

Official Selection
HOLLAND FILM
MEETING 2022

The Fine Art Of Keeping A Secret

Written & Directed by Wiebe van den Ende

*The
hardest truth
to face
is your own*

A RINKEL FILM production | Animated sequences by SECRET LEVEL
Executive producers Reinier Selen (NL) | Eric W. Shamlin | Boudewijn Brouwer

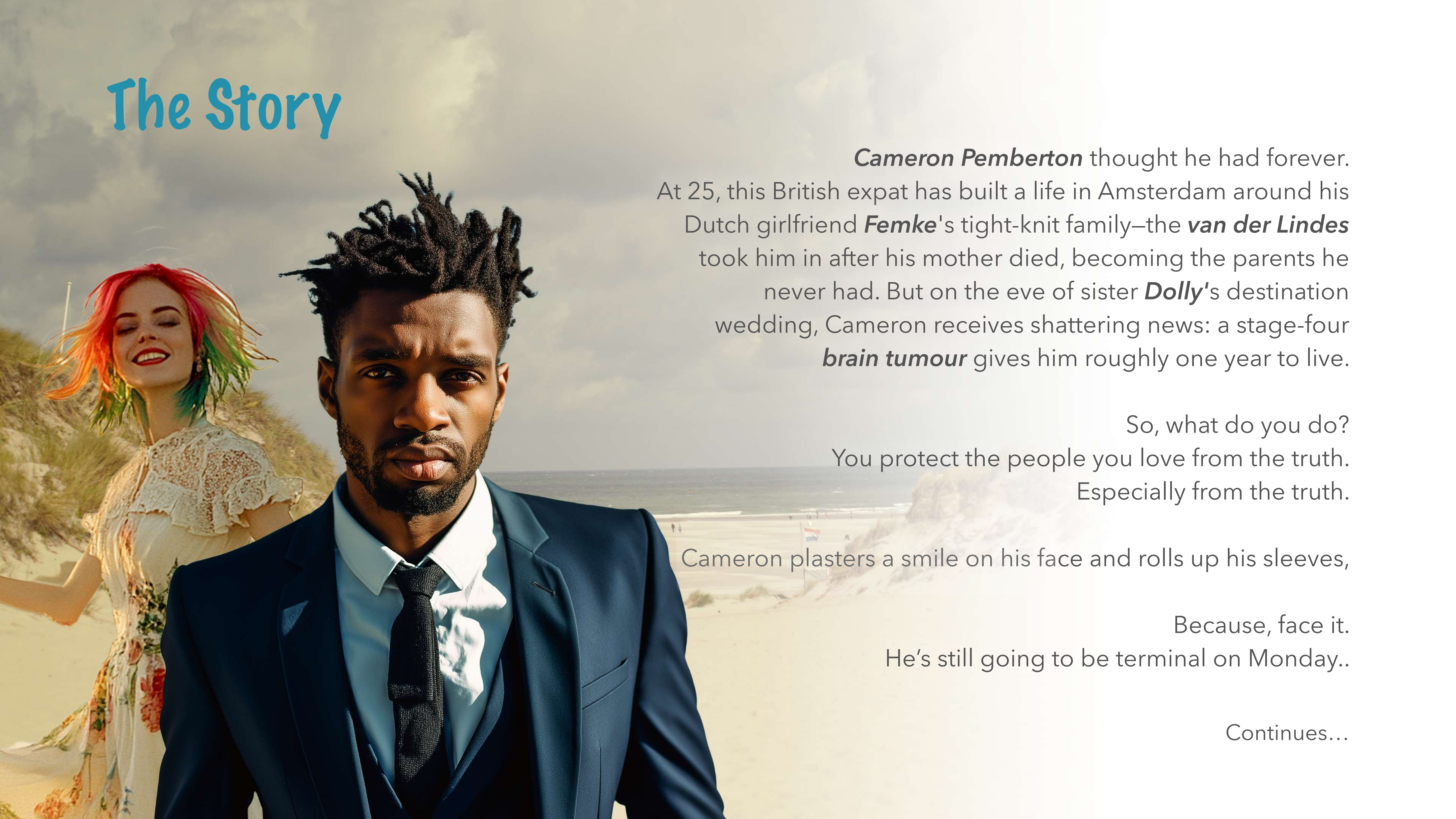
NL FILM
FONDS

SECRET
LEVEL


Rinkel Film



The Story

A man with dark skin and dreadlocks, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and dark tie, stands in the foreground looking directly at the camera. Behind him to the left, a woman with vibrant rainbow-colored hair, wearing a white lace wedding dress, is smiling and looking away. They are on a sandy beach with the ocean and a cloudy sky in the background.

Cameron Pemberton thought he had forever. At 25, this British expat has built a life in Amsterdam around his Dutch girlfriend **Femke**'s tight-knit family—the **van der Lindes** took him in after his mother died, becoming the parents he never had. But on the eve of sister **Dolly**'s destination wedding, Cameron receives shattering news: a stage-four **brain tumour** gives him roughly one year to live.

So, what do you do?
You protect the people you love from the truth.
Especially from the truth.

Cameron plasters a smile on his face and rolls up his sleeves,

Because, face it.
He's still going to be terminal on Monday..

