

Before Midnight

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Jesse and 14-year-old Hank are walking through an airport in Greece.

JESSE
So you got everything?

HANK
Mmm-hmmh.

JESSE
You going to play video games the whole flight, or do you think you might actually crack a book?

HANK
Probably read some.

JESSE
If I write you an email, don't be scared to write me back, okay? It won't kill you to let your old man know what you're thinking about and what's going on, you know?

HANK
Yeah.

JESSE
If we want, we could try Skyping once a week or something.

HANK
All right...

JESSE
You got the drawings for your science deal?

HANK
Yeah, think so.

JESSE
Alright, well they turned out great by the way. Like, really great.

HANK
Thanks.

They've arrived at the concession stand. Hank grabs a couple of snacks.

JESSE
Is your computer charged?

HANK
Yeah.

JESSE
What do you think's the first thing
you're gonna do when you get home?

HANK
I dunno.

JESSE
I really cherish this communication
we have. You know, it's just - your
answers are so...

HANK
(interrupting)
What?

Jesse is paying.

JESSE
Just keep practicing the piano, okay?
You're really good and they spend so
much time at that school of yours...
just remember that music is actually
something you will use in your life.
Right, and don't forget to - you
want those sesame things, right?
They're really good.

HANK
Yeah.

JESSE
Right.
(to cashier)
Yassou. Here you go. Thank you.
Okay.

He gets the change and they head to the gate.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'll probably make it over there in
October, you know? Try to see you
in that first recital and then
hopefully catch a soccer game while
I'm there.
(to cashier)
Efharisto.

HANK

I might not even play soccer this year.

JESSE

Oh, that'd be a big mistake. Trust me.

HANK

I'm not that good.

JESSE

Oh, no, you're pretty good. You are.

HANK

I mean, I missed summer training camp, so the chances of me starting are minuscule.

JESSE

Yeah, well, just tell the coach the situation - your dad lives in Europe, you really wanted to be there, blah blah blah. Blame me. My parents stink, but I'm really serious.

HANK

But I'm not serious, Dad. I don't care that much.

JESSE

Well, you don't have to decide right now. You know, just think about it. All I'm saying is that team sports are important, you know?

They've arrived at the security line.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Here we are. I love this airport, don't you?

HANK

It's awesome.

JESSE

I know, it's cool, right? You excited about seeing your mom?

HANK

Yeah, and all my friends.

JESSE

Yeah, right. What about your boarding pass, passport...? Okay. You feel confident about making the connection?

HANK

Yeah, I've done this before.

JESSE

Yeah, but not with a tricky connection like this. Just remember, when you land, you stay in your seat. Somebody from the airline's going to come get you and take you to the gate, right?

HANK

It's not a problem.

JESSE

Okay. All right. Oh, boy. Well, looks like maybe we should just do this thing, huh? Okay. Come here.

They hug.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna do my best to make that recital, okay?

HANK

You know, I wouldn't bother.

JESSE

What makes you say that?

HANK

Look, I'm not being mean, but it'd be easier if you didn't come to the recital.

JESSE

How come?

HANK

It'd just be better if you visited on another weekend.

JESSE

But... I want to see you play.

HANK

Look, it's because Mom hates you so much. She'd be really stressed if you were there, and then it'd be tense for me.

Jesse motions to the person behind him to go ahead.

HANK (CONT'D)

We wouldn't have any time to hang out, anyway.

JESSE

Don't worry about her, we'll figure that out, we can... Just don't want you to worry about it. You know? I mean... you know how much I miss you, right?

Hank nods.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Why do you think she still hates me so much?

HANK

I don't know. I think she hates Daniel more than she hates you.

Hank playfully punches Jesse.

HANK (CONT'D)

Hey, don't worry about it. I'll figure something out. We should just do this though.

JESSE

Yeah. But I mean, is there anything I can do to help?

HANK

I don't know.

JESSE

But you know that I love you, right?

HANK

Yeah.

JESSE

Right, okay.

HANK

Yeah, I know. This has been the best summer of my life.

JESSE

Really?

HANK

Yeah!

JESSE
Well, me too. See, I told you, I
told you this whole Greece thing was
going to be great.

HANK
And it was.

A final moment.

JESSE
Okay. All right. I love you, pal.

HANK
I love you too, Dad.

