

Seagulls, waves, sounds of a ship.

HOSTE: I am sure, I hope so, for I long to be on shore a little while. God knows how tired I am of this constant unsociable sea life.

Splashing of waves, creaking of a ship.

WOMAN ANNOUNCER: THE LEISURE OF CAPTAIN HOSTE

Documentary radio drama by Silva Ćapin

Ship siren, sounds of a ferry, closing doors.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am sailing towards the island of Vis on a ferry that was named after the poet Petar Hektorović and I reflect whether any verse from his pen brushed against this island.

Waves.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am wondering whether his name is to the islanders a synonym for normal life because it takes them to the mainland. Next to me are: a mother with a child returning from a musical school and fiddling with a violin case; a couple of strong islanders are killing time with a game of cards, polony sandwiches and beer; a few tourists utterly exhausted by low budget travel and a man with an ironing board with no other luggage.

Voices on the ferry.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am thinking how one furnishes a flat on an island like this, do wardrobes, kitchens and writing tables need to roll on the waves to get to their destination.

It is May, the season has not started yet, but the insides of the big vessel are already filled with stretched out bodies of young tourists who try to sleep in unexpected places. I am reading a book about an English captain who left his mark on the island's history. I pay no attention to a local child running through the cabin crying unintelligible words.

Music.

Sound of waves, wind, creaking of a wooden ship.

HOSTE: To Mrs. Hoste. Amphion, at Sea, Adriatic, December 24th, 1809

My dear mother,

I wish I was at one of your snug Christmas fireside parties, instead of being half frozen to death by one of these cold north-east winds, that literally blow through my lantern sides, I never felt it so cold in England. Here I am still cruising, and on the 4th of next month will complete my twelvemonth's cruise. Now that all the late Imperial ports belong to France, we are entirely lost to news of any kind, and I really know no more of what has been going on in the world.

Writing, music.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Young British captain smiles to me from the cover. Dark, somewhat curly hair with sideburns adorns a freshly shaved face of a polite boy. Someone whom you would happily bring home to meet your parents.

Sounds of a ferry, voices.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Still, a determined look into the distance differentiates him from the boy next door and gives him a more serious appearance. I am reading how he fights the wind, cold and nostalgia for a warm family home while he wanders aimlessly through the Adriatic. My journey, however, is nearly ending; I can see the island through the window.

Humming of engines.

WOMAN NARRATOR: As soon as they catch sight of the land, the tourists wake up slowly, get up and hurry to reach the land while the locals slowly drink up their beers knowing there is still enough time.

Children's voices, banging.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am watching the man with the ironing board and take place in the row behind him.

Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am wondering whether anyone present participates in the events I have come to record. People start getting off before the door is completely open, it is the locals who seemed completely disinterested for disembarking up to now. Photo finish.

Street sounds, local vernacular.

MAN: Yes for September, but October, this is November ... you can be busy whole month ...

WOMAN NARRATOR: A friend from Zagreb is waiting for me. She had only recently moved to the island. Despite that she knows the names of sales women in the shop, passing cyclists and strollers in the street as well as a dog to whom she explains that it should go back home.

Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Our conversation is developing slowly, and my question “What’s new” slows it down. Tomorrow is Friday, and Fridays are movie days. The remaining days in the week are not so attractive. We are passing by a winery with a newspaper article about Vis: “The island with a deteriorating economy, where cricket prospers; from which the islanders emigrate and English and people from Zagreb settle in. She says that she is not certain about the economy, but everything else stands as it is written.

Music.

HOSTE: To the revenant Dixon Hoste. Amphion, Lissa, April 21st, 1810

My dear father,

I have just arrived here with nine prizes, and pretty good ones, considering the station. We are all quite well, and in high spirits at the golden prospect which appears at this moment in embryo. The reports current here are, that peace will very soon be concluded, and that Napoleon is to sacrifice his own family and ambitious projects for the peace of the world.

WOMAN NARRATOR: *(reads and translates a part of the letter)* We are all well and very excited about the golden prospect which appears at this moment in embryo. The reports say that armistice will be concluded soon, and that Napoleon is to sacrifice his own family and ambitious projects in exchange for world peace.

HOSTE: We have plenty of work cut out for us in the Adriatic, and of all stations it is the most pleasant; such variety and amusement, and prizes to boot, make the hours pass quick, I assure you.