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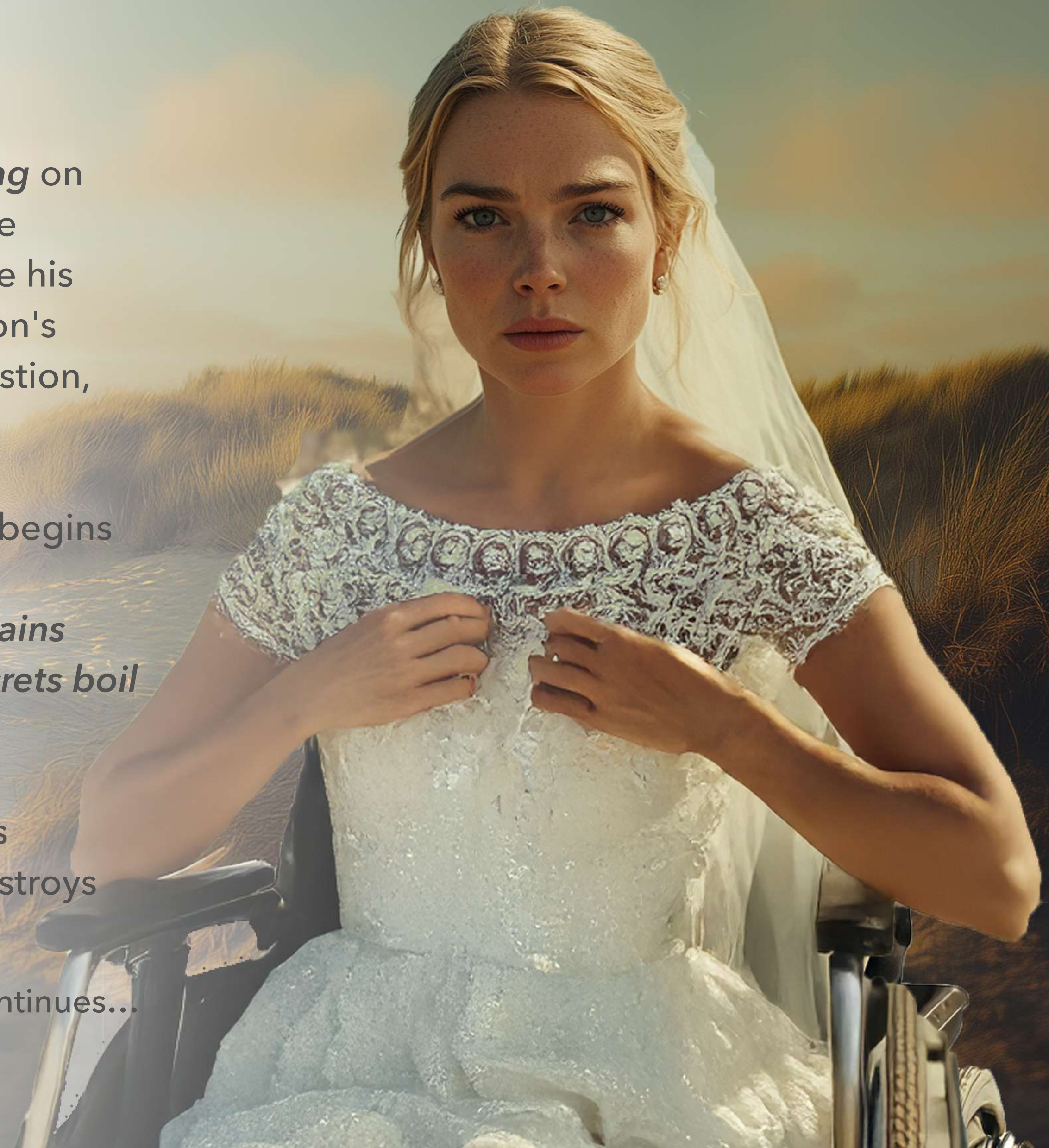
The Story

Set against the deceptively idyllic backdrop of a *weekend wedding* on the Dutch island of *Terschelling*, Cameron embarks on a desperate mission to give his surrogate family one perfect celebration before his world—and theirs—implodes. But secrets have weight, and Cameron's burden grows heavier with each forced smile, each deflected question, each moment of connection he simultaneously craves and fears.

As the weekend unfolds, Cameron's carefully constructed facade begins to crack. His work colleague *Shirin* crashes the party with *career-threatening drama*, his *relationship* with rising musician Femke *strains* under the weight of her impending European tour, and *family secrets boil* under the surface, awaiting the inevitable eruption.

Meanwhile, Cameron's illness manifests in increasingly dangerous symptoms, culminating in a *catastrophic public meltdown* that destroys everything he sought to protect.