JESSE
Okay, shake my hand. All, right,
go.

HANK
Bye.

JESSE
Bye. See ya.
(sighs)

He goes into security. Jesse watches him walk away, and
then slowly heads toward the exit.

EXT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

We follow Jesse back through the airport as he finds his way
to the parking lot, revealing Celine, standing outside of
the car, talking on the phone.

CELINE
(speaking french)
Oui, oui.
(continues in french)
Okay.

As Jesse and Celine settle inside the car, the camera pans
over toward two 6-year-old girls who are asleep in the back
seat. That's right, twins NINA and ELLA. They start driving
away from the airport.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

As they hit the highway, Celine lowers her volume as she
wraps up her conversation.

CELINE
(into phone)
Okay. *Bon. Très bien. Merci.*
Oui, oui, Lucia. Au'voir.
(hangs up, speaks
french)

JESSE
What's going on?

CELINE
They voted against it.

JESSE
What, the wind turbines?

CELINE
Six months dealing with those people,
they were all for it. Everyone agreed
it was great for the region...

JESSE
Oh. So what happened?

CELINE
...And now they've decided that they
don't like the way it looks on that
hill. It's ruining their view.

JESSE
No, no, I thought it was a done deal.

CELINE
It was! It practically was--

JESSE
Well, can--

CELINE
That's what's so infuriating.

JESSE
Can they do that?

CELINE
Yes, of course. They've done it.
That's it. It's over, fini.

JESSE
I'm sorry.

CELINE
No, no, it's just so frustrating. I
can't take it anymore.
(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm gonna take that job with Remy.

JESSE

No. No, you don't want to work for him.

CELINE

Why not?

JESSE

For the government?

CELINE

Well, I think this government is different. We need laws. That's the only way anything is going to happen.

JESSE

It's not the only way. You guys have been getting a lot of good work done.

CELINE

Well, I've been thinking about it. This is the way to go.

JESSE

Okay. Well then, let me remind you that you do not like that guy. The whole time you worked for him before, you complained about him constantly.

CELINE

Yeah, yeah, yeah. He can be an asshole, but he gets things done. That's how I'm gonna be from now on--

JESSE

Okay.

CELINE

A real bitch, okay? That's it.

JESSE

Okay. Well every time I look at that guy, all I see is ambition. I mean, I'm sorry, I just don't trust him. The only reason he's going from non-profit to government is to have people kiss his ass.

CELINE

I don't care about him, okay?

JESSE

All right, and I think you're gonna be miserable, all right? Just with all that politicking and compromising--

CELINE

Whatever. I've made my decision. I'm tired of being the do-gooder that rolls a boulder up a hill and watches it roll down again.

JESSE

Isn't he the guy that used to throw his pens at his assistant and stuff?

CELINE

Okay, I should have taken this job a year ago. You know, and I was scared because of the amount of work, but I think it's the best opportunity ever and it's more money and... I'm doing it.

JESSE

Okay. Are you sure?

CELINE

No, I'm not sure of anything, okay?

JESSE

All right, all right--

CELINE

I mean, you know, what's gonna happen to everyone if I leave? Like Francoise, and I mean, they count on me. What do you think? Should I take it or not, should... Should I?

JESSE

Ah, no, no, no, I don't have an opinion. I just don't want to see you rush into a decision because of this wind turbine crap.

CELINE

No! It's not just that, okay? It's been stirring in me all summer...

JESSE

Well, I know it has. I know.

CELINE

...And I should do it. And I'm doing it!

JESSE

All right then, just - then do it.

CELINE

I'm doing it, all right? Oh, god. I wish things were simpler. I mean, if I leave I get fucked, if I stay I get fucked...

JESSE

(laughs)

There's always a catch.

CELINE

Yeah, the world is fucked.

JESSE

Yeah, baby.

CELINE

Oh, god. We finally have a vacation and the girls are sick for the first two weeks.

JESSE

Or the perfect son who lives a million miles away.

CELINE

Or the love of your life can't clean up after himself or learn how to shave.

JESSE

Who's that? You're not, you're not talking about Captain Clean-up over here, are you? You don't mean--

CELINE

Captain Clean-up! The one that's been missing in action all these years!

JESSE

What did you expect at this point in your life, missy?

Celine turns back to look at the twins.

