

THE FASSBINDS

JUNIOR FASSBIND III, a kleptomaniac but generous bon vivant, manages a grand hotel and famous distillery in most unconventional ways to keep the family's business over times of world wars, a pandemic and economic crisis.



PROJECT INFORMATION

PERIODIC TRAGICOMEDY WITH SURPRISING ACTUALITY

GENRE **TRAGICOMEDY**

FORMAT **6 x 45' / MINI SERIES**

HEADWRITER **FIONA ZIEGLER**

CO-WRITER **LUKA DJIKANOVIC**



BRIEF STORY DESCRIPTION

The Fassbinds have created a booze dynasty with their “Kirsch”, founded the countries’ first Cantonal-Bank to gain best conditions within the national and international booze trade and to build their Grand-Hotel in Engelberg, a Swiss mountain village and top alpine tourism destination. What seems a success story at first, is soon to be shaken by unpredictable external factors.

When Junior’s father dies from the Spanish Flu, him and his siblings go against his last will, don’t sell the hotel but apply original ways to save the eccentric Fassbind family’s business instead: Siegfried invents the first distillery-train, promotes booze abroad and saves taxes by distilling on-site. His invention’s success guarantees the hotel’s gap finance during the pandemics and the economical crash.

Junior, together with his sister Anna, build a secret clinic on the hotel’s top floor for patients of the mysterious “Encephalitis Let-hargica”, illegally testing pharmaceuticals which leads to legal conflicts with the authorities.

When the hotel can finally re-open and starts to make profit, Black Friday happens and Siegfried dies from Syphilis. Junior now, next to the hotel, runs in a balance-act, the distillery and its international trade-business. Trying meanwhile, despite the economical crash to recruit tourists, he entrusts the hotel’s management to his sister and his wife Lina, who manage the hotel skillfully but become discriminated by a sexist, patriarchic and increasing fascistic society. This culminates in Lina’s breakdown, her death in a psychiatric clinic, the outbreak of WWII and the closure of the hotel.

In a last manouvre at the war’s end, Junior re-opens his hotel first, as a shelter for Jewish holocaust-survivors, later, for American GI’s and nurses, spending their last holiday in Europe before going back to the US. Again however, his liberally open and ahead-of-his time life-approach clashes with the mountain villagers narrow and often racist perception and mind. He sells his hotel, contemplating his father’s last will, and moves to Monte Carlo, where he gambles happily for the rest of his life.

CHARACTERS

Gottfried Fassbind III. – “Junior” is Gottfried Fassbind’s II. eldest son. Junior is humorous, strikingly original and speaks 6 languages fluently. Junior is known to be among the most innovative hoteliers of his times. He always gets himself somehow into troubles but manages to escape in a spectacular way. Junior knows no limits, just like his ambition. He loves exquisite champagne and gambling. Junior is very generous due to his unmaterialistic nature, but sometimes he steals, or rather: “takes something that he likes in that moment”. So don’t get mad if you’re missing a silver knife, a nice book or even your shoes!

Lina Bürgi, Junior’s future wife is the daughter of the national wrestling king Bürgi Josef. She is a passionate and free spirited mountain-woman who doesn’t like rules. Lina is stubborn and likes to do things in her own way which is almost always different from what is expected from her. After she survives a serious illness she will get struck with apocalyptic visions that will cause mental problems. There is a tragedy lurking over her great heart and soul.

Luis, Junior’s best friend is a Jenish-Gipsy with a golden tooth. He works for the Hotel Terrace as its housekeeper. He is politically active and dismantles a crime happening to his people: the Swiss State kidnaps “gypsy-kids” and “assimilate” them into settled farmer families, where they work in slavery. Nothing is more precious for him than a beautiful woman and he doesn’t pull back even if the woman is married to an important man. This is not the most valuable virtue if you are a “gypsy” in a racist society – it can definitively get you imprisoned.



Anna Fassbind, Junior’s sister loves literature and Hermann Hesse. Highly emancipated and eager to compete with men, she will get struck with the expectations brought upon her, but she gets “help” from her little friends – her plants! Some of them have the “power” to relax your soul and body if you smoke its leaves or flowers – other have even greater power: They can poison you, make you dizzy or even kill you! Do not mess with Anna and drink her tea afterwards!

Siegfried Fassbind, Junior’s brother runs the Fassbind distillery. He is a brave trader who knows technology and invents the world’s first distillery on rails. No matter how passionate Siegfried is about his work, there is nothing better than seducing women. Siegfried loves adventure and traveling. It brings prosperity to the distillery and opens up a new hunting ground for women. However, this will backfire in the most painful way. At the age of 32 he dies of syphilis.



SERIES CREATORS

Fiona Ziegler is a descendant of The Fassbinds and balances the family's eccentric borderline of genius vs. madness. She got a BA in History and Literature and a MA in International Studies before graduating from the Film Academy (FAMU) in Prague, where Luka Đikanović worked as dramaturg and editor for her debut fiction 'Lost in Paradise' (2021), a comedy-drama and first Swiss-Czech co-production in film-history.

Luka Đikanović was born in Podgorica, Montenegro. He finished his MA at Charles University in International Economics and Political Studies, before enrolling into FAMU. He got a BA in Editing before graduating in Directing with his Student LA Award-winning short 'Boiling' (2023). Having grown up with the 'Balkan'-connecting booze Rakjia, Luka fell in love with the 'Fassbind Kirsch' and spirit of the Alps.

INTENTION

THE FASSBINDS is a tragicomic family portrait, based on true events and characters set in the **Roaring 20s**, challenged by the **Spanish Flu**, its post-pandemic syndrome the **Sleeping Illness** (Encephalitis Lethargica), the **rise of Fascism**, **Black Friday**, family tragedies and deaths and the outbreak of **WWII**. All of this circulates within the cosmos of **Booze**, **Banks** and **Tourism** in unpredictable times that mirror nowadays challenges like the **pandemic**, the **rise of right-wing parties** and **"new" wars**.

TRAILER

vimeo.com/manage/videos/881502123/f0e3d19592



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