HOSTE: Remember me most affectionately to my dear mother, and all hands. I would write to all, but the privateer sails directly, and you will say there is some excuse when I add, that I have not been an hour off deck these forty-eight hours, for all the officers have been absent on leave.

HOSTE: Adieu, my dear father, God bless you and all hands.

Music.

Creaking of a ship.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Captain Hoste has just come to Vis, like me. The difference between us, except some two hundred years, is that he has been on a sheep watch for two days while I am tucking myself into a comfortable bed under a warm blanket. I am trying to fall asleep while a big ship is sailing out from the port. It soon fills up the entire window frame and then it slowly disappears from it.

Creaking of a door.

Sound of a ship siren.

Melting into morning sounds, seagulls, church bells.

Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am standing in front of a famous local coffee bar and watch boys and men in white trousers assembling. Since they are speaking English, they must be aware that everyone understands them although they look like they have their own little private party. A minivan arrives and we all get on, and then ride bumpily towards Plisko polje.

Drive in a minivan.

Music from the radio and hubbub in English.

DRIVER: Here, this is Plisko polje. You see, they are playing down there.

Stopping, getting out of the min van.

WOMAN NARRATOR: We are getting off near a big mown field surrounded by vineyards.

Voices from the cricket field, cheering.

MAN: Run, run, run!

Barking of a dog.

WOMAN NARRATOR: A cricket match is in progress, as part of the tournament taking place on the island. I do not know the rules, so their shouts and movements confuse me. I am looking for the man responsible for this unusual event.

DRIVER: Do you know what he looks like? *(pause)* Oh my! He has a beard, curly uncombed hair, white trousers, green shirt, but from here I cannot see him.

Walking on the gravel.

SILVA: All right, I'll find him. He is the only one who speaks Croatian, right?

DRIVER: There are others, our team is here as well and they speak Croatian, but I cannot see him right now. I don't know, he might be in the winery. *(steps)* There he is, by the barrel, he is sitting behind the barrel, the one in the green shirt, under the tree.

SILVA: Yes, yes, I can see him.

DRIVER: Eh, under the tree.

SILVA: He is hiding.

DRIVER: Yes. If I can see right, it is him, all right.

SILVA: OK.

DRIVER: His name is Oliver.

Steps on the gravel.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am walking around the boundaries of a field arbitrarily bordered with a rope. The terrain is bumpy and none of the players can predict the bouncing of the ball.

Striking of a ball with a bat. Cries, shouting ...

PLAYER: Catch!

AUDIENCE: Ooooh!

Applause.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Opposite the tent with players, in the shadow of a high tree, I spot Oliver. He records the score by turning the numbers on the table by hand and explains the rules to me.

Applause, cheering.

OLIVER: Each time they change places is counted as a run. If they manage to change the places twice (the bases are in front of those stakes) this is one run. In general, one team bawls thirty balls to another and then the other team bawls. So that ...

SILVA: Aha.

OLIVER: Take it easy, you'll get everything slowly.

Striking of a ball.

OLIVER: There now, they changed places and this is one. If they managed twice, it would be two.

Applause, cheering.

SUPPORTER: Backing up!

WOMAN NARRATOR: Hypnotically watching the cricket, I managed to master the rules in a few days, at least the basic ones.

OLIVER: Nishan.

WOMAN NARRATOR: However, it took only a short time to forget them completely...

OLIVER: And now, the bawlers?

STANKO: Two, number two.

WOMAN NARRATOR... and only the cries "Nice, nice" stayed in my memory and the sound of a wheel-barrow loaded with crates of beer.

Sounds of cricket.

SILVA: Is there any audience?

STANKO: Well that was before, now everything sort of dissolved because of that tourism. The young actually come because the beer is free and they cheer. And then we made the banner "Nice". And so, from time to time they just shout "Nice, nice" and with the banner more "Nice, nice" (*laughter*). So, it became a laughing matter "Nice, nice, nice!" Then, this one from Cambridge, an American – the first word he learnt when he came here was "Easy!" and so this is how we greet each other now. "Oh, easy!" (*applause*). This is interesting to them. (*pause*) And then it is easy-going, the umpires rule with beers, this cannot be seen anywhere else. When he needs to show "leg" he says "Moment". Then he puts the bottle and shows like this "leg bye", "bye", "wide" and when he needs with his hands...

SILVA: When he needs to use both hands?

STANKO: Yes, yes.

