mary and so after their relationship he could never have them with anyone else. He never stopped loving her. A string of relationships after Mary all hit problems when the topic of 'starting a family' came up. Enjoys making 'beautiful things'. Enjoys the immersive process of producing film effects. Has a tendency to disappear into his own world when making, or working on craft. Not really interested in politics, but values honesty, trust, respect and fidelity. Deeply hurt by the split with Mary, although he tries to convince himself otherwise. Anger sometimes bottles up. Can be explosive (never violent). Does not entertain conceit or hidden meanings, concealment, lies. Feels he wasn't good enough for Mary. This feeling of inferiority has plagued all his relationships to date. Feels both lovingly drawn to Mary while at the same time anxious and nervous.

Act I

Scene 1

A MUSEUM, MARY IS SITTING READING AN INFORMATION LEAFLET ABOUT THE MUSEUM, TED WALKS BY, RECOGNISES MARY AND STOPS TO GREET HER.

TED: [TRIES TO CATCH MARY'S ATTENTION AS SHE READS]  
Hi.

MARY: [MARY LOOKS SURPRISED BUT CALM] Hi.

TED: [AWKWARDLY, NERVOUS] How are you doing?

MARY: [ALMOST COLD] OK. You?

TED: [NERVOUSNESS CONTINUES, BUT WITH A SMILE TO TRY AND RELEASE THE TENSION] Yes, good.  
[PAUSE, SMILES] We keep meeting in strange places.

MARY: [LOOKS UP TO TED, SHE LOOKS AROUND] Not that strange

TED:

AKWARD PAUSE. TED LOOKS AROUND. MARY CLOSES HER LEAFLET AND PLACES IT ON HER LAP. TED NERVOUSLY WATCHES HER AND AFTER AN AWKWARD PAUSE AND GESTURING TO THE MUSEUM EXHIBITS CONTINUES...

Ok, maybe not 'strange'. [PAUSE, LOOKS AROUND]  
Interesting? [PAUSE, MARY DOES NOT RESPOND].  
(AWKWARDLY, LOOKING FOR CONVERSATION AND  
GESTURING TO THE SCULPTURES) The sculptures:  
they're beautiful...

MARY: [TAKES HER TIME, LOOKS AROUND AT THE SURROUNDING  
SCULPTURES, THEN DOWN AT HER LEAFLET, SHE TURNS  
THE LEAFLET OVER AND REFERS TO IT.]

It does not use the word 'beautiful'. [MARY  
READS] It talks about 'character' and  
'personality'. [SHE QUOTES] 'We must enter into  
the spirit of the character: here the challenge  
is to place the figure in the human space, to  
work out what he represents in relation to other  
people, other human personalities; when you've  
worked this out, you're done.' [MARY PAUSES,  
LOOKS AROUND]

TED: [TED LOOKS AROUND] worked out what?

MARY: [MARY SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS] The spirit of the  
character I suppose.

TED: [LOOKS AT A SCULPTED FIGURE] Spirit? You mean  
like making the figure life-like?

MARY: I don't know- (SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS) they're not  
my words. Maybe it means the character of the  
figure (GESTURING TO A PART OF NEARBY FIGURE),  
the personality.

TED: Oh.

MARY: [GETTING MORE INSTRUCTIVE,  
GESTURING TO TED BETWEEN BOTH OF  
THEM]

Look at us now- the distance between us. How your Body is positioned [TED LOOKS AT HIS BODY] and how that relates to the position of mine. I've been sitting down, my legs crossed, arms folded. And you. You have moved left and right, your arms have been in and out of your pockets. You're swaying in the wind with no anchor. What does that say?

TED: It says you're making me uncomfortable.

MARY: Me? I'm making *you* uncomfortable? Are you sure?

TED: Well who else is it?

MARY: Making you uncomfortable?

TED: Yes.

MARY: You.

TED: What?

MARY: You're making yourself uncomfortable. You don't feel right in your own skin. You don't know where to put yourself. Its easy to see.

TED: Well, this certainly isn't helping.

