

GOYA

Goya follows Malik, a quiet but observant young man, as he ventures into a secluded forest with a group of friends. One evening, after wandering alone, Malik doesn't return. What begins as a search quickly becomes a psychological unraveling, as each friend gives a conflicting account of the last moment they saw him.

Through interwoven perspectives, the film dissects memory, guilt, and fractured truth. In each retelling, Malik appears differently, sometimes cold, sometimes scared, sometimes angry, leaving the audience to question what really happened. As the accounts diverge, so do the relationships between the remaining group members, revealing hidden tensions, old wounds, and the limits of their own reliability.

Goya unfolds with a poetic, restrained visual style that emphasizes atmosphere over exposition. Drawing influence from works like Akira Kurosawa's - Rashomon 1950, it situates the viewer inside the shifting consciousness of each character. The forest, at once beautiful and oppressive, becomes a metaphor for inner disorientation.

Shot between the Netherlands and Germany, the film uses natural landscapes and handheld camera work to ground the narrative in realism, while allowing space for abstract psychological tension. The film is intended for international festival release and offers a universal meditation on how personal truth can become distorted by emotion, fear, and memory.



Francisco Goya's oeuvre famously transitions from luminous court portraits to shadowed, haunting works like the Black Paintings, reflecting personal and societal rupture. GOYA mirrors this transformation in its shape: the story starts buoyant, with shared laughs and trust, and slowly descends into tension, alienation, and fractured bonds. The title nods to this evolution, inviting viewers to trace the emotional spectrum, not just in painting, but in human relationships.



Stella Adler: Acting Through Imagination and Given Circumstances

Core Philosophy: Stella Adler's approach is built on the idea that actors should not rely on personal emotional memories (as Strasberg suggested) but rather use their imagination and the given circumstances of the script to create a character.

Key Principles:
Imagination Over Emotional Recall: Actors should create emotions based on the character's world, not their own past experiences.

Research & Preparation: Deep understanding of the script, setting, and characters is essential.

Externalization: The focus is on the external circumstances influencing the character, not internal emotional recall.

Theatricality and Larger-Than-Life Performance: Adler emphasized that acting should not just mimic reality but elevate it to an artistic expression.

Actors analyze the script deeply, researching the historical, social, and psychological contexts.

They create a rich imaginary life for their character, rather than relying on personal experiences.

Exercises involve improvisation within the script's world, making the actor's performance more dynamic and vivid.

Example:
An actor playing a grieving father wouldn't recall a personal loss but would imagine the loss of a fictional child, using the script's context to build authentic emotions.



Lee Strasberg (Method Acting): Emotional Memory and Psychological Realism

Core Philosophy: Strasberg's "Method Acting" is deeply psychological, teaching actors to tap into their own emotional memories to create authentic performances.

Key Principles:
Emotional Memory (Affective Memory): Actors recall past experiences to generate real emotions in a scene.

Sense Memory: Physical and sensory details from the actor's past are used to recreate an emotional state.

Relaxation & Concentration: Before performing, actors use relaxation techniques to free their bodies and minds.

Personalization: Connecting the character's experiences with personal experiences to create believable performances.

• Actors practice recalling deeply personal memories to fuel their character's emotions.

• Techniques like "The Private Moment" (performing something private in public) help actors build emotional vulnerability.

• The actor immerses themselves into the character's world, sometimes staying in character even offstage.

Example:
If an actor plays someone in mourning, they might recall the actual death of a loved one to produce real tears and grief.



Sanford Meisner: Living Truthfully in the Moment

Core Philosophy: Meisner's technique is rooted in spontaneity and deep connection with scene partners. Instead of relying on memory or imagination, actors are trained to focus on their scene partners and react truthfully in the moment.

Key Principles:
"The Reality of Doing": Acting is about truthfully doing something under imaginary circumstances.