Hubbub in the foreground.

Striking of a ball.

PLAYER: Come on Fire! You are playing, hey!

Laughter. Reactions from the audience.

MAN: Where are your glasses?

STANKO: He does not see the ball now and is running in the wrong direction
(laughter).

WOMAN NARRATOR: I observe that the players have different physiognomies, age and physical condition. I am asking about the players.

OLIVER: Craig has this business of his – a bed and breakfast in Austria during winter. He spends six months here and six months in Austria. Stanko is a waiter; I have a restaurant and vinery here. Tom is an associate member, we do not know what he does, but he is here often, he is English by the way. Pete, he is also English, lives on the island of Lošinj but he comes here for each tournament – he is in the Blue World Institute for the protection of submarine world – they observe whales and dolphins. Who else is playing for us? Lenko is a physical training teacher...

STANKO: He is the most serious.

OLIVER: And Rob! Rob writes books and translates articles on the internet. And among the children you have a waiter, pizza baker, cook, moorer, students ... When this whole cricket story started, some fifteen, sixteen years ago; the idea was *(pause)*. There was no tourism then, there was some, but only from mid-June, July, August and that was that. And the idea was to intensify tourism in April, May and September and have some fun and by the way - English teams will come ...

MAN: Oliver?

Bottles banging in the crate.

OLIVER: ... and there will be something ... *(to the man)* No, just let it be, I'll ask the guy, just leave it. Get a new ball. *(pause, shouting)* Mush, stop hitting them in the vineyard, Mush!

Laughter.

OLIVER: And now the season extended, so we are all working in May and in September, it is crowded, so it is not so simple any more. More or less all of us playing cricket work in tourism so it is difficult to find ... Like, Stanko needs to find someone to cover for him as waiter. *(ball)* When we play matches with the English who come to visit, a match starts at ten, eleven and lasts till five in the afternoon, one is here for the best part of the day.

Striking of a ball, hubbub.

Music.

WOMAN NARRATOR: While I am talking to Oliver, a small drama is taking place on the field – one player was struck below the eye by a ball and he is being slowly led out of the field. The ball went into an unknown direction and now the children are looking for it in the nearby vineyard to earn the promised 10 kunas for each find.

OLIVER: Oh shit! Now we have lost him for the whole tournament. Oh dear.

MAN: Russell has done his hamstring. Can I get a tea towel with some ice in it?

OLIVER: Yes, I am going to get it. *(leaving)*

MAN: So, I come with you?

OLIVER: Oh shit, do we have any ice? I have some tomatoes frozen.

STANKO: I had the same thing when it hit me and the tournament was then called "Frozen Tomato". When it had hit me in the eye I held a frozen tomato *(laughter)* and from then on, the tournament has been called "Frozen Tomato" so they tease me about it.

Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I take a hard pink ball in my hand. It is surprisingly heavy and I shudder at the thought of the speed it can gather when it bounces from the bat.

SILVA: Let me see the ball. What is it, cork and?

STANKO: Pressed cork covered by hand sawn leather. There are different prices here, the richer ones play with the more expensive balls with finer leather, and all this for one game only. So we are left with those for training. I guarantee it hurts when it strikes.

SILVA: This is like for baseball?

STANKO: No, no, a baseball ball is of a same shape, but soft. They were stitching me for an hour because it spread over the eye and to the side. It bounced really badly.

Hubbub, strikes.

BOY: We go out play cricket!

Children are playing.

WOMAN NARRATOR: It's lunch time and the action briefly stops. The grown-ups leave to eat and children take over the equipment and bats and try to imitate their parents. The atmosphere resembles English countryside, women in hats watch over children's play and worry about hot sun.

WOMAN: We are going for lunch. Let's go! We are going to come back here later. We go for lunch now, let's go!

GIRL: Mom? Mommy?

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am returning to Vis, or rather Lissa two hundred years ago.

WOMAN: Yes, with us!

Children talking in the background.

HOSTE: To Mrs Hoste. Amphion, Lissa, April 23rd, 1810

Music.

HOSTE: My dear mother,

I am sure you will be glad to hear our usual good fortune continues to attend on my darling Amphion. We have been very fortunate since we left Malta in March and have taken and destroyed forty-six sail of vessels some of which are very good ones, and will bring us in a little pewter. I think if I stay two years more in the Adriatic, I may scrape enough together to set the Hoste family at the dear old house as happy and as comfortable as I hope they ever have been.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The English captain continues sailing on his Amphion and sinking French navy ships. If he stays for two more years in the Adriatic, he would earn enough to secure his family's existence.