MARY: [SMILES] No I suppose it isn't.

TED: How about this? Or this?...

[TRIES TO PUT HIS BODY IN A  
'RELAXED' POSITION. MARY  
WATCHES AND SMILES AS THIS  
BECOMES FUNNY. TED USES SOME  
PLINTHS AND REFERS TO THE  
SURROUNDING SCULPTURES FOR  
INSPIRATION UNTIL HE FINDS A  
POSE THAT SEEMS 'RELAXED']

MARY: That's it! Well done!

TED: I am now officially 'comfortable in my own skin'.

MARY: [SMILING NOSTALGICALLY] You were always good fun.

TED: Thanks.

So, how's things? It's been a while now.

[PAUSE, MARY GETS UP MOVES OVER TO A PLINTH,  
MOVES IT SLIGHTLY AND SITS ON IT. TED WATCHES  
HER]

MARY: Yes it has, a year or so?

TED: Yes, [ALMOST TO HIMSELF] maybe more. [PAUSE] Mmm,  
well I'm still working, you know as always.

MARY: In film?

TED: yep. Still. You?

MARY: I haven't made anything for a while. I'm still working, of course. Thinking. Writing a bit. But right now, nothing's really happening. So I'm looking for [IRONICALLY] 'inspiration' [MARY GESTURES TO THE SCULPTURES AND THE MUSEUM].

TED: Have you found any?

MARY: No.

TED: [SMILES] I suppose its not that easy.

MARY: No, its not.

TED: I was talking with a painter once. He said he could never start on a blank canvas. So he used to deliberately put his blank canvases in places where they would get dirty, or pick up marks from the studio floor or someone's shoes, or some stray paint from another painting. He said he could only start when there was something to respond to. [TED LOOKS BACK TO THE SCULPTURE HE WAS MIMING EARLIER TO FIND A 'RELAXED' POSE AND MAKES ANOTHER MIME)

MARY: Oh. [UNINTERESTED, LOOKS BACK AT HER LEAFLET. PAUSE].



TED: [RETURNING TO MARY'S PREVIOUS QUESTION] So, yes, I'm doing fine. Just working you know. [PAUSE AND GESTURING BACK TO THE SCULPTURES] So what do you think?..

MARY: My opinion? Haven't you had enough of that? [SMILE]. I must have been hard work back then...

TED: At times. Of course. But that's you Mary- I've always liked your thoughts, your words, your ideas. You know that. You just say them with passion, that's all. [SMILES].

MARY: Well sometimes its best to be quiet and to use *somebody else's* words (GESTURING TO THE LEAFLET IN HER HAND). [PAUSE] Like the artist's. or the writer's [SMILE, IRONICALLY]. They know best.

TED: [WITH DISBELIEVING SMILE] Bullshit. 'They know best'. What are you talking about? Not so long ago you would have gone mad in here [GESTURING TO THE MUSEUM]. In fact you would never have been here in the first place! You would have contested all this authority. What's happened to you? [MOVING A PLINTH READY TO CLIMB, MARY SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS A LITTLE] You would have dismissed all this history. It was YOU who taught me to be skeptical about how things are presented in places like this. You always challenged the institution. [STANDING AS IF FOR A SPEECH AND LOOKING UP TO THE CEILING OF THE MUSEUM, MARY WATCHES HIM CONFUSED AND ENTERTAINED] You stood face to face with the authority of these places,

you know, people telling you how things should be seen. Explanations [GESTURES TO THE LEAFLET]. How [pointing to a sculpture] it should be interpreted. What context we should see the things we are experiencing for ourselves. [TED MOVES IN RELATION TO A NEARBY FIGURE] From here it means this, and from here it means that. This arm represents... I don't know... spirituality or expression or something and this leg... (EXHASPERATED) Don't you just feel sometimes you're being told what to think when you walk into these doors [GESTURING TO THE FRONT DOORS]?

MARY: [PAUSE, SHE LOOKS AT THE FRONT DOORS WITH TED]. Well, not really. I chose to come here. I was walking down the street, I had a coffee, I went into a book shop. I walked some more, I saw the museum, I came in. I came in to learn, and to see something I hadn't seen before, or spend time in another world, or someone's else's world.