Repetition Exercise: A key technique where two actors repeat a phrase back and forth, focusing emotional shifts rather than words.

Emotional Preparation: Actors learn to create emotional states by immersing themselves in their circumstances, rather than recalling personal experiences.

Listening and Reacting: Instead of "acting," performers genuinely respond to what is happening in the scene.

Actors train by repeating simple phrases with varying emotional intensity to develop organic reactions. Exercises focus on being fully present and reacting instinctively, rather than planning performances. The actor builds a "preparation" technique to enter a scene with a real emotional state.

Example:
If an actor plays a character discovering betrayal, they don't recall personal betrayal but instead react fully to the scene partner's words, tone, and behavior in real time.

Method	Actor Example	Film Example	Technique Used
Stella Adler	Marlon Brando	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	Imagination & Research
Meisner	Tom Cruise & Dustin Hoffman	<i>Rain Man</i>	Real-time Reactions
Strasberg (Method Acting)	Heath Ledger	<i>The Dark Knight</i>	Emotional Memory & Immersion

CHARACTER PROFILE

- MALIK Backstory

Malik grew up in a home where love and chaos lived in the same room. His father's drinking could turn an ordinary evening into either a burst of laughter or a storm, and Malik never knew which one he'd get. That uncertainty carved deep grooves into him; he learned early that people can be warm one moment and cold the next.

As a kid, he became an expert at reading the room, watching body language, tone shifts, subtle changes in breathing, all survival instincts from years of never knowing when things might explode. But instead of making him more open with people, it made him guarded. He learned that sharing his feelings often meant giving someone the ammunition to hurt him.

Now in his twenties, Malik comes across as independent and composed, but it's more self-preservation than confidence. He's quick to disappear into his own head, taking walks alone, letting conversations slide without answering the real question. When conflict stirs, especially in his relationship with Mae, he retreats rather than risks losing control. Still, there's a part of him that wants connection. It slips through in unguarded moments: the way he lingers when someone laughs at his joke, the rare times he lets himself tell a story from childhood, or the softness in his voice when he says someone's name.

Malik's flaw, and his tragedy, is that he wants to be understood but fears that true understanding will lead to rejection. So he lives in that limbo: close enough to feel something, far enough to feel safe.

Characteristics

Core Characteristics

1. Personality Traits

- **Observant & Intuitive** – Reads people's moods quickly, often before they speak. Picks up on subtle tensions.
- **Guarded** – Keeps his inner world private, rarely shares deep emotions.
- **Self-reliant** – Prefers solving problems alone rather than asking for help.
- **Avoidant in Conflict** – Withdraws rather than argues, which can frustrate people around him.
- **Sensitive but Controlled** – Feels things deeply but has trained himself to keep a neutral exterior.
- **Occasionally Wry** – Can be dryly funny or sarcastic in moments of ease, but never cruel.

Starting Point: Quiet Resistance

- Keeps to himself at the campsite, spending more time wandering the forest than with the group.
- Gives short answers in conversations, avoids personal topics.
- Watches others interact but rarely joins in, masking it as “just needing space.”
- Subtly resists plans or suggestions by changing the subject or drifting away.

Midpoint: Tentative Opening

- Starts engaging in small ways, a brief joke, offering help without being asked.
- Shares a small personal detail, almost by accident.
- Has moments of genuine connection (like a quiet talk by the fire or helping with an activity) but pulls back quickly.
- You can see him wanting to be part of the group, even if he's not ready to fully step in.

Why Malik Is Like Most Guys in the Netherlands, and Why He's Relatable

Malik's quiet, guarded nature isn't just his personal backstory, it mirrors a common emotional pattern among men in the Netherlands today, according to several social and psychological studies.