CELINE

God! Oh, look at them; they're so cute! They look like conjoined twins! Oh my god, I gotta take a picture.

She takes out her cell phone and takes a picture. Jesse reaches back for something he can't quite find.

JESSE

Hey, did uh, did Ella finish that apple?

CELINE

You're going to take food out of your child's mouth?

JESSE

Yeah.

Celine reaches back and grabs a half-eaten apple off the seat.

CELINE

Okay. Well. It's all brown.

JESSE

Oh, there's a spot here.

He takes a bite from the green part of the apple. Celine is now filming him with the camera.

CELINE

Ella - this is evidence of your father stealing food from you. If you become bulimic or anorexic, it is not my fault. Don't blame it all on your mother, okay?

JESSE

Ella, this is a family apple. I'm teaching you the value of sharing. I love you honey.

CELINE

Ohh, so sweet. You girls will remember this vacation very differently than we will.

JESSE

That's for sure. I see that with my mom. She remembers my childhood entirely differently than I do. Can you please stop filming me.

Celine puts the phone away.

CELINE

God. I love your mom. You're always so hard on her.

JESSE

It's because you missed the fucked up years. You're just getting the good era.

CELINE

The "fucked up years." That reminds me, talking about fucked up... did I ever tell you the story of my little Cleopatra kitty? No? Okay, I think you would remember if I did. When I was a little girl I had this cat named Cleopatra and every spring she would jump the fence and get pregnant and always end up with a litter of exactly two kittens.

JESSE

Two kitties?

CELINE

Two kitties. Every time, every year, two cats. I mean it was just... amazing. Then one day, I was around 30 and I was having lunch with my Dad, I was remembering, mentioning little Cleopatra and he was like - 'the hardest thing I ever had to do was to kill those cute little kittens'- and I was like WHAT? It turns out-- listen to this--there were sometimes up to 7 kittens in that litter--

JESSE

Oh, no.

CELINE

But he would take five of them--

JESSE

Oh, no.

CELINE

--Put them into a plastic bag with a bunch of ether.

JESSE

(laughs)
That's terrible.

CELINE

He had forgotten the lie he and my mom had told me as a kid.

JESSE

How did he decide which ones he wanted to kill?

CELINE

Well, I actually asked him that. Did you take the fluffiest, cutest? He just started to cry.

JESSE

Oh.

CELINE

Poor Daddy.

They realize they're driving by some ancient ruins.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Oh, we said we were going to stop. They wanted to see the ruins.

JESSE

Yeah, but should we?

CELINE

Well, Ella really wanted to.

JESSE

Yeah, but should we wake them up?

CELINE

I don't know.

JESSE

You know what, let's do this. On our way back to the airport we can catch them.

CELINE

You know we won't.

JESSE

Yeah, probably not.

CELINE

Okay.

JESSE

We'll be like, so long, ancient ruins! What's so great about you anyway?

CELINE

Psh! Seen one, seen them all! Oh my god, we are shitty parents. We should have stopped.

JESSE

Aw, it's okay.

CELINE

It's culture. Come on, go back.

JESSE

Ah, we gotta put some character in these kids somehow, you know what I mean?

CELINE

Yeah, yeah.

JESSE

We're teaching them a valuable lesson, you know. You snooze, you lose in this world.

CELINE

And when the girls are in rehab, recovering from ten years of addiction to coke and speed, they'll say, "oh, we just never felt comfortable going to sleep because our daddy always used to tell us, "you snooze, you lose." And that'll be your fault again.

JESSE

(laughing)

Okay, okay. Well, we are shitty parents.

CELINE

I know.

JESSE

Saying goodbye to Hank sucked.

CELINE

Why, was he upset?

JESSE

No, no. He said it was the best summer of his life.

CELINE

Well, that's great!

(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

I mean, I wouldn't worry too much about him. We spoke a bunch, and you know what his main concerns in life are?

JESSE

What?

CELINE

Pimples and how girls perceive him. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, I guess.

JESSE

What do you mean? I'm not like that.

CELINE

Oh, please!

JESSE

What?

CELINE

That's all you think about!

JESSE

What?

CELINE

Women! I mean--I'm not complaining. I'm getting a lot of attention. But you never stop ogling girls.

JESSE

I don't ogle girls.

CELINE

Yeah you do.

