Speaking: And the Oscar goes to… *Two people exchanging saliva*

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Warm Up. Just to set the mood and understand a little bit what's behind the story. Use your fact knowledge and your imagination and choose the best option for each blank space.

1) **Young Iranian couple _____ after dancing near Teheran's Freedom Tower**

   a) **Go viral** and become the sensation of social networks;
   b) **Are sentenced to 10 years in jail** for promoting corruption and prostitution;
   c) They finally get their **families' permission to tie the knot**, marking the first ever happy ending for a Romeo and Juliet-style story;
   d) Show that **being an influencer** is the **wrong dream to have**.

2) **In 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis passed an "_____ bill".**

   a) anti-***gun***
   b) anti-***hate***
   c) anti-***gay***
   d) anti-***fake news***

3) **Imagine a society where money had completely disappeared from the big picture. How would you like to pay for the things you might need or want? Discuss and choose among the following options and if you feel like, suggest other alternatives:**

   a) by being ***slapped in the fac***e;
   b) by ***exchanging things*** you've created yourself, kind of a modern ***barter*** economy;
   c) by doing **community service**;
   d) by hitting the ***like and subscribe*** button.

Watch and check your answers

Question 1 here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8IB-oW3rm4

Question 2 here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=romKodGoEF0

For question 3, watch the trailer of the Oscar winning short, *Two people exchanging saliva*, directed by Natalie Musteata and Alexander Singh: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6klvwgo4DUE .

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After watching the trailer, discuss:

- What **kind of world** do you think this film takes place in?
- What clues suggest that this is a **dystopian society** rather than a **normal one**?
- Why do you think the film is **shot in black and white**?
- What emotions does the **trailer** create: **curiosity, discomfort, humor, horror**?

Watch the whole film https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuOEEu--j2Y

Discussion:

1. **Oppression and dystopian control**

   - Why might a society decide to **ban kissing or other forms of affection**?
   - What does the **punishment** for kissing reveal about **the values of this society**?
   - Why do you think **the law punishes desire rather than violence**?
   - Why are **dystopian stories** often **effective at criticizing real social norms**?

2. **Violence as social currency**

   - In the film, **slapping replaces money**. Why might the filmmakers **choose violence as a form of payment**?
   - What does it say about the society the fact that **bruises become status symbols**?
   - Why do some shop assistants in Lafayette Galleries **fake bruises**?
   - What might the **slap symbolize**: punishment, power, desire or conformity?

3. **Symbolism in names**

   The names of the main characters in this film function as **allegoric hints.** What aspects of that dystopian society do they represent?

   - **Malaise**: meaning a feeling of ***emotional unease or discomfort***;
   - **Angine**: referring to ***angina*, a disease of the heart**;
   - **Chagrin (**Angine's distant husband and a coffin maker for those executed for kissing): meaning **sorrow** or **grief**.

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4. **Setting and Consumer Culture**

- Why is the **Lafayette Galleries** an effective stage for this story? (compare the homes of average people, those of wealthy people and the gallery as a converging point in this film)
- How does turning a **glamorous colourful store** into a **black-and-white site of violence** comment on **modern consumerism**?

5. **The Punishment – circus for the masses or warning against rebellion and transgression?**

- Why do you think the society in the film chooses to **punish only women** for expressing desire?
- How does **public execution as spectacle** serve the society in terms of **control and fear**?
- What parallels can you find with **historical or modern societies** that **use(d) punishment as a warning or public show**?

6. **Big Picture**

- If **affection is criminalized** and **violence is rewarded**, what does this say about **human nature and social control**?
- What's your take on the film **mixing humor and horror** (tragicomedy)?
- Which **elements** of this dystopia **feel exaggerated**, and which **feel familiar** in our modern world?
- What do you think the filmmakers want the audience to **feel or question** by the end of the film?

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