1. **Low Emotional Disclosure Among Men**
 - Dutch research on masculinity shows that many men grow up learning to understate their emotions. While the culture values openness in theory, boys are often subtly taught to be “stoer” (tough) and not dwell on feelings.
 - Like Malik, this leads to a habit of emotional self-reliance, only sharing feelings in rare, trusted moments.
2. **Preference for “Doing” Over “Talking”**
 - Studies (Movenber Foundation, Dutch Mental Health Monitor) find that many Dutch men connect through activities rather than verbal sharing.
 - Malik mirrors this, he joins group moments through action (helping with luggage, collecting firewood) rather than long conversations, making him recognizable to audiences.
3. **Fear of Burdening Others**
 - There's a cultural tendency here for men to “keep problems to themselves” to avoid being a burden, especially when stress is personal or emotional.
 - Malik's avoidance of vulnerability feels authentic because a lot of men here can see themselves in that instinct to protect others from their own struggles.
4. **Guarded but Loyal**
 - Research on Dutch friendships and relationships shows men may be slow to open up, but when they do, loyalty is strong and lasting.
 - Malik's arc from quiet resistance to tentative opening reflects that slow-burn trust-building, which resonates with real-life male friendships and relationships in the Netherlands.

CHARACTER PROFILE

- MAE Backstory

Mae grew up in an environment where she often felt overlooked. Her parents weren't neglectful in a cruel way, but they were emotionally distant, more focused on keeping the household running than on deep emotional connection.

From a young age, Mae learned to be self-sufficient but also hungry for validation. She became good at reading the room, knowing exactly how to keep the peace, but it left her unsure of what she truly wanted.

In relationships, Mae is someone who loves deeply but struggles with boundaries. She fears abandonment, so she often tolerates things she shouldn't, until the frustration quietly builds.

On the trip, Mae's dynamic with Malik and Lowell puts her in an emotionally conflicted position: she's drawn to connection and affection, but still carries the habit of not wanting to “rock the boat,” even when her needs aren't met.

Characteristics

- **Empathetic** – Notices how others feel and tries to make them comfortable.
- **Conflict-avoidant** – Prefers to keep the peace rather than start arguments.
- **Emotionally intuitive** – Picks up on tension in the group without being told.
- **Independent** – Can handle herself, but still wants closeness and support.
- **Validation-seeking** – Responds strongly to attention and appreciation.
- **Socially adaptable** – Adjusts her tone and behavior depending on the vibe.
- **Guarded in expressing needs** – Hesitant to ask directly for what she wants.
- **Charming but reserved** – Warm in conversation but keeps part of herself back.
- **Romantically conflicted** – Drawn to connection, even if it complicates things.
- **Visibly emotional when triggered** – Her body language often shows irritation or sadness before her words do.

Mae's Emotional Arc in Two Beats

• Starting Point: Quiet Harmony-Keeper

Mae begins the trip trying to maintain peace and balance between Malik and the group, even if it means sidelining her own needs.

• Midpoint: Craving & Conflict

Lowell's attention becomes a mirror for what she's missing with Malik, forcing her to confront what she actually wants, not just what keeps the peace.

Why She's Relatable

Audiences will see Mae as:

- The friend who always notices if you're left out of a conversation.
- The partner who's deeply caring but sometimes struggles to put her needs first.
- The person who laughs along with the group but walks away thinking about something completely different.

Why Mae Is Like Many Women in the Netherlands and Why She's Relatable

- **The “Independent but Vulnerable” Balance**
 - Dutch culture places a high value on zelfstandigheid (self-reliance), especially for women, but many still feel the tension between being independent and wanting deep emotional closeness.
 - Mae mirrors this, she can stand on her own, but she still yearns for warmth and reassurance.
- **Conflict Avoidance**
 - Studies (SCP reports on Dutch relationship dynamics) show that many Dutch women are socially conditioned to avoid open conflict, especially in mixed groups, instead expressing frustration indirectly.
 - Mae's tendency to hide irritation (like after stepping in the puddle) until it leaks out later fits perfectly with this cultural nuance.
- **Craving Emotional Validation**
 - Research on young adult relationships in the Netherlands reveals that while equality and independence are strong values, emotional affirmation is still deeply desired, and when partners fail to give it, many seek it elsewhere, even in subtle ways.
 - Mae's responsiveness to Lowell's attention is relatable to anyone who's felt underappreciated in a relationship.
- **Social Adaptability**
 - In group settings, Dutch women often “read the social temperature” and adjust, joining conversations, keeping things light, or quietly slipping away depending on the vibe.
 - Mae does this naturally, which makes her feel authentic to Dutch audiences.