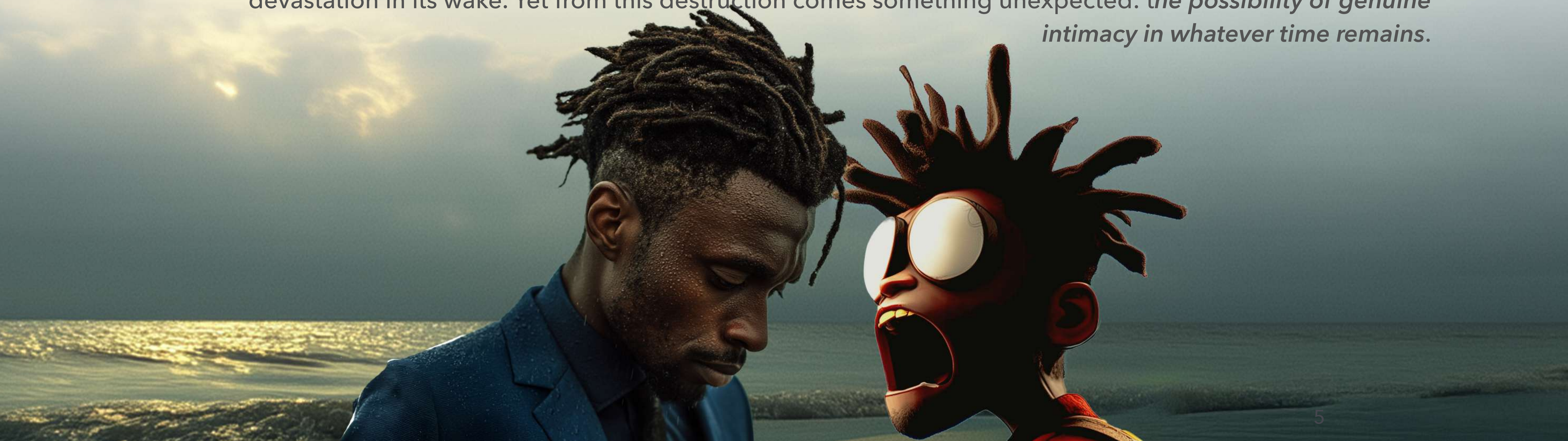
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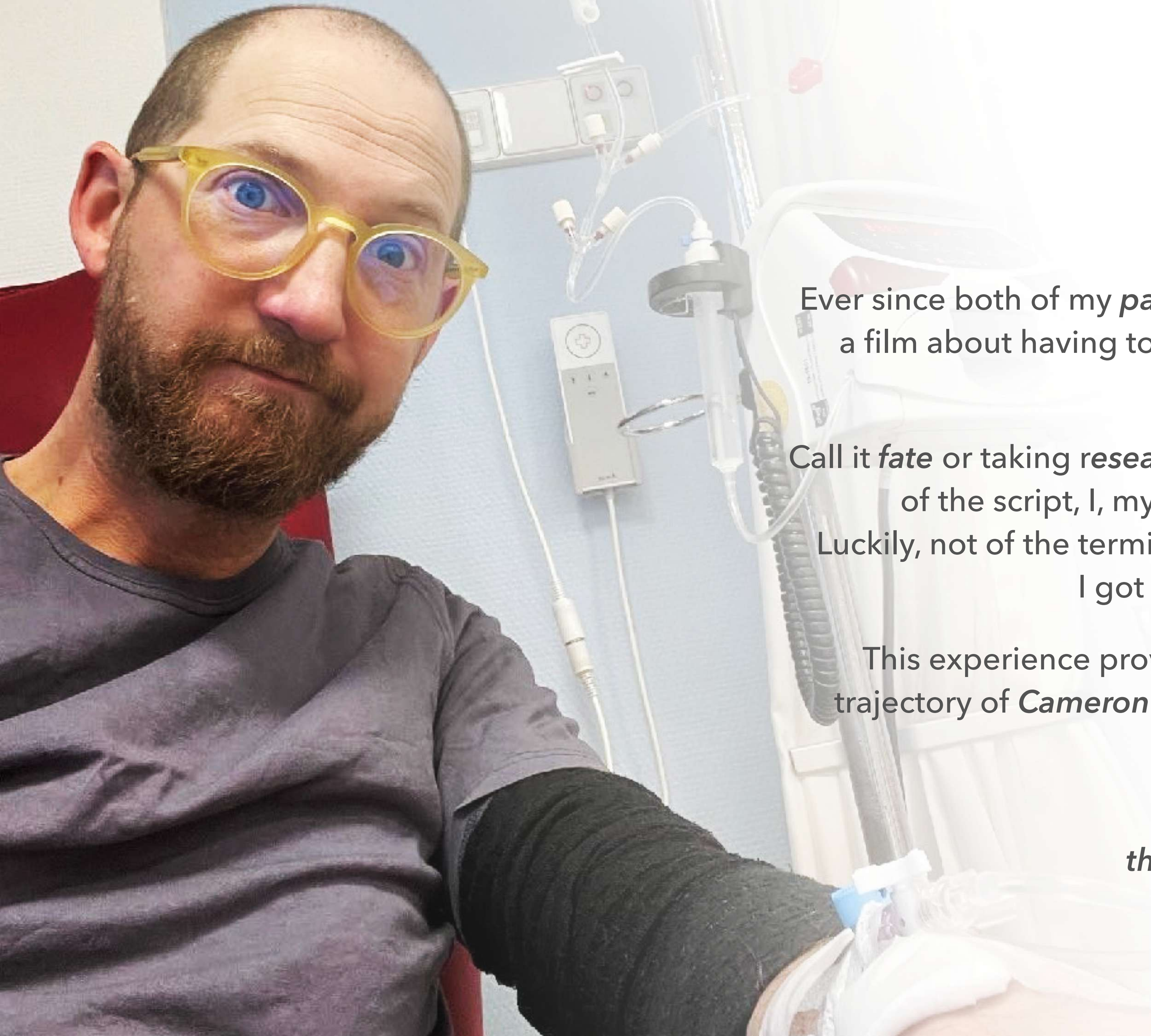


The Feel

The film's innovative visual language brings Cameron's fractured psyche to life through *animated sequences—vibrant, street-art-inspired interludes* that contrast his rich inner world with his deteriorating reality. These aren't mere stylistic flourishes but urgent transmissions from a dying artist's mind, revealing the beautiful, terrible, and darkly comic thoughts he cannot voice.