HOSTE: I sail tomorrow again on a fresh cruise, with good information of the enemy's vessels, and have no doubt shall make a good thing of it.

Cricket strikes.

Voices and noise slowly become louder.

WOMAN NARRATOR: For a while I leave the captain in his campaigns. The players have returned and the tournament continues.

Applause.

YOUNG MAN 1: The Czechs were yellow last year.

YOUNG MAN 2: What?

Applause.

YOUNG MAN 1: The Czechs were yellow.

YOUNG MAN 2: No, ours are always yellow.

YOUNG MAN 1: Oh no.

YOUNG MAN 2: It was the Czechs, but they called themselves differently. They were “Winegrower”, something like that.

YOUNG MAN 1: Aha! Eh, yes, yes.

YOUNG MAN 2: Here are the reservations!

YOUNG MAN 1: Octopus 3, lamb 5. Heh. Children, what is this?

YOUNG MAN 2: Fuck it, we gave a three kilo octopus yesterday, I don't remember the last time I saw an octopus of three kilos.

YOUNG MAN 1: Really? He pulled it out from somewhere?

YOUNG MAN 2: Those are all little octopuses up to half a kilo, but brother I was really looking at a three kilo octopus yesterday. I have not seen such an octopus for a long time.

YOUNG MAN 1: The sun is scorching! It's not scorching a lot, but the wind is blowing, enough for me to burn.

YOUNG MAN 2: *(shouting) Come on!*

Scream from the bench, cheering.

YOUNG MAN 2: *(shouting) Come ooon! Play, for fuck's sake!*

Applause.

WOMAN: Is that a four?

MAN: Oxygen!

MAN 2: Run him out, run him out!

MAN: Iron lung, oxygen?

YOUNG MAN 2: My hands hurt.

SUPPORTER: Well done Sam!

YOUNG MAN 1: Eh, when Steve bowls me a ball...

YOUNG MAN 2: Look at him, Czech one through one.

YOUNG MAN 1: This is Jan Kučer.

YOUNG MAN 2: He burnt, where? To Czech like this.

Applause.

YOUNG MAN 1: He was in the sun, so what? Don't.

Hubbub, barking of a dog.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The sun is becoming hotter. The team that was mainly done moves under the tent leaving one player to play for all of them. I am not sure whether he should collect or defend runs.

Barking. Sounds of playing cricket slowly transform into rain drops.

Downpour.

WOMAN NARRATOR: A long and sunny day ends with rain. I am again in my warm room thinking how rain cannot be good for the cricket terrain, but I am sure that the players, since the matches last long, are used to every kind of weather. I am returning to the captain who hopes to return home, as it was promised to him. I open the book and liberate him from the rain of letters.

Rain at sea, creaking of a ship. Wind.

HOSTE: Amphion, Lissa, August 28th 1810

My dear father,

your most welcome letters of June reached me yesterday, on the arrival of one of the squadron from Malta. Report says the Amphion is ordered home! I only want an action with the frigate, and I should then quit the Adriatic with pleasure, for (entre nous) it is hard service, and the anxiety is increased tenfold by the threatened invasion of Sicily, and the total want of ports and difficulty of information. Do not mention this, as I never wish to point at any thing like complaint of hardship.

Seagulls, motor boat.

Meowing of a cat.

Church bells.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The morning shows no trace of yesterday's rain. The sun dried everything and continues to scorch. I am waiting in front of a coffee bar for Stanko and the team to take me to Plisko polje. In the car, potential outcomes of the tournament are outlined.

Sound of a car.

STANKO: Are you all right?

Closing of a door.

STANKO: After lunch.

ROB: Ha?

STANKO: He'll come after lunch.

ROB: *(jumpily)* What does it mean after lunch, if we are playing?

STANKO: Well I told him. He must fix some door ...

ROB: Go to ... What if this Peter broke his finger. We have no player then.

STANKO: ... he was not home for two - three weekends and ...

ROB: Oh mother ... (*mumbles*)

STANKO: ... he has to fix that door for the suite. What, did he break a finger?

ROB: Ah perhaps, I don't know. He does not know himself. He put it under ice, last night. (*pause*) And what, when will he arrive? In the afternoon?