CHARACTER PROFILE

- MAYA Backstory

Mae grew up in an environment where she often felt overlooked. Her parents weren't neglectful in a cruel way, but they were emotionally distant, more focused on keeping the household running than on deep emotional connection.

From a young age, Mae learned to be self-sufficient but also hungry for validation. She became good at reading the room, knowing exactly how to keep the peace, but it left her unsure of what she truly wanted.

In relationships, Mae is someone who loves deeply but struggles with boundaries. She fears abandonment, so she often tolerates things she shouldn't, until the frustration quietly builds.

On the trip, Mae's dynamic with Malik and Lowell puts her in an emotionally conflicted position: she's drawn to connection and affection, but still carries the habit of not wanting to “rock the boat,” even when her needs aren't met.

Characteristics

- **Sharp observer** — notices subtle shifts in mood and behavior
- **Witty and sarcastic** — uses humor to deflect and control situations
- **Emotionally reserved** — reveals little of her own vulnerabilities
- **Loyal but cautious** — supports her friends but guards her heart
- **Prefers watching over engaging in conflict**
- **Holds unspoken knowledge**, carrying emotional “baggage” others don't see

Emotional Arc in Two Beats:

Starting Point: Silent Strategist

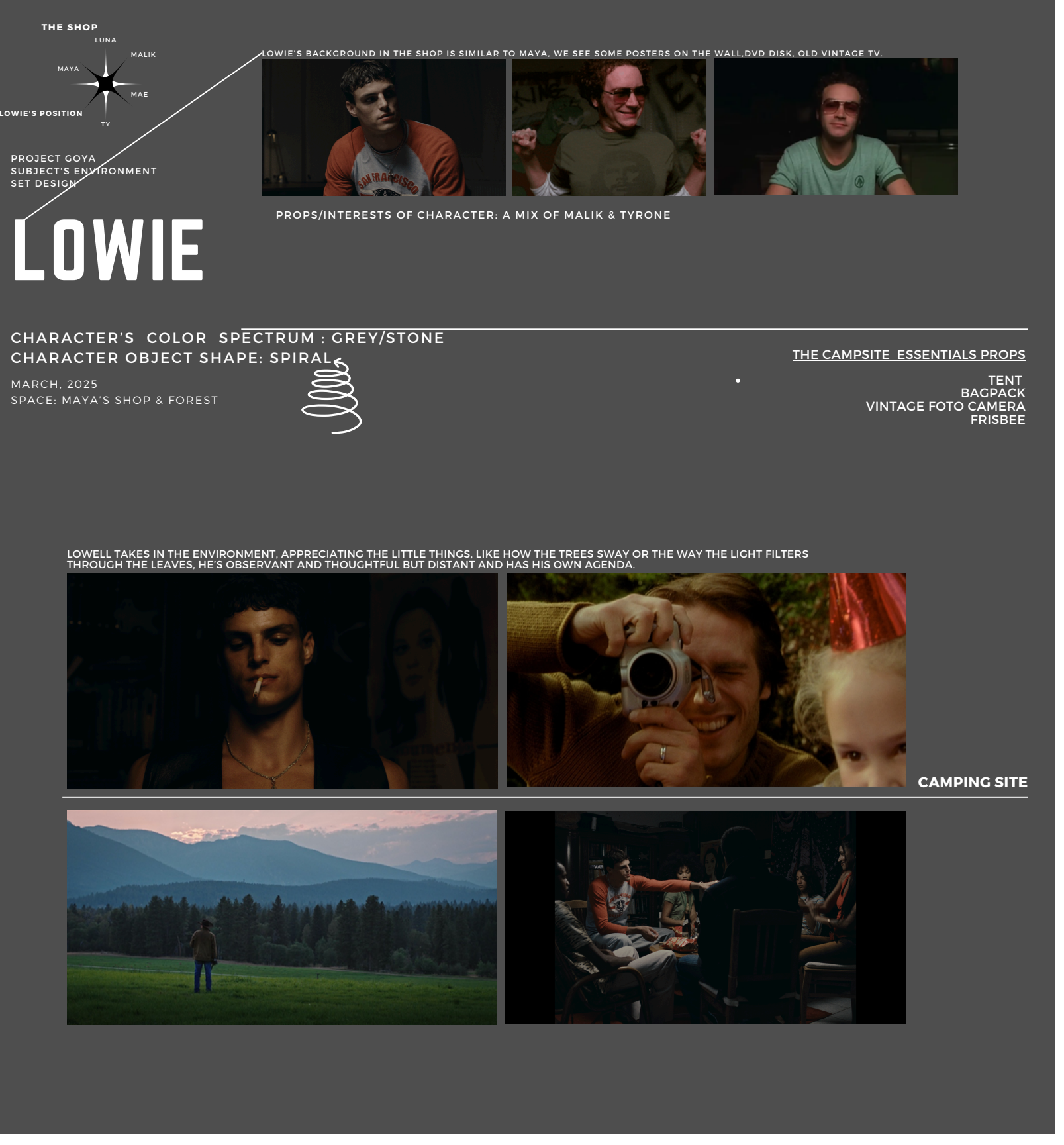
Maya enters the trip as the quiet but sharp-eyed member who watches the group's tensions without intervening, protecting herself by staying on the sidelines.