TED: You mean the world of the artist or the world of the museum?

MARY: [SHE LOOKS AROUND] Well I suppose when you come to mention it, it is a bit of both. The museum presents the artist and his work. Any way does it matter?

TED: I don't understand this! Where have you gone Mary? [DISBELIEVING] 'His' work [IRONICALLY]

MARY: It just happens that in this case the artist is a man. That's it. That's all. It's a fact. I wasn't generalizing. You don't need to read some feminist critique into it. (Confused) You were never like this.

TED: [GETTING AGITATED AND FRUSTRATED] Me! It was you who introduced me to all this!

[PAUSE]

MARY: That's what happens over time. In relationships- You sculpt bits of yourself through your difference, then pieces become familiar. And then too familiar...

TED: But we are not in a relationship Mary. It ended years ago.

MARY: But still. We were. Things resonate you know, we take bits along the way and they stay with you. Like these figures. At one time, probably clay, bits squashed together on top of each other, being pressed by fingers and thumb. We all change Ted, you know that... We're getting older. Maybe I've mellowed out a little?

TED: I doubt it. Its not just how you *change*. Its how you see. I mean I remember seeing *with* you Mary. There was a time when we experienced everything together... The exciting things, our films, our ideas, the images we made together. And also the small things like choosing food at supermarkets,

paying bills, deciding where to park. All these things however trivial or important require two sets of eyes [POINTS TO EYES], with all those differences of opinions, instincts, emotions... Sometimes in conflict, sometimes in harmony. The world through difference. [THINKING] I miss that.

MARY: In general? Or with me?

TED: With you particularly. I loved our differences.

[PAUSE]

[IN THOUGHT] I was always faithful you know.

MARY: I know [PAUSE, TED LOOKS AT MARY]

TED: It's a shame.

MARY: What?

TED: Us.

MARY: Yes I know. But that's what happens.  
Relationships breakdown sometimes.

TED: [ANNOYED] 'Breakdown' are you fucking joking?

MARY: Calm down, [MARY LOOKS AROUND THE MUSEUM] please not here.

TED: You cheated Mary. That was the reason it ended. That was the beginning of the end anyway. Is that what you call a 'breakdown'?

MARY: You always had such conventional perspectives on things. A typical cinematographer.

TED: [DISBELIEVING] You're incredible. Sometimes its like you're heart has been ripped out. You can be so cold.

MARY: You never seem to be able to have a broader view on things. It was just a certain period in history. Commitment was a political construct not a personal one then. fidelity represented conservative thinking. It was not progressive. The 'epoque' was not a friend of monogamy.

TED: And what about feelings Mary? about people, you and me. Not fucking politics. So in your opinion its ok to hurt people [GESTURES TO HIS INTERNAL ORGANS] repetitively in the name of some ephemeral 'progressive' ideology.

MARY: It was NOT 'Ephemeral'. Things WERE happening Ted. Things were changing. It was not a time to be standing still. Or looking back.

TED: You have no idea. [SHAKES HIS HEAD WITH A SMILE].

MARY: [COLDLY] That's how it was. Maybe some people got hurt...

TED: [INTERRUPTS]... I got hurt Mary. ME. [POINTING AT HIS CHEST].

MARY: Ok, People got hurt, but you have to understand Ted, the word 'infidelity' is often misunderstood. Its not an evil. It has a relation to 'fidelity'. You need to see this relation to truly understand what was happening. [MARY LOOKS UP TO A NEARBY SCULPTURE, AND WALKS TOWARDS IT] We make representations of things, copies and we try to be 'loyal' to the original. I mean [REFERRING TO THE LEAFLET] the 'character' of the figure. How do you honour this figure? I mean the original subject represented with a material like Bronze? [SHE WALKS AROUND SCULPTURE, TAPS IT, TED MOVES POSITION TO SEE HER, HE IS CONFUSED AND ANGRY] You see, [SHE TOSSES THE LEAFLET ONTO A PLINTH IN HER OWN THOUGHTS] for me, the faith expressed by the 'character' to the subject comes from a relation between chance and endurance.