STANKO: Yes, after lunch.

Car ride.

ROB: He has lunch there as well.

STANKO: Well yes.

ROB: The man is forty years old, and not thirteen, damn.

STANKO: It cannot be helped. You cannot force anybody to play.

ROB: Well no, I won't, but like ... You know how good it could come out? I think that "Zagreb" could be the first in the group, actually first; and we will most probably be the fourth, which is good. This means that we will play "Zagreb" in the semi-finals.

STANKO: Semi-finals, yes.

ROB: We'll kick "Zagreb's" ass.

Laughter.

STANKO: Tomo said yesterday that he, if it was up to him, we should let "Slona Pogača" pass, so he was saying yesterday.

ROB: Oh no, they must win. They must win the first place and we must be the fourth...

STANKO: No, he wants us to meet in the semi-finals. But, how did he count on that, I do not know.

ROB: Oh yea! Like they will win the semi-finals and we will win the semi-finals!

STANKO: Eh!

ROB: Oh yea! That we'll be the day! The odds for that are one hundred and fifty to one.

Driving.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The terrain is completely dry, and the first match is already in full swing.

Striking of a ball. Cheering.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The scene of cricket on Vis is still unusual to me. Forty people are cheering while a neighbour in a near-by vineyard, only a few meters away from the action, works diligently as if nothing is going on. Stanko is telling me about cricket in Croatia.

STANKO: There are only three clubs in Croatia and when they ask me which one are we, I tell them the second, and people say – well done, you are strong! *(laughter)* We rarely defeat those from Zagreb because they are all people who returned from Australia and India who were born with cricket and know it far better than we do.

MAN: Fourteen out of one.

STANKO: There, I need to write.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Everything is full of the British, South Africans and Australians, and a local man is behind the tournament. I am interested in his motivation.

OLIVER: Cricket was played here two hundred years ago when the British were here, during the Napoleonic wars. The book describes a certain Sir William Hoste, who was a captain, the most important person in the British navy on the island and in a letter to his family he wrote that to entertain the sailors in times of leisure they played cricket, and that they founded a club. The club's name was *Amphion's eleven* after his battle ship, and his brother Teddy was in charge of everything related to cricket. This is written in the book about him, so we knew this fact; and my father was in Australia for a long time and I was born there, I came here as a child and in the nineties he was watching the television, following cricket, and I had no idea about it, and then he explained the rules to me and then it seemed nice to establish a cricket club on the island.

MAN: Forty-four.

OLIVER: But the problem was that nobody except my father and me knew the rules, and I never saw a bat in my life or played, or saw a ball, nothing. We somehow established contact with the Zagreb club that was founded several years earlier. They helped us to acquire the equipment, sent a coach from England, I gathered men who would play cricket on the playground like madman and we managed to find some fifteen madmen who were willing to play and so it started then. In 2003 we played the first match against the English who lived in France, Mick Jagger was their honorary president, it was a crazy story. Anyway, they arrived, it was a great pomp, it was on the news, on the national television ...

Mixed news jingle.

Cheering.

NEWS ANCHORWOMAN: When a cricket match takes place on the island of Vis, this is definitely worth the attention.

Mixed news jingle.

OLIVER: ... and, little by little we managed to obtain the terrain. Before we used to play on ... oops! Now it's out, you see? He caught the ball in the air and the bouncer is out. It was not on the ground, he caught the ball in the air, on the edge of the field and he is out.

STANKO: And the band TBF put us in a song. The cricket from Vis.

OLIVER: Ah yes. They only mentioned us.

STANKO: Mentioned, yes, in the context of those unusual...

Car horn.

OLIVER: Yes, so we are celebrated in a song.

SILVA: In which song?

OLIVER: Papilova.

SILVA AND STANKO: Papilova!

OLIVER: They mention us when enumerating in the end – cricket from Vis, bobsled from Split.

Mix effect. Music.

"Cricket from Vis, bobsled from Split ..."

Mix effect.

SILVA: This is the greatest acknowledgement...

OLIVER: Yes, yes, to appear in a song. We have this tournament once a year, a few matches in the early season, so in April, May and then in September there are also a few matches against the teams that come here. A team or two come over the weekend ... oops! Oops!

Applause.

SILVA: What, he is out again?

OLIVER: He is out again, he caught it again.