Midpoint: Craving & Conflict

Heavy Secret Keeper. After witnessing Lowell and Mae's secret kiss, Maya faces an internal conflict, whether to reveal the truth and disrupt the group or keep quiet and carry the emotional burden alone.

Relatability (Research Insight):

A 2021 behavioral study in the Netherlands found 55% of women in their 20s self-identify as the “social anchor” in group dynamics, the one who notices and quietly manages tension. Maya's constant awareness of everyone's subtext, yet refusal to step in unless necessary, makes her instantly recognizable to this demographic



CHARACTER PROFILE - TY

Backstory

Ty grew up in a household where emotions were expressed openly, sometimes too openly, leading to both warmth and chaos. He learned to value loyalty and clarity in relationships but often struggles with jealousy and insecurity. His first instinct is to address issues directly, but when uncertainty grows, he can retreat into humor or defensiveness.

He deeply values his relationship with Lowell and feels threatened by Lowell's shifting attentions. On the trip, Ty's emotions swing between confident affection and quiet doubt, showing his battle between wanting to trust and fearing loss.

Characteristics

- Loyal and affectionate
- Emotionally expressive, sometimes impulsive
- Uses humor to manage discomfort
- Quick to notice changes in partner behavior
- Needs clear communication and reassurance
- Vulnerable under his tough exterior

Emotional Arc in Two Beats:

Starting Point: Silent Strategist

Secure and Playful

Ty begins the trip relaxed and affectionate with Lowell, confident in their bond.

Midpoint: Craving & Conflict

Ty's growing doubts culminate after Luna encourages him to express his feelings, leading to an emotional confrontation that reveals cracks in their relationship.

Relatability (Research Insight):

The 2022 Dutch Young Adults Wellbeing Study shows men in loosely defined relationships often oscillate between detachment and possessiveness. Ty's struggle with jealousy and desire for clarity mirrors common experiences of navigating fluid relationship boundaries in contemporary Dutch society.