TED: What are you talking about? We are meant to be talking about your affairs!

MARY: [HOLDING/TOUCHING THE SCULPTURE] OK, You meet someone. You're not expecting to meet them but you do. It happens. A random encounter. A bus stop, a café, a bar, at work, a museum, a wedding whatever. You meet them and there they are. In front of you. Chance. There's nothing you can do. Now, some of these encounters last and some don't. The ones that do.. Well they last, they

change of course, but they endure (TAPS THE BRONZE).

TED: I have no idea what you are talking about.

MARY: Ted. All I'm saying is that fidelity starts as chance and then becomes resilient over time, with work. Look (LOOKING AT THE SCULPTURE), it seems permanent right, it has and will endure time. Of course it will. That's why it's a monument of history, that's where its value lies and its the material characteristics that give it this stability. [MARY INSPECTS THE SCULPTURE MORE CAREFULLY] But the form and the exact colour and texture of this particular object happened through a succession of chance moments or encounters. Ideas, trials, drawings, elemental reactions in casting processes, chemical relations at high temperatures...

Don't you see that fidelity is the transition from a random encounter to something more solid...(TAPS SCULPTURE)

TED: Let me get this right. You are comparing you sleeping with other men...

MARY: ...And women.

TED: Whatever, You are making a comparison between your infidelity and a bronze horse?

MARY: (MATTER OF FACT) Well, yes.

[PAUSE]

TED: (EXHASPERATED) Why are you here Mary?

MARY: Here? The museum? I said, I just came in.

TED: Come on.

[PAUSE]

MARY: (HEAD DOWN) I've been dreaming Ted.

TED: You always did. Sometimes vividly. I remember.

MARY: (SERIOUSLY AS IF THERE'S A PROBLEM) They are getting worse. My therapist says its related to my 'paranoia'

TED: I thought you didn't suffer from 'para..

MARY: I don't, but she says I do. We differ on that. anyway she thinks its come from the 'paranoia'  
[MAKES INVISIBLE APOSTROPHE MARKS TO SIGNAL IRONY].

MARY: Yes, that's what she thinks. Anyway, this dream... I am in a museum. And somehow I get locked in over night, I don't know how - so I'm in there and at first I find the silence disturbing (long pause) then I get used to it. And just then as I'm getting more comfortable things start to move. Not the statues [POINTS TO FIGURE]- I've



seen that in some Hollywood film - can't remember the name. No this was just the plinths. The supports (TAPS PLINTH) for the sculptures. They started to multiply and move together like some sort of dance.

[TED LISTENS INTENTLY, AND THEN MOVES. HE STARTS TO WORK WITH THE PLINTHS, ASSEMBLING SOME SHAPE OR FORM OR WALL. HE THEN MOVES IN RELATION TO THE FORM WHILE MARY CONTINUES]

They moved in rhythm like they were choreographed or something. I watched for a bit and then they stopped. Silence again. A mass occupation of plinths. The museum full of them. They started to drown the objects - they say art works need space to breath don't they- Space around them for the spectator to appreciate the work. In my dream (SHE GESTURES AROUND THE MUSEUM) the work, the sculptures were being suffocated. Drowned in a sea of supports. Pillowcase over a mouth. Struggling for life. Dry lips like some thirsty punishment. Boxes. Boxes. Triangles. Wedge shapes. Ramps. Circular stage pieces. Boxes on boxes, bricks in a wall surrounding me making dark spaces without air [TEDS FORM STARTS TO RESEMBLE WHAT MARY DESCRIBES], without breath. I breath more heavily now. From the dreaming. Nightmares really. My lungs move faster. (MARY

BREATHS AND WATCHES HER LUNGS MOVE] Sometimes I'm not sure who's in control of them. My breath? My breathing? Grey plinths all fighting for attention like they have been forgotten for so long. Poor plinths. In the store room. Grey. What a colour! Not even black. Under sculptures. Always used for something else. Never themselves. Mother Theresa. And SO many angles. (RUNS HER FINGER SEDUCTIVELY ALONG ONE EDGE) Corners at 90 degrees. Diameters of 50cm. 66cm. 140cm. A corner at 35 degrees a length of 200cm. Like some sort of code trying to tell me something. I started to read. the shapes. Through measurements. Angles. They started to talk. Not literally. No mouths. Just mine now talking to you. Anyway. Where are you? Look, can you see?