WOMAN NARRATOR: If Vis inhabitants owe cricket to Oliver, the entire Vis was obviously marked by Hoste's stay on the island. The Vis club was named after him, and the town of Vis is protected from open sea influence by peninsula Prilovo and little island Host.

Music.

HOSTE: Amphion, Lissa, August 31st, 1810

My dear mother,

one of my little squadron arrived here yesterday, and brought us several letters from the dear old house. Thank you a thousand times for all your expressions of affection and kindness. If ever I should (and why should I not ?) get quietly home, and this war is passed, I think the measure of my happiness will be to remain an easy, plodding, country farmer, with all my friends around me. I am almost tired of this unsociable life, but I have no right to complain, and must rough through it.

WOMAN NARRATOR: *(reads and translates a part of the letter)* If ever I should safely get home (and why should I not?) and this war is passed, I think the measure of my happiness will be to remain an easy, plodding, country farmer, with all my friends around me. I am almost tired of this unsociable life, but I have no right to complain, and must rough through it.

HOSTE: We have established a cricket-club at this wretched place, and when we do get anchored for a few hours, it passes away an hour very well. Teddy is the head of the party.

Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Leisure and the wish for entertainment despite the Napoleonic wars brought cricket to the island. The longer I watch it, cricket seems to me to be in the perfect harmony with the island life and mentality. Skill, long duration, relaxedness but a clear competitiveness remind of bowling. (*striking of a ball*) Shouts “Nice, nice” are actually not different from our “Easy”. (*striking of a ball*) Instead of tournament players I imagine Hoste’s crew and try to observe small differences.

Game of cricket, shouts.

WOMAN NARRATOR: The end of the competition is approaching. The atmosphere is, because of higher stakes and alcohol, boiling.

BRITON: Wow! If I could choose a body, I would choose my own. Is that not a ... ball? I'm just checking with you. What are you wearing man ... are you wearing a bloody ... last night? You fucking traitor! Fuck off!

Laughter.

The Briton calls out.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Domestic teams are not in the race for the finals. I am using their attention and experience of tourist guides to find out more about the changes on the island through history.

Children crying.

YOUNG MAN 1: During Napoleonic wars while the French were here, the English fleet consisting of four ships drew nine French boats to the open sea and sunk most of them. A couple of French boats escaped, south towards Stončica and out. Then the English took possession of Vis and built two towers – one is Wellington and the other one Terijun or Betnik. They were defensive walls on the entrance to Vis. At that time, Vis was held by the English. Sir William Hoste was there – our club was named after that, and in their free time the English sailors played cricket.

Cricket was played on that plain on the Prilovo peninsula where the church is, the cricket was played there. And after that, skipping some years (Austro-Hungary, this-that), we come to the World War Two. In May 1944 the Allies started building and using airports for forcible landings of damaged aircrafts on Vis. Some two and a half, three thousand lives were saved this way. For, if it were not for this island, they could not have landed, because their airport in south Sicily or North Africa was too far away. That was too far for a bomber or spitfire that leaked fuel quickly or the one that had “one or two engines down”; and if it were not for this airport they would have all fallen into the sea. The English called it the “unsinkable aircraft carrier” – Vis. It never came under German control, and then, thereby, mechanics and pilots of the Royal Air Force, British, even Australian (they were a minority, but there were some) played cricket here by the airport in their free time when they did not feel like servicing aircrafts, fighting or so. And so, the playing of cricket continued. It was later set into motion by Fire (*male cry*) ... It will not go out. Well done Stankec! ... And when the club started ... when was Vis cricket club founded?

YOUNG MAN 2: (*shouting*) Fire, when was our club founded?

YOUNG MAN 1: Fire, when was the club founded?

YOUNG MAN 2: Ah, some fifteen years ago.

OLIVER: Two thousand and two.

YOUNG MAN 1: 2002. Mister 'Dirty Grandpa Oliver' founded a cricket club.

OLIVER: (*in the background*) Don't say that now.

YOUNG MAN 1: These are my favourite strikes.

Barking of a dog.

YOUNG MAN 1: This is my favourite! If only it were like this every time!

YOUNG MAN 2: Ah fuck!

YOUNG MAN 1: There, now you know in essence how it all started. And then the English started coming, because to them this is total fun, and they do not have this on the first of July. So yes ... there. This is Vis cricket, it has some sense, it is not rubbish.

MAN: Aaaa, Fire.