What emerges is a story about *the fine art of letting go* —of control, of protecting others at our own expense, and of the illusion that love means shielding those we care about from life's most brutal truths. When Cameron finally speaks his truth, it's not the gentle revelation he planned but a raw, unfiltered explosion that leaves devastation in its wake. Yet from this destruction comes something unexpected: *the possibility of genuine intimacy in whatever time remains.*



A man with a beard and yellow glasses is lying in a hospital bed, looking towards the camera. He is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. Medical equipment, including an IV drip and a blood pressure cuff, are visible on his arm. The background shows a hospital room with a light blue wall and medical equipment.

And then it got personal

Ever since both of my *parents died of cancer*, I wanted to make a film about having to share that devastating news with your loved ones.

Call it *fate* or taking *research a bit too far*, but during the writing of the script, I, myself, was *diagnosed with colon cancer*. Luckily, not of the terminal kind, and after surgery and chemo, I got *green-lit* for another chapter in my life.

This experience provides me with a *unique insight* into the trajectory of *Cameron's psyche* and the dos and don'ts while facing your own mortality.

Needless to say,
this film is now more personal than ever.

Why it matters

In a world *increasingly disconnected* despite digital proximity, *The Fine Art of Keeping A Secret* explores what it truly means to be *present with those we love*. It asks whether our impulse to protect others from pain might actually rob them—and us—of authentic connection.

The film draws from writer-director Wiebe van den Ende's own experience with cancer, bringing *unflinching honesty* to Cameron's journey while finding *humour in the darkest moments*. This isn't tragedy porn but a celebration of *life's messy, imperfect beauty*—the kind of story that makes audiences laugh, cry, and ultimately feel more alive.

With its blend of *emotional authenticity, visual innovation, and dark comedy*, the film sits comfortably alongside international successes like *The Farewell*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, and *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* — stories that find profound truth in family dysfunction and unexpected grace in life's most challenging moments.





The Fine Art Of Keeping A Secret offers audiences something rare:
A terminal illness story that's more about living than dying, told through the unique lens
of a visual artist whose imagination becomes our window into his experience.

It's a film that trusts its audience to handle complexity – where love and selfishness,
protection and control, humour and heartbreak exist in the same frame.

This is cinema that matters:
honest, innovative, and ultimately hopeful about our capacity to connect
even when –especially when– time is running out..