(LOOKS FOR TED EXPECTING HIM TO BE THERE LISTENING. MARY CAN'T SEE HIM. SHE LOOKS AROUND THE MUSEUM, THEN AT THE PLINTHS. SHE MOVES ONE TO A DIFFERENT POSITION. SHE SITS ON HER OWN FOR A LITTLE WHILE, THEN CONTINUES)

Ted! (MARY SCREAMS) I'm talking about the plinths. (PAUSE) My nightmare. They were talking to me. (NO RESPONSE. SMILES TO HERSELF, THEN CONTINUES IN QUIET VOICE ALMOST TO HERSELF).

Any way, The code started to take a sort of shape (smiles) like a form of language constructed by

the position of the supports. ... You know if you look from above, (SHE TRIES TO) You can see a template, a pattern. (SHE MOVES THEM ABOUT TRYING TO 'WRITE' SOMETHING) Well, you can read that pattern, like an organ reads music. Shapes. Holes. Sound. Music. Words. Talk.

TED: (TED SHOUTS FROM HIGH ABOVE) what did they say?

MARY: (STARTLED, FALLS A LITTLE OFF A PLINTH, COMPOSES HERSELF, THEN SHOUTS BACK) They weren't *actually talking* Ted. Listen. I'm trying to explain. They represented a language. Like symbols. The shapes of the plinths made some sort of vocabulary. And I was trying to read... Ted are you there? [LOOKING UP, TRYING TO SEE HIM] Where are you?

TED: (SHOUTS WHILE DOING SOMETHING) Yeh.

MARY: What are you doing?

TED: (LEANS OVER THE BALCONY) Nothing.

MARY: Look I'm trying to tell you about my dream.

TED: Nightmare.

MARY: Yes. Nightmare. (PAUSE TRYING TO REMEMBER WHERE SHE WAS)

TED: You were talking about a 'Vocabulary'...

MARY: Yes, so from above or from certain angles, they started to spell things out. Can you see from there? Do you see what I mean?

TED: (MOVES HIS HEAD AS IF TO TRY TO SEE / READ) Yes, sort of.

MARY: (WHILE MOVING SOME PLINTHS) What does it say?

TED: I'm not sure.

MARY: Come on.

TED: They're just shapes

MARY: What? Look harder.

TED: I'm trying!

MARY: I thought you were the cinematographer anyway! I thought you could frame things up perfectly.

TED: Framing is not the same as reading some phantom message in a pile of blocks Mary!

MARY: Look come on..

[TED AND MARY TRY TO SPELL  
SOMETHING BY MOVING THE BLOCKS.  
TED IS DIRECTING MARY.  
THEN MARY STOPS MOVING THE

PLINTHS. SHE HAS A MEMORY, HER HEAD IS DOWN, THINKING. SHE HAS MOVED NEARER THE 'BRIDGE'. TED SEES AND MOVES NEARER, STANDING ON THE BRIDGE.

You ok?

MARY: All this. Working together. Made me think. What were we doing?

TED: Us?

MARY: The film.

TED: Universal?

MARY: (ANGERED BY TED'S NAIVIETY) Of course bloody Universal!

TED: I don't know, I thought it was an interesting project. I thought it would be something different, something that we could continue to work on together, but in a different context, a different genre.

MARY: (SERIOUS, BEGINNING TO GET PASSIONATE) But you did not seem to understand how I felt about it. How our work reveled in form and composition and the abstract nature of light. (LOOKING STERNLY AND COLDLY AT TED) You see that right? You didn't seem to understand how the work would be affected in the context of a Universal Newsreel! Real

stories, you know, stories of politics and power and conflict from around the world. How did you think our forms would work in relation to that? You never really said, you just encouraged the project without due consideration, and I never stopped you (MARY LOOKS GUILTY, ASHMAMED).