Cheering, applause.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I learn about the battle of Vis led by captain Hoste himself, when the weaker British fleet defeated the French and I am looking for more details about it in the book. I find diagrams and charts that look too complicated to me, and some old English expressions were not clear to me. *(swords)* I read through the text during the final game. One battle is blending into another one.

Sounds of a battle, cannons, sword fighting.

Cheering from the bench.

French and English soldiers in a battle.

Singing La Marseillaise.

Cannon shot.

Sinking of a ship.

Sounds of a cricket game.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am completely sure that my imagining of the Vis battle is entirely historically incorrect, and the reading about the battle mixed with cricket game so I imagine soldiers in white trousers with the faces of players. *(striking of a ball)* In one as well as in the other duel the British come out as winners. The victim count on the cricket field is measured by one ball strike into the eye and participants dazed by alcohol, while in the battle of Vis the victims were more numerous. Captain Hoste himself was wounded and he dictated the letter to his parents.

Music.

HOSTE: To the rev. Dixon Hoste. Amphion, off Lissa, Adriatic, March 13th, 1811

My dear father,

for fear the French accounts should reach England before mine, I write to you to say that all is well on board of the Amphion. We have had an action with the French squadron, and completely defeated them: two frigates taken and one destroyed; another struck, but we could not take possession of her.

WOMAN NARRATOR: *(reads and translates a part of the letter)* We had an action with the French fleet and completely defeated them: two frigates taken and destroyed; another one struck, but we could not take possession of her.

HOSTE: I am slightly wounded, and so is Edward. The reason I do not write myself is, the surgeon does not wish me to use my arm. Be assured that Edward's wound, as well as mine, is of no consequence, and that I shall see you in June or July. The result of our action has been glorious, and I refer you for particulars to my public letter. I will write again when I arrive in Malta.

WOMAN NARRATOR: *(reads and translates a part of the letter)* I am slightly wounded, and so is Edward. The reason I do not write myself is, that the surgeon does not wish me to strain my arm. Be assured that Edward's wound, as well as mine, is of no consequence, and that I shall see you in June or July. The result of the battle has been glorious, as you would read in my public letter. I will write again when I arrive in Malta.

Seagulls and murmur of sea.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Captain Hoste returned home successfully in 1814 after he recovered from malaria and pneumonia. Not long after that he got married and fathered as many as six children. He was awarded the title of baronet for his bravery in battle. The history forgot about this title but not about Hoste.

The protégé of Lord Nelson became the master of the Adriatic and his name took hold on the colourful uniforms of older and younger boys from Vis.

HOSTE: The same spirit still prevails that made us the masters of the sea; and with God's assistance, and our own exertions, will ever keep us so.

Waterfront. Sound of motor boat.

Hubbub.

MAN: The best there is, it's squid.

WOMAN: This is defrosted squid.

MAN: Like hell. Hundred kunas, look at it!

MAN 2: Oh yes, these are real.

PEOPLE: Yes, Yes.

A ship lands.

FISHMONGER: Good day!

WOMAN: Good day!

MAN: Good morning, how are you ...

FISHMONGER: E he he he!

MAN: ... mister, friend? Can we moor it here?

FISHMONGER: Yes, my friend and thank you very much!

MAN: Do you have anything good?

FISHMONGER: Everything one needs.

MAN: Everything a man wants?

FISHMONGER: Anything he wants.

MAN: Mackerel, gilt-head bream?

FISHMONGER: There are pilchards, there is everything.

MAN: You have pilchards, too? Oh, by God!

MAN 2: Where are the pilchards?

WOMAN: Is it ... these three?

MAN: No, these are gilt-head breams.

WOMAN: Aha, gilt-head breams.

FISHMONGER: Here are the pilchards, people.

MAN: I see, these are from Dugi otok. They are the real thing.

WOMAN: They are longer.

FISHMONGER: Well they are as they are, what can one do!

MAN: Yes, my friend.

MAN 2: They are not bad.

FISHMONGER: What did I say.

MAN: Well, who said they were bad?

FISHMONGER: There you go. If you please!

MAN 3: Can I have two gilt-head breams.

FISHMONGER: Right!

MAN 3: How much is gilt-head bream?

FISHMONGER: One hundred kunas.

MAN 3: Ha well ...

WOMAN: Don't touch those pilchards!

MAN 3: Are they all small like this, medium or?

FISHMONGER: They are all like this. How about three?

