

Sketches of the Inchoate

Analysis of Main Characters



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Ida is not a typical muse

Our relationship wouldn't work without her professionalism.

During the flooding -

In a different set of facts, being able to quickly and calmly execute like we both did, could mean the difference between life and death.

During the shopping -

It's stupid, but it would have spoiled the romance, if we argued over mundane decisions -

Loser stuff:

That which causes pointless unhappiness, with the idea that high-functioning people don't care about stuff like that, and are happier because of it.

Instead, we plow through the scene, because we both want the same thing, so we operate as a team, suspending irrelevant preferences, in light of a shared goal.

Being a professional in a high-stress environment makes these behaviors automatic after a while, and that's definitely an upside to dating someone with a high-stress job, provided they're actually good at it, which I plainly suggest is the case with Ida -

She's both brilliant and competent.

The downside is the borderline autism of Ove, where emotional considerations get processed incorrectly -

He buys his rat a racecar, because he incorrectly thinks that it cares.

Nonetheless, he's successful, because his job is quantitative, scientific, and strategic, and he's clearly really good at it.

He doesn't have to make people happy at work, and I suggest he's even printing porn at work, which is wildly inappropriate, and again an example of a guy that just doesn't get it -

His job is to keep the lights on, which he does.

Ove is an absurd person meant to highlight a real personality defect, which is that some people simply cannot effectively predict or understand the emotional state of other people.

Ove is nonetheless a good guy, just strange, and I both legitimately and cynically enjoy my time with him.

Ida is highly, emotionally aware, though with a touch of narcissism -

“... your majesty.”,

Deliberately, because I treat her like a Queen in many ways, and it’s only natural for someone to adjust to that, which doesn’t bother me at all, since it’s how I actually see her, with that kind of regard, albeit in a healthier manner, less the ceremonious pretensions, still clearly willing to tease her.

My character is menacingly conscious of what other people think and feel, and highly manipulative, even with Ida, but strictly intended for her amusement and happiness -

E.g., “The Beast Sonata.”

This is an insane thing to do, that requires a lot of effort and forethought to achieve an unnecessary outcome, designed only to make her laugh, partially at herself, but laugh nonetheless.

It is a microcosm of why my character gets up in the morning -

To make her happy.

And the fact that we can both execute on plans dispassionately, leaves me more free to create, for her.

This is a longwinded way of saying that she is certainly a muse for me, but the relationship nonetheless defines a team -

We share equally in the practical management of our lives, making our life together more efficient.

Ultimately, all we want to do is hangout with each other, with healthy interest in the external world, but nowhere near as much as we have in each other.

The, “Awful boat” sequence is intended to convey this -

She doesn’t have to come, as she presumably knows it’s on a swamp, and though she is legitimately annoyed by the revolting condition of the boat, and its embarrassing noise, she now has a story, and that’s why she does it.

Ultimately, she trusts that I’m going to provide something to talk about, even if it’s just with me sometime later on -

She's going to have an interesting life, and so she tolerates me.

So she is undoubtedly a muse for me, as she fires up my ambitions -

Even though I'm with her, I still feel the need to compete, to create, for her.

But we are a team of equals. †

Ida and I are old-fashioned

Ida and I are both old-fashioned, in that we have an education in both the arts and the sciences -

This is what people were like only seventy years ago.

It's only recently that we associate the arts with weirdos and losers -

Was Brahms a weirdo?

Bach?

Handel?

Beethoven?

Fauré?

Chopin?

Were any of these people lazy?

Mozart is often unfairly portrayed as a weirdo, but he wasn't -

He was just far more intelligent than everyone else, and less ashamed, perhaps because he was impossibly prolific and brilliant, having written his fifth symphony at just 9 years old -

Would you care what anyone else thinks?

I don't.

He had ordinary flaws, and extraordinary, unprecedented gifts.

Most people have at best average flaws, and average gifts.

Who should be ashamed on balance?

Mozart was not a weirdo -

He was a person that made everyone else feel small, and so in response, lesser people portray him as a weirdo, to size him down a bit.

This is something my character does on purpose, with stupid t-shirts, and absurd conduct, because the reality is, most people don't want to be friends with the nihilistic bar-fight super-genius, because it's beyond intimidating.

This is something Ida struggles with in, "The Empire State" sequence, where

what she thought was a simple folk song, turns into a work of DADA art, clearly specifically created for the moment, even the room and city that she's in, ultimately leading her to not enjoy herself -

It's too much.

She would like it at an exhibit -

She doesn't like it in her bedroom, where she feels emotionally safe with me, and, "koselig", which is a word built by association over time with intimate, and physically comfortable moments and textures, in particular with family and close friends, that doesn't really have a good translation in English, but rough justice says it's, "cozy".

The sequence is a conscious play on, "The Beast Sonata", in that I over did it, even suggesting with the title, the notion of cultural empire, which she has no interest in -

She wants a normal life, plus.