TED: I thought we talked about it? About how our work would act as a formal counter to all that. Something that massaged the eyes, that worked with optics, bending light and objects, creating relations between things without having to describe a particular message, and that forming a relation to optics was political in itself, it was about looking, about activating the visual sense.

MARY: But we were seducing too, together we wanted to take our audience somewhere unthinking, psychedelic, *hallucinogenic*, we openly talked about making a visual form or material substance to escape within, to dream with, like opium or absinth or whatever, we were making an alternative, another landscape of mental activity. Don't you think by creating this aesthetic hedonistic place, we were placing the audience in a passive position, ready to be manipulated by universal newsreels and their partisan representations? Why else did they invite us? We were completely complicit. (MARY LOOS AT TED ACCUSINGLY).The very beginning of mass propaganda.

TED I never saw it like that [LOOKS DOWN TO THE FLOOR, PAUSE, LOOKING FOR WORDS]. Anyway (PAUSE) we are talking about different kinds of politics. (PAUSE) It was just an opportunity to reach a large public audience. A stage where our work, our cinematography..

MARY: (INTERRUPTS) *Your* cinematography [she raises her eyebrows knowingly]

TED: (PAUSE, SMILES KNOWINGLY) so this was the problem! Authorship!

MARY: Don't be ridiculous.

TED: You think I think they were *my* images?

MARY: Of course not, it's jus..

TED: I lined up the shot. *My* composition? Is that the problem? (VOICE GETS LOUDER, ANGRIER) I took *your* directorial territory? Is that it? You think I stole your voice through my framing? This is absolutely ridiculous!

MARY: I think you are getting carried away, this is simply about initials, credits. You wrote TN on the rushes, your impulse was to claim them. Yours. You wanted them for yourself..

TED: (INTERRUPTS AND ALMOST SHOUTING) I *always* signed off TN, I still do. I sign off texts the same. TN, LOL..

MARY: (INTERRUPTS WITH A DRY SMILE) Until I informed you that it meant 'Laugh Out Loud' not 'Lots Of Love'...

TED: Well, ok, all I'm saying is, you're reading authorship into things that don't need reading, and that's why we always come back here.

MARY: Where?

TED: (SIGHS DESPAIRINGLY. LOOKS DOWN TO THE FLOOR AND THEN BACK UP TO SEE MARY) You know what I mean... Initials, territory, ownership...

MARY: Control (PAUSE) You know, (RELUCTANTLY HONEST) it's easy to see how all this happened. We got to know each other because of your role in the industry, my role in directing, we struck up a relationship. Our relationship got stronger..

TED: Right so now you're saying you regret it. You would rather it never happened?

MARY: I don't know, sometimes I think it might just have been a 'marriage of convenience', something that happened through circumstance rather than emotion.

TED: (INTERRUPTS) ...or love?



MARY: (QUICKLY, ALMOST SPEAKING OVER TED) Yes, I suppose, maybe it was a *circumstantial* love. A *circumstantial* set of relations...  
Me, you, our work, our words, the tools we used, the devices we made, the light we reflected, the audience, you know, the whole lot. Chance, circumstance.

TED: (INTERRUPTS HURT AND ANGRY) Friends of convenience? You make it sound like some proxy state!

MARY: (LOOKS WITH QUICKLY RAISED EYEBROWS AS IF TO SAY 'EXACTLY' AND THEN SPEAKING SLOWLY AS IF TO CALM THINGS DOWN) Sometimes it felt like we both lost control.

TED: (IN CONFUSED DISBELIEF) What?

MARY: Do I really need to spell it out?

TED: (ANNOYED, EXASPERATED) Word for word. I have no idea what you're talking about.

MARY: [RELUCTANLY, SYMPATHETICALLY) We were vulnerable, there were underlying tensions, I don't think we ever really addressed.