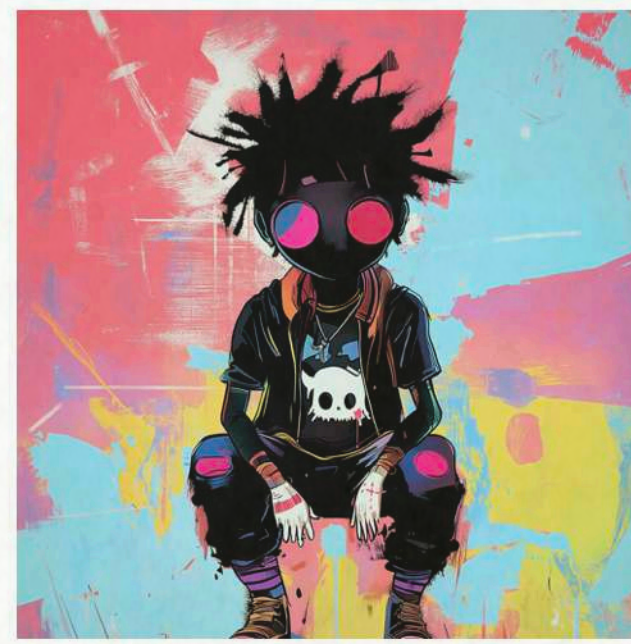
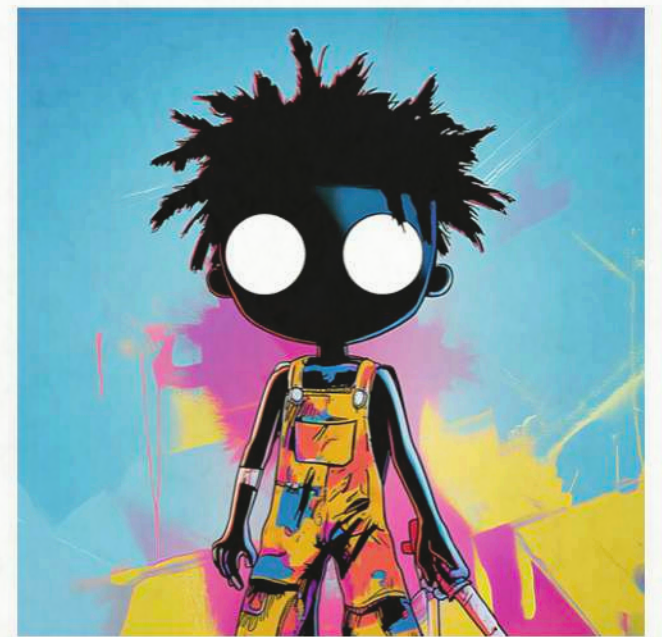
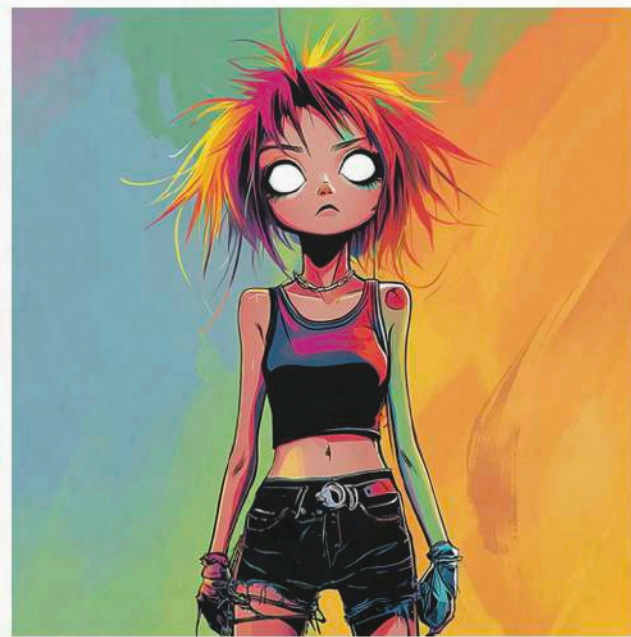
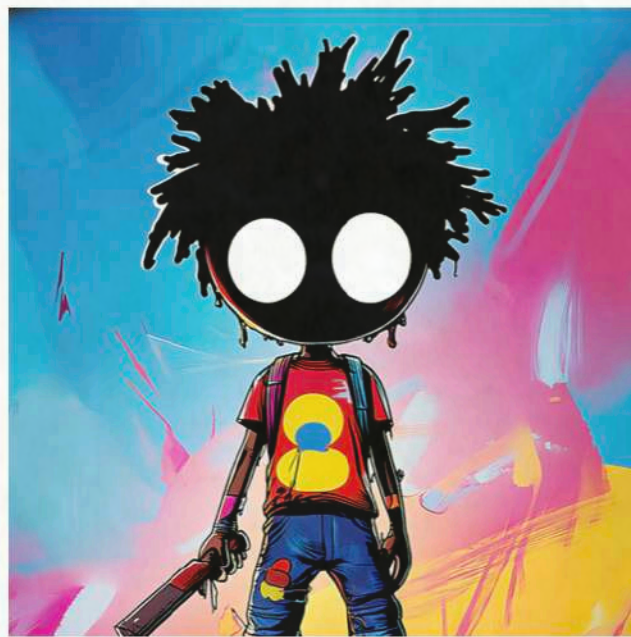


ANIMATED SEQUENCES BY

SECRET LEVEL

WE ARE A NEXT-GEN ENTERTAINMENT STUDIO

Secret Level is a next-generation entertainment studio where storytelling meets cutting-edge technology. As the **first AI-native production company**, we create groundbreaking content across commercials, TV, film, gaming, and immersive platforms. By blending generative AI with human creativity, we deliver innovative campaigns and original IP that redefine what's possible in modern production—fast, efficient, and endlessly imaginative.



The Characters



Cameron Pemberton (25) is a British Motion Graphic Designer trapped between financial survival and creative fulfilment. Raised to ***equate self-worth with self-sacrifice***, Cameron faces a terminal diagnosis while battling an ingrained compulsion to save everyone but himself. His journey becomes one of radical unlearning—***dismantling the "male saviour syndrome"*** that's defined his identity and discovering that ***self-advocacy is the ultimate act of love***.

Beneath his self-deprecating humour lies a man grappling with time's cruel mathematics: how do you live authentically when every day feels borrowed? Cameron's greatest fear isn't death—it's the possibility that he'll waste his remaining time ***being who others need him to be*** rather than ***who he truly is***.

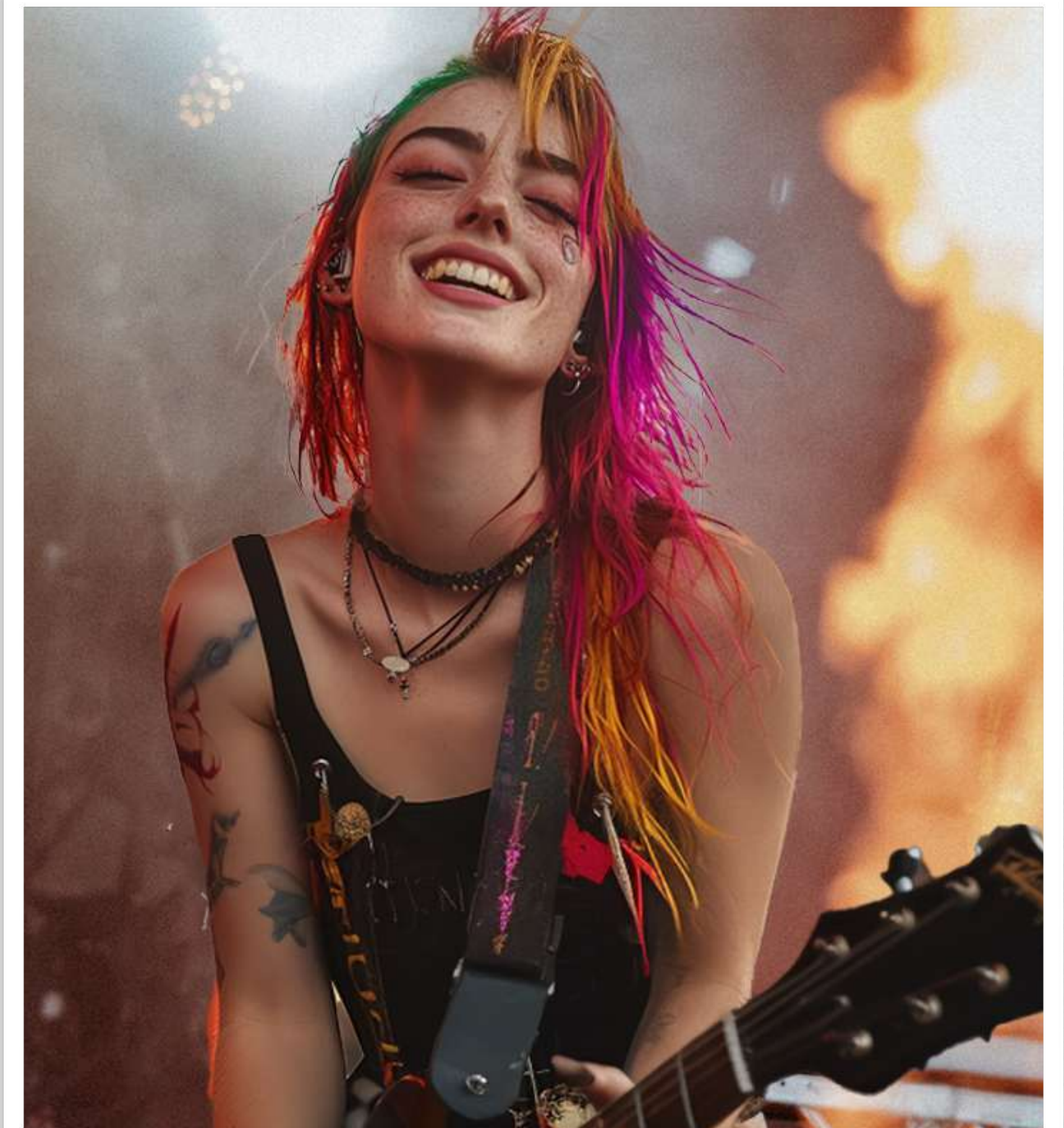
His relationship with mortality has made him both recklessly generous with his energy and painfully stingy with his truth.

Through his surreal animations—darkly comedic visual storms that blend absurdist humour with raw vulnerability – Cameron reveals ***a soul at war with itself***, where the dying martyr and the man fighting to truly live wage their final battle, with the remainder of his life at stake..

Femke van der Linde (24) is a *rising musician* whose electric charisma masks a deeper fracture—the impossible choice between **burning bright and burning alone**. Scarred by Pieter's betrayal and Dolly's devastating choice to side with him during their breakup and her own recovery, Femke has **weaponised her ambition** as both shield and sword, **propelling her toward stardom while scorching the relationships** she desperately wants to preserve.

Her relentless drive springs from a wounded need to prove **she's worthy of unwavering loyalty**—something she's never truly received. With Cameron, Femke faces her ultimate paradox: how to love someone completely while refusing to dim her own light, terrified that vulnerability will only invite another betrayal.

Brilliant and mercurial, she's caught in a perpetual dance between intimacy and escape, her luminous exterior concealing a haunting question that drives every decision—can someone love her fiercely enough to withstand her fire and faithfully enough to never abandon her, or is she destined to illuminate an empty stage alone?





Dolly van der Linde (29) moves through her *wheelchair* with the lethal grace of a hawk, the bride who commands every room she enters. An *unapologetic realist* who's become her family's unshakeable anchor, she's perfected the exhausting art of being everyone's rock while her own foundation quietly crumbles.

Her scars—visible and hidden—map a geography of survival forged by betrayal, accident, and the brutal choice between Pieter and Femke that nearly destroyed her family. Dolly's wedding becomes a battleground where her *razor-sharp wit* cuts through everyone's pretence, forcing them to face their own fragilities while she confronts her greatest fear: that being truly loved might require her to stop being invincible.

She's learned to weaponise strength as protection, but Cameron's hidden struggle mirrors her own—the terrible weight of carrying everyone else's needs while your own world falls apart. Beneath her armour lies a woman who's discovered that *perfection is overrated*, but *vulnerability? That's still terrifying.*

Shirin Bahloul (22) is a brilliant young **creative strategist** whose razor-sharp efficiency masks the precarious reality of building a life in a country that sees her as temporary. With her **visa status tethered to professional success**, Shirin hides in perfectionism—every project isn't just work, it's survival. Yet beneath her calculated professionalism lies a fierce hunger for what she wants, a willingness to seize opportunities others might hesitate to pursue, whether in work or desire.

As Cameron's creative partner and **reluctant life coach**, she delivers brutal truths while wrestling with her own vulnerability: beneath her competence armour lies someone fighting to prove she belongs, professionally and personally.

Her greatest challenge isn't managing Cameron's chaos—it's learning that **worth isn't measured by productivity**, that genuine connection might be more valuable than perfect performance, and that **asking for help isn't a luxury but a necessity**.





Maarten van Meerenburg (33) possesses the rare gift of making chaos feel manageable simply by existing in it, his *heart as golden as his retriever Pegasus*. He embodies a different kind of masculine strength: one that finds power in listening rather than fixing. While Cameron battles his saviour complex, Maarten wrestles the opposite—the terror that his love alone might not be enough to heal the people he cherishes most.

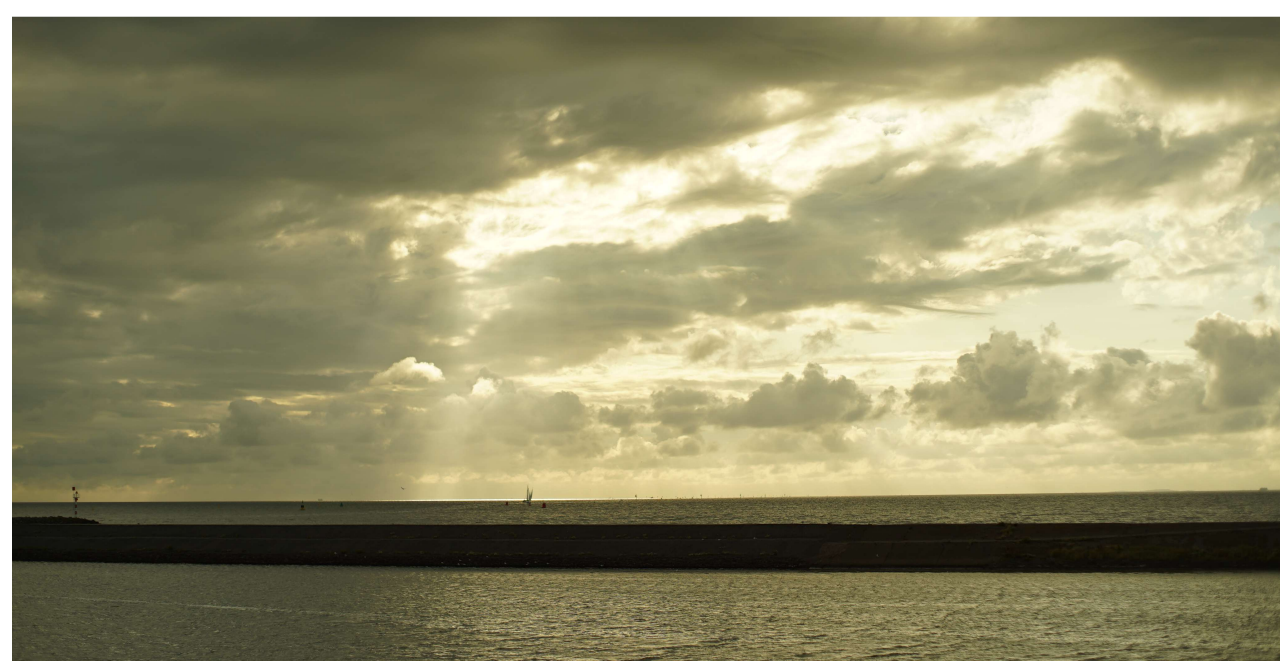
Haunted by his *absent father's* pattern of abandonment, Maarten has become the steady centre everyone orbits around, yet struggles with his own worthiness of love. His quiet wisdom masks profound vulnerability: he's so busy being everyone's safe harbour that he's forgotten how to ask for rescue himself. With Dolly, he's learned that *true partnership means holding space for someone's darkness without trying to illuminate it away*.

Robbert and Joke van der Linde (50s) embody *the yin and yang of intellect and spirituality*, grounding a family of brilliant chaos. Robbert's perfectly-timed dad jokes balance Joke's sharp maternal observations. *Having taken Cameron in after his mother's death*—Joke's best friend—they've become *his chosen family*, offering the unconditional love his absent father never provided.

Their unwavering devotion to their daughters creates the weekend's emotional backbone, providing moments of levity and hard-earned wisdom. Yet beneath their steady presence lies the weight of witnessing *one daughter fight for her life while fearing the other might squander hers for art*.



Terschelling - LOCATIONS



WRITER & DIRECTOR

Wiebe van den Ende (46) is a Dutch writer-director whose work explores the beautifully messy reality of human connection. Drawing from a background in high-end commercial and corporate content for major brands including **Disney, HBO, Kroger, and Ahold-DelHaize**, he brings both visual sophistication and emotional authenticity to his storytelling.

His films celebrate the imperfect, gloriously human business of actually living and provided him a chance to work with oa. **Gaite Jansen** (Jett, Peaky Blinders, In The Line of Duty), **Durassie Kiangangu** (Imperial Blue) and **Jim Deddes** (Joardy, Micro Maffia, the East)

- **Vox Scripta** (2011) - A young illiterate librarian discovers his talent for writing in the pursuit of love
 - **Eénnachtsliefde** (2015) - What happens when you meet the love of your life right after you die
 - **Exit** (2016) - A dark comedy about workplace ethics in an unlikely industry
 - **Sede De Furia** (2016) - A relationship study showing that every couple has their quirks, later reimaged as the VR experience
- Incitement*, which premiered at SXSW 2019 and received Forbes recognition as one of the year's 50 best XR experiences
- His VR series **My Only Way Out** was one of the first VR projects ever to receive a 50k euro Development Grant from Creative Europe and was a pitch favourite at many international film and VR festivals from Paris and Cannes to Austin and Qindao.

Van den Ende's approach combines commercial polish with indie sensibility, using innovative visual techniques to illuminate universal emotional truths.

His upcoming projects include

The Liberation, The Shredder, My Only Way Out (turning the VR concept into an 8-episode TV Series), and *Becoming Cupid*.

wiebe@wiebevandenende.com

The Fine art Of Keeping A Secret



DOP



Aziz Al-Dilaimi

Amsterdam-based
award-winning cinematographer

2015 NFF Wildcard

2017 - 2 Golden Calf nominations

2018 - Dutch Entry Oscars

2020 - ADCN Best Cinematography Award

2021 - Berlinale Talents

2024 - Dutch Film Critic Prize (Torch Song)

Azizaldilaimi.com

EDITOR



Haukje Heuff

Amsterdam-based
Internationally acclaimed editor

1998 - Your life on video (CCCP)

2007 - Master Film Edit (Portland, Main)

2007- AVID Master (New York)

2021 - Inside the Mind of a Con Artists

2023 - Inside Russia.. Storyville BBC

2024 - The Pentecost Prince

haukjeheuff.nl

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

***Eric W. Shamlin** is the CEO of Secret Level, the leading AI-native entertainment studio redefining the future of storytelling. With a career spanning three decades across Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and Silicon Valley, Eric is a **multi-Emmy, Peabody, and Cannes Lions winner**. He began as a field journalist for ABC News, reporting from war zones, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters—where he developed an enduring passion for human stories told under pressure.*

*Today, Eric sits on the **Television Academy's Board of Governors**, where he chairs their AI Task Force, drives innovation at the **Producers Guild of America**, and serves as an **advisor to the SXSW Film Festival**.*

As an all-terrain storyteller, Eric champions the next wave of artists who fearlessly fuse culture and code.



<http://www.secretlevel.co/>



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

***Boudewijn Brouwer** brings the rare combination of European sensibility and American scale to every project he touches. Over the past decade, he's built a reputation for turning ambitious creative visions into flawless executions—whether crafting intimate digital stories or orchestrating Super Bowl spectacles for the world's most demanding brands.*

His journey from Amsterdam's creative scene to New York's relentless pace taught him that great production isn't just about managing budgets and schedules—it's about protecting the soul of an idea while navigating the beautiful chaos of bringing it to life. Boudewijn has mastered the delicate art of being simultaneously the creative's champion and the client's trusted advisor.

Drawing from deep experience across feature films, television, and commercial production, he possesses that invaluable sixth sense for what can go wrong before it does, and more importantly, how to turn obstacles into opportunities. He's the kind of producer who arrives on set having already solved tomorrow's problems, leaving everyone else free to focus on the magic.

For teams with impossible deadlines and uncompromising standards, Boudewijn doesn't just deliver—he elevates.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



*Rinkel Film & Docs is an Amsterdam-based film production company founded by **Reinier Selen** in 1996. We create narratives that give you food for thought. Never afraid to provoke, challenge or rebel to tell our stories. Our first feature film was **Van God Los**, our last one is not even written yet.*

In the past 27 years, we have established a remarkable name in the global film industry and we're proud to have produced award-winning features, TV Series and TV movies.

*Our films were nominated for A-festivals such as the **European Film Awards**, **Toronto** and **Sundance**. **Rafiki**, the Kenian LGBTQ drama was selected for **Cannes** and other festivals worldwide. We are proud that our movies are made by **Oscar-nominated directors** such as **Paula van der Oest** and **Ben Sombogaart**.*

We have produced 39 films and TV series and grossed over 150 awards at filmfestivals worldwide. Productions that are vulnerable, tough, direct and humane. Productions that are mostly inspired by real authentic stories.

*Creative producer **Jelle Nesna** has been working with Rinkel Film for over 15 years on projects like **Accused**, **Rafael**, **Hidden in the Spotlight** and **Strijder**.*

*Together with **Stichting Film Collective**, a foundation by Rinkel Film & Docs, they strive to make an impact with all documentary and fiction productions. By bringing meaningful subjects to the right audience and thereby starting important, and sometimes complicated, conversations to bring people together.*

We value our work and our employees. Our workplace offers a safe space where creatives can flourish and bring their ideas to life.

rinkelfilm.com