CHARACTER PROFILE - LOWIE

Backstory

Lowell grew up in an achievement-driven family where emotional vulnerability was often met with dismissal or discomfort. Learning early that charm and wit were his most effective tools, he developed a charismatic but somewhat guarded personality. Relationships have always been a mix of genuine affection and a subtle game of testing boundaries and seeking validation.

The camera is his favored medium; through it, he controls how others see him and how he sees them, blending intimacy with distance. On the trip, Lowell navigates his attraction to both Mae and Ty, balancing desire, loyalty, and self-interest in a way that sometimes leaves others unsure of his true feelings.

Characteristics

- Charismatic and playful
- Skilled at reading social situations
- Emotionally guarded despite seeming open
- Seeks validation through charm and creativity
- Hesitant to fully commit emotionally
- Uses humor to deflect serious conversations

Emotional Arc in Two Beats:

Starting Point: Confident Player

Lowell starts the trip comfortably juggling attention between Ty and Mae, using his camera and charisma to hold space with both.

Midpoint: Revealing Choices

His growing closeness to Mae, shown in intimate but fleeting moments, forces Lowell to confront the fragility of his relationship with Ty.

Relatability (Research Insight):

Recent Amsterdam social research (2023) indicates many young adults maintain multiple “emotional footholds”, keeping options open as a hedge against uncertainty. Lowell's dynamic of split affections and playful detachment captures this tension between desire and commitment familiar to many viewers.

CHARACTER PROFILE - LUNA

Backstory

Luna was raised in a small Dutch village where tradition and routine ruled daily life. As a child, she was more comfortable with facts and logic than emotions, finding solace in science books and structured activities. Emotional expression was often seen as unnecessary or exaggerated in her community, so Luna learned to rely on rationality and self-control to navigate relationships.

She prefers to observe from a distance rather than dive headfirst into emotional turmoil, valuing calm and clarity over drama. On the trip, Luna is the practical, unshaken presence, often the voice of reason amid the group's swirling emotions.

Characteristics

- Analytical and methodical
- Prefers logic over emotional expression
- Emotionally self-reliant
- Speaks clearly and only when necessary
- Values routine and predictability
- Often quiet, watching social dynamics with detached interest

Emotional Arc in Two Beats:

Starting Point: Calm Observer

Luna arrives focused on practical tasks and logistics, largely detached from the emotional tension bubbling between others.

Midpoint: Revealing Quiet Challenger

In a private moment, Luna pushes Ty to confront his feelings honestly, showing her capacity for emotional engagement even if she doesn't openly display her own.

Relatability (Research Insight):

Dutch personality research (2022) shows many from rural areas align with analytical, introverted types (ISTJ, INTJ), valuing independence and logic. Luna embodies this cultural archetype, resonating with viewers who feel more comfortable processing emotions internally and pragmatically.



7.

3.2 VISION SEQUENCE – MALIK'S MIND

A SOFT TRANSITION. Like a memory arriving gently, not forced.

A young Malik , maybe 8 or 9 stands barefoot in the shallows, jeans rolled up, staring out at the water. He turns.

a woman walks toward him slowly. Graceful. Serene. She passes young Malik... and sits beside present-day Malik on the rock.

MOTHER
(softly, almost a whisper)
You always came here when you didn't have words. Even as a baby, you'd crawl toward the sound.

Malik doesn't move. Just listens. Still staring at the sea.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
You'd press your hand to the water like it could tell you something. Like it could speak back.

(she smiles)
But water only echoes. It gives you your own voice, just... quieter.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I used to watch you. Small. Curious. So quiet. Like the tide lived inside you.

A pause. She gazes forward again.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
And now... here you are. Carrying all that ocean and nowhere to pour it.

A beat of silence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Maybe that's why you come back here. To empty it out.

She gently places her hand over his.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Let it go, baby. Just for a little while.