Ted: Like what?

MARY: (CONTINUES, IGNORING THE QUESTION) Lets be honest, (LOOKS AT TED FOR CONFIRMATION) let's be

open for once. We were literally at war a lot of the time...

TED: (LOOKING CONFUSED, SHOCKED) Honest?

MARY: What?

TED: (LAUGHS) I can't believe this!

MARY: (CONTINUES) We were vulnerable, we had no stability. And it was at that time when larger powers got involved, they started to direct us when we were weak.

TED: (INTERRUPTS, SLOWLY, LOOKS INTENTLY AT MARY) We could never have done the things we did without them. We were liberated by their support.

MARY: But at what price?

TED: We needed them. Plain and simple.

MARY: All we really needed was the work. Our ideas.

TED: And each other.

MARY: You know Ted. Look, we're in a museum. That's no place for love.

[PAUSE]

(MARY CONTINUES AFTER SOME THOUGHT) MARY:  
Maybe the films we were making contributed to my

'state of mind'? Maybe the hallucinations in the imagery we made and the objects that we filmed somehow merged with my consciousness? I don't know.

TED: Are you talking about what the therapist said, your 'condition'. There was a period when you were really anxious about being watched wasn't there? Someone following you?

MARY: I doesn't matter now Ted. what mattered then and matters now is trust. Between people. Between us. You never believed me. You thought it was all in my mind and you still do. I needed support. I needed transparency between us. And you didn't offer it. You offered nothing. You didn't believe me Ted.

TED: What was I supposed to do. You were seeing things in everything Mary. You were hearing voices in the apartment, you thought the telegraph poles we passed were passing messages about you. You tried to get me to paint them. To camouflage them so they'd disappear. You started to read messages in the flower beds in public gardens. Some secret floral code like writing that you said was transferring information. I mean, come on, what was I supposed to think?

MARY: I needed you. I needed to trust someone.

TED: But it was too much Mary, you needed help and I didn't seem to be able to help you. Do you

remember in Moscow when I left you for a few days in the airport. I emailed you and you didn't respond. (MARY LOWERS HER HEAD) When I returned you said it was because you feared we were being watched, that our emails were being followed! Why on earth would anyone be interested in a love affair between a cinematographer and a film director! It didn't make sense Mary!

MARY: (ANXIOUS) You wrote 'weak and difficult to convince' and 'crystal clear' in an email. That could have been interpreted as a low concentration explosive liquid or chemical or something. I could not respond to that email. It was too risky. Things can be inferred you know. Words of love as you put it, can be translated into anything. You know how the Stazi spied on lovers.. you know all that, it still goes on. Those words when you described the contours of my face as a landscape. Beautiful words Ted, really they were (MARY LOOKS AT TED) I remembered them. But they are open to interpretation you know. Someone else could read some other content in them. Something that was aligned with their particular intentions. You know when you're looking for something. Something specific. Things you're looking at can start to transform into what you're looking *for*. Like you said, there maybe words in flower beds, or in the arrangement of these plinths.

MARY: (STANDS UP AND LOOKS AT THE PLINTHS) PAUSE AND THEN CHANGES SUBJECT) I've started making models.

TED: What?

MARY: Of the places we stayed in during that journey. Hong Kong, Moscow, Quito..

TED: We never got to Quito.

MARY: Yes but I still think of it somehow. I made a model of the Quito airport terminal, and I haven't even been there! [LAUGHS]

TED: Why?

MARY: I don't know. I just had the impulse. Maybe I needed to see those places that were part of our journey but we never got to?

TED: (NONCHALANTLY) Mainly airport terminals as I remember.

MARY: Yes, airport terminals. Transit zones.

TED: They're all the same aren't they? (PAUSE) Where are the models?

MARY: they're not all the same, they're quite different. [PAUSE, A THOUGHT COMES TO MARY'S MIND] 'The narcissism of little difference' as my father would say. They all have their own

identity. Little Differences. They all have different Characters. But those little differences are quite disorientating, like an American speaking English or a Portugese in Brazil. I keep the models at home, around the house. In the kitchen, by the sofa.