JESSE

I don't ogle girls!
(sexy Spanish accent)
I make love to them with my eyes.

CELINE

Oh, wow.

JESSE

Yeah.

CELINE

I like the Spanish guy. Or is it Greek?

JESSE
(Spanish accent)
I don't know where I'm from, but I'm
very hairy.

CELINE
(laughs)
Well, I think... You know, Henry
might have, you know.

JESSE
What?

CELINE
That little Melina girl.

JESSE
I don't know. He had a crush but...

CELINE
Oh, are you kidding?

JESSE
What?

CELINE
Why do you think he said it was the
best summer of his life?

JESSE
Because he and I had a good time
together?

CELINE
Jesse...

JESSE
No, huh? So what, you think they...
you think they what--

CELINE
Of course.

JESSE
You think they kissed?

CELINE
Yeah, they kissed! Yeah, yeah.
Okay, I was sworn to secrecy but he
told me. They kissed. Okay.

JESSE
What'd he say?

CELINE

I'm not supposed to tell you anything,
so I'm not gonna talk but--

JESSE

Come on.

CELINE

Okay. He told me he was worried -
you know, concerned about the kissing.
You know, tongue, no tongue.

JESSE

What, he asked you that?

CELINE

Yeah. But he was so - he was so
cute. All nervous, all red, biting
his cheek like when he was little.
So cute.

JESSE

Wow. So he and Melina were a real
thing.

CELINE

Yeah.

JESSE

What's gonna happen now?

CELINE

I don't know. They must be friends
on Facebook, so they'll keep in touch,
at least for a while.

JESSE

Hey - what if they end up spending
their whole life together? You know?

CELINE

You're so corny! Sometimes I'm just
like -

JESSE

No, I just - I mean -

CELINE

What are you, a twelve-year-old girl?

JESSE

I'm just, it's -

CELINE

I mean, first love, do you even remember who it was?

JESSE

Uh, yeah, I do. It was you.

CELINE

Oh, please. Like you were a virgin at twenty-three. I don't -

JESSE

No, you said "first love", not first sexual experience, okay?

CELINE

Okay. Fine. Like I'm the first woman you ever fell in love with?

JESSE

Yeah. Pretty much. The first one I felt truly connected to. Sure.

CELINE

I don't think so.

JESSE

What, I wasn't your first love?

CELINE

(beat)

No, of course not.

JESSE

Oh. No, I just - I thought I was.

CELINE

No!

(laughs)

Jesse, stop this. It's dumb.

JESSE

It's okay, it's okay. It's not a big deal.

CELINE

No? Okay. How old are you? Come on!

JESSE

I'm forty-one and I have loved only you.

A beat of silence, then they both laugh.

CELINE

You are so, so working on our little night, aren't you?

JESSE

Hell yeah. I've got a Trojan in my billfold and a rocket in my pocket.

CELINE

I'm stuck with an American teenager. Can't believe it. Do we have to do all that stuff later?

JESSE

What? Oh, yeah, come on. It means a lot to Patrick. Ariadni and Stefanos are probably already there prepping, the kids wanna have one more big time together - it's gonna be fun.

CELINE

No, no, no, but I meant the hotel, later. I just, I'm not sure I want to go -

Her phone rings. She picks it up.

CELINE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hi, sweetie. Yeah. Oh, okay, okay, okay, okay. Well, well, it's fine. It's fine! Call me from London. Have a good flight. Bye.

Jesse gestures for the phone, but she's already hung up.

JESSE

But - but -

CELINE

They were telling them to turn everything off, they were about to take off and I asked him to call me from the plane; you know, I don't like when he flies.

(a beat)

What?

JESSE

I don't - I dunno. I dunno.

(sighs)

I just don't think I can keep doing this.

CELINE

Why?

JESSE

Just every summer, every Christmas,
you know, it's like -

CELINE

I know. It makes me ill every time.

JESSE

It just wouldn't be so bad you know
if I - like if we were sending him
to boarding school or something.
Just - I dunno. ...If his mom and I
got along a little bit better.

CELINE

I know. It's like we're sending him
back across enemy lines.

JESSE

I know. It really hit me this time,
you know? I mean, he's going to be
a freshman in high school! Four
more years and then he's gonna be on
his own.

CELINE

Well, maybe that's the good news.
We only have four more years of this.