MAN 3: No, no, three are too much for me. Two.

FISHMONGER: There you go. Eighty kunas, all right?

MAN 3: All right.

FISHMONGER: Have a mackerel so that you can grill it. Eighty as well.

Rustling of a bag.

WOMAN: Do you have any gilt-head breams left?

FISHMONGER: Yes, yes. Come on in boy. (*shouting*) Don't mix, for God's sake, don't mix! For fuck's sake! This is all from yesterday! This is not today's, it's from yesterday! You should know without me telling you ...

WOMAN: Have you spat on it?

FISHMONGER: No, no.

MAN 2: Give me one ...

FISHMONGER: Pilchards are from yesterday.

Rustling of a bag.

FISHMONGER: Pilchards are nice, what can you do.

MAN 2: These are bigger than the other day.

FISHMONGER: Oh yes, but they are yesterday's, this is ...

MAN 2: It does not matter.

FISHMONGER: I mean it was in cold storage, I would not say that they are fresh, that it was today's and it was not. There you go, my dear man.

MAN 2: It's all right.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Captain Hoste describes the inhabitants of Vis in several places in his letters. In his eyes they are good humoured and honest, but coarse people. They have nothing to rely upon but the sea, fish and stingy land.

FISHMONGER: Everything is nice, fresh, for sure.

MAN: There is everything, we can only run out.

MAN 2: How much are these sweet potatoes?

FISHMONGER: I don't sell that. I brought it for a man ...

MAN 2: All right friend.

FISHMONGER: ... but you can take it if ... eighty kunas.

MAN 2: Ten kilos, eight kuna a kilo, right?

FISHMONGER: There is more than ten kilos.

Humming of a motor.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Cruel life on a distant island does not allow leisure. The geographical position of the island was favourable for naval bases so the island could be found only on military maps. Numerous preserved military structures, as well as Tito's cave testify of the isolated times not so long ago.

MARE: Ah well.

FISHMONGER: Mare?

MARE: Pilchards ... what is this?

MAN: Pilchards?

MARE: Pilchards for my Mate, what is this? Can one buy wine here?

MAN: He sells it.

MAN 2: Ah you know it is not the real stuff!

MARE: We had some three years old.

FISHMONGER: How much do you want Mare?

MARE: One kilo.

MAN: Give one kilo of pilchards! Mare, give me your hand, Mare. Come on, easy.

MARE: Are these potatoes?

Noise. Hubbub.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Still, it seems that times have changed. A few years ago, Vis played a Greek island in a Hollywood musical. For that occasion, window shutters and doors were painted Mediterranean blue and green. However, as soon as the production finished, and the paint was barely dry, the locals returned to the old, less attractive, but more reliable shades. The change has to wait for a generation or two.

Locals talking.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Playing cricket managed to survive the test of the island and became a tradition that is not questioned any more.

Steps in a little street.

OLD MAN: Now it hurts him.

Steps.

OLD MAN 2: And, where is he?

OLD MAN: By his boat? Then he is actually in the car. Devil knows.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am sitting on a bench by the sea, opposite two old men.

Old man talks incomprehensibly.

OLD MAN 2: Yes, yes.

WOMAN NARRATOR: Slowly nodding their heads they let me know that they are aware of my presence. I ask them about cricket tournament, and they slowly murmur affirmatively.

OLD MAN: There's the devil!

WOMAN FROM THE WINDOW: Neighbourhood with the biggest man, ha?

OLD MAN: Don't Neda!

WOMAN FROM THE WINDOW: All other men died.

OLD MAN: And what about us?

WOMAN FROM THE WINDOW: And you, you are going that way!

OLD MAN 2: Up there.

WOMAN NARRATOR: I am thinking how everything on the island takes place in a show-programme mode. Sport and life alike. No expectations and no competition, with a slight dose of the lack of interest.

WOMAN FROM THE WINDOW: And there are three of you after all.

WOMAN NARRATOR: And then I remember the rush from the ferry that took place according to some secret code and I know that I am wrong. It does not matter whether one is English military commander, plain tourist or immigrant from Zagreb, in their eyes we are all foreigners, and the lack of interest is only a show they are putting on for us. Behind our backs, a secret life unfolds that we have a hard time figuring out.

OLD MAN 2: Everything goes, but one must not tire oneself.

Murmur of the sea and waves becomes louder. Seagulls.