TED: Why?

MARY: Why the sofa?

TED: Yes, the sofa, the kitchen, why there?...

MARY: So I don't forget

TED: Forget what?

MARY: How I got here.

TED: How we got here.

MARY: Yes, ok.. How we go here.

TED: It wasn't just the journey that got us here. It was everything else. But I mean, does it matter? Cant you just leave it? it's the past do we really have to understand everything?

MARY: That was always your problem. You had no desire to understand. You just trusted your impulse without thinking.

TED: Well, its plain to see, you need to understand too much. You're making a language from plinths and making models of airport terminals for Christ's sake. Its too much.

MARY: (Pause) It allows me to remember that's all. I made one, a model, of the transit zone in the Moscow airport. Of that space that somehow evaded jurisdiction. I remember when we were there. For those hours that merged into days... that I began to feel really 'present' in that zone. I mean it was completely controlled, Air conditioning, tannoy announcements, vending machines and all that... but it did not have any sovereignty. I liked that about it. I mean, this ground is claimed (MARY TAPS HER FOOT ON THE FLOOR). All cut up (MARKS A LINE WITH HER FOOT). You'd expect sovereignty to dissapear in the sky (SHE LOOKS UP) but it doesn't. air space is claimed too (GESTRURES THE SKY BEING SLICED/CUT UP). So it was nice to just be in a space, in a room [POINTS TO THE GARDEN GALLERY], on the ground, without being in 'a country'.

TED: I felt trapped there. The rhythm of the place was terrifying. The smell of coffee and pastries so early every morning. 5am or something. That false, sweet air. Yuk. Claustrophobic. I hated it. I'm not sure why I stayed with you there? I was following you I suppose.

(MARY LISTENS INTENTLY)

We traveled from Hong Kong to Moscow. We took a plane in the afternoon. It was June. Humid. You said you were leaving because you thought someone was watching you. But that was the paranoia right?

MARY: (LOOKING INTENTLY AT TEDS EYES) Its not paranoia. I saw them watching the house Ted. I told you that. You never listened. You just followed. You didn't believe me. Did you?

TED: We'd just met. I didn't know you then. And it seemed from the outside that you were really anxious. I Could see that. But you were having treatment at the time, right?

MARY: (ANGERED / FRUSTRATED) You still think it was some psychologically induced state. You think it never happened? You think I was running from city to city because of some vision or voice controlling my every move?

(TED GESTURES AS IF TO SAY 'WELL EXACTLY')

I had to get out of Hong Kong. (PAUSE) Moscow seemed right. Cooler. I don't know. It was summer then.

TED: June.

MARY: Summer.



Ted: The end of Spring. Come on it wasn't about the weather Mary! It was about politics. You had it laid out in front of us. Moscow, Havana, Quito. It was a pilgrimage. You said you wanted to follow a line of red blood. 'The thinning arteries of socialism' You said. That there was still socialism in the world and you wanted to follow it, and see where it would take us. It took us to a city 1500 metres above sea level. Where the air effects your breathing. (PAUSE) So your political pilgrimage ended in our loss of breath, our light headedness! We found ourselves together with a sort of uncomfortable dizziness induced by politics not love... (PAUSE).

MARY: (TO THE CEILING AND LOUD) The Vertigo of Politics! (THEN TO TED) Could be a film?

TED: More like a thesis title.  
Look, it doesn't matter why or how we got here really does it?

[MARY SITS ON A PLINTH. TED COMES OVER TO EMBRACE HER, SHE REJECTS HIM. TED STARTS TO MAKE A COVERED AREA WITH THE PLINTHS. HE LOOKS AT MARY]

TED: I'm going to sleep.

[MARY DOES NOT LOOK ROUND, TED DISSAPEARS INTO THE CONCEALED SPACE IN THE PLINTHS, MARY LOOKS

ROUND, THEN BACK TO THINK. THEN  
SLOWLY MOVES OVER TO HIM AND  
JOINS HIM]

END.