JESSE

No, no, no. This is the crucial
time. I just feel like I should be
there for him. Like it's now or
never, you know?

CELINE

No. What do you mean?

JESSE

I guess I just thought somehow he'd
end up living with us. Somewhere
along the way, you know. Now time's
going by so fast and here we are!
It's high school, you know. There's
girls... next thing you know it's
college applications.

CELINE

Yeah, you're right! Maybe it's time.
I mean... I really think it's time.

(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

Just tell his mum all this and ask
if he can come and live with us.
He'd love it, we can put him in that
bilingual -

JESSE

That's never gonna happen, all right?
She's never gonna give me one thing
that she's not legally obligated to.

CELINE

Do you want to call that lawyer again?

JESSE

No. I don't like that guy. He's
terrible.

CELINE

Should I call his mother?

JESSE

Uh, no. Please. Never again.

CELINE

No, I know.

JESSE

Look, he doesn't even know how to
throw a baseball.

CELINE

Who cares?

JESSE

He just... he leads with his elbow.
He throws like a girl.

CELINE

That's not your fault.

JESSE

No, it is my fault. A father is
supposed to teach you that.

CELINE

Okay, he just doesn't like baseball
does he? Who can blame him.

JESSE

No, it's an example, okay? It's a
metaphor for everything. He's turning
fourteen and he needs his father.

CELINE

Jesse, I'm not moving to Chicago.

JESSE

Well, did I ask you to?

Celine rolls her eyes.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Where'd that come from, huh? I'm just thinking out loud. I mean, this is the one thing I promised myself I would never do and I look up and I'm doing it.

CELINE

Well... listen, you're a wonderful father. He loves the relationship you have, he loves the letters you send him and he -

JESSE

He doesn't even read the letters that I send.

CELINE

No, of course he reads them; he just doesn't compliment the writing the way you want.

JESSE

I just know that if I miss these years, they are never coming back.

CELINE

Oh, my god.

JESSE

What?

CELINE

This is where it ends.

JESSE

What're you talking about?

CELINE

This is how people start breaking up.

JESSE

Oh, my god. What'd you just... you just jumped off a cliff.

CELINE

No, no. I'm marking this. This is the day you light the ticking bomb that will destroy our lives.

Jesse laughs.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Yeah. Watch.

JESSE

Okay. Well, first off, you don't light a ticking bomb, okay, you set it and it's a timer -

CELINE

Oh, okay, whatever! Whatever, okay.

JESSE

- That's why it ticks.

CELINE

It has a timer. Well, you know what? It's ticking. Right now. And this is how it happens.

JESSE

Right.

CELINE

You're unhappy, you blame it on the other person, resentment grows, everything slowly rots and you break up. That's it.

JESSE

You're just doing this to shut me up.

CELINE

Not at all. Not at all!

JESSE

I know you are. That's what you're doing. Yeah.

CELINE

No-no-no-no. I'm actually surprised we lasted this long.

JESSE

Okay, Okay. So here comes the hyperbole-

CELINE

We were on parallel tracks for a while but now our tracks have crossed and I'm going west and you're going east. And believe me, this is how it happens. I've seen it, okay?
Catherine Alexander -

JESSE

You're kidding, right? You're kidding.

CELINE

Well, no! I'm kidding. And I'm not. All right?
(beat)
Just - this is it.

As Celine talks, the girls wake up. One of the girls, ELLA, groggily says:

ELLA

How much longer to the ruins?

CELINE

Oh, they were closed.

JESSE

Yeah. Sweetie, you know what we decided, we're gonna catch them on the way back, when we're going to the airport.

CELINE

Exactly.

JESSE

Okay?

CELINE

We'll leave early, right? Yeah.

JESSE

Yeah. Yeah.

ELLA

What happened to my apple?

CELINE

Your apple. *La pomme, elle etait fini, cette pomme.* Right?

EXT. FISHING VILLAGE STORE - AFTERNOON

They pull up at a small store in a coastal fishing village and start getting out of the car. Celine is speaking in French to the girls.

CELINE
Give me the list.

JESSE
I don't have it.

CELINE
It's in your wallet.

JESSE
Oh.

CELINE
In your wallet.

JESSE
Okay.

He gets out his wallet and hands it to Celine. She pulls out the list instantly.

CELINE
Voilà!

She