However, because my character is typically professional in my outward interactions, this is a rare outcome, and so our relationship generally works as a practical matter, and it is instead circumstances we can't control that interfere, causing both of us to temporarily shun the outside world, at times. †

Ida and I are conservative

Ida and I are profoundly monogamist, arguably codependent, with both of us being completely wrong about our perceived indiscretions, in my case, disastrously so.

The scene with Mø is designed to make a joke of the idea of indiscretion -

We're both too in love with each other to stray.

There is absolutely no drug use by either of us, which I make a point of in the hospital scene, though I make it plain that I probably have a drinking problem, but that's not a political issue, it is instead a character flaw.

Nonetheless, it's pretty obvious that we wouldn't judge people that don't subscribe to our way of life -

I spend substantial free time with a guy that has a pet rat, that he feeds steak.

We are both outwardly, beyond open-minded, but personally conservative, which is an anathema to modern politics, and again, in my opinion, deliberate, to denigrate the people most likely to raise successful families and create a healthy liberal society -

Monogamist professionals that really love each other, and their kids, and don't care what other people do, so long as you don't break the law.

Though not stated, the implication is that we're already married in Copenhagen, having been engaged in Oslo. †

The inspiration for Ida

Ida's personality and appearance are an amalgam of women that I've dated, mostly from Scandinavia, in all honesty, taking the aspects that I liked most about each of them, and combining them into one person, and the flaws that I found most charming, like her willingness to be essentially worshiped by me, generally without question -

I used to live on Jones Street in the village in New York with my ex-girlfriend from Norway, and our local deli guy would refer to her, jokingly, as, "The Princess of Jones Street", presumably because he witnessed our interactions, and though I can't say exactly what he saw, the text is generally consistent with how I really behave with women that I love:

Relentlessly celebrating the person, which is occasionally exhausting, and probably at times annoying. †

The inspiration for Charles

It's really me, and almost everything is real, or based in a real story, except, regrettably, I've yet to sell my algorithms, which are also real, which I should probably get back to work on, now that the Covid virus has subsided.

That said, the character that emerges after Ida has a miscarriage is admittedly, thankfully, somewhat exaggerated:

Externally, he's a baby, complete with a bottle, describing the external world with childish components:

Head + Bottle = Boom.

And I'm then pleased to discover this new law of nature, after the man collapses from his injury.

Internally, I'm a torrid, complex person, writing depressing music, talking to dead, imaginary people at a disgusting bar that plays strange music, presumably not very happy -

I've resigned to living in my thoughts, so unless necessary, my interactions with the external world are incredibly simplistic, and indifferent.

I don't even dislike the guys while getting beaten by them, and instead, I grin -

I just don't care, at the time.

Internally, I'm a disaster, and the sky during the bridge scene is supposed to reflect my internal condition, with the coloring of our kitchen tiles appearing just above what appears to be a slow moving inferno in the sky:

The colors of the kitchen tiles manifest in the sky at the far end of the bridge, as if we're heading back into our own imagined reality that we loved, back into our home, when things were normal, across a perilous path, the bridge, where even the Sun, a symbol associated with our love and fertility, suddenly appears dangerous in context, revealing its awesome power, appearing to burn the sky, making us modest, and afraid, before true majesty, Nature.

The lines in the cloud appear deliberate, echoing the lines of light behind Ida in the closing scene to the first book, suggesting that perhaps this is all no accident -

That somehow, my internal state is manifesting in the external world.

This is also implied by the lyrics in Petter Carlsen's song, "Pull the Brakes", where he says,

“I don’t care what it takes; now it’s time we pull the brakes.”,

Implying some kind of sentient action to stop what’s happening, to bring Ida and I back together, with a desperate intensity.

The idea being that I made my entire life into a work of art dedicated to Ida, which included my personal, physical appearance, with my body the frame for this total work of art -

That the energy of my love for her, and our unborn children, is so extreme, that when it derailed, it took out entire cities, all seemingly designed to bring us back together:

A cosmic version of the sequence where I assault Andreas, with both events arguably out of my control, due to my uncontrollable love for Ida, as I become an instrument of Nature -

Causing in the first case, the wind to blow behind me, through my rage, moving the trees behind me, to frighten Andreas, before I kick him, and in the second case, through my anguish on the couch, a bona fide geological event.

Despite all of this insanity, the closing scene is intended to convey that even this cosmic struggle was all an effort for us to simply be together, and be normal:

To be the family on the beach, with nothing to do. †

Sketches of the Inchoate

Musical references

Note that song titles are hyperlinks

1. Petter Carlsen, "Pull the Brakes" (2008). †

Sketches of the Inchoate*Our home*

As an idea,

My love for you can achieve the permanent -

The infinite, and immutable.

A jewel suspended,

In an infinite void -

The home I will build,

For you.

Each day,

You will rise,

Astonished,

By my love,

For you.

Its relentlessness,

Will exhaust you,

And so you will never spend a day,

Alone.

Even in death,

You will hear its echo,

And it will call you back,

Home. †

Sketches of the Inchoate

For, "Anna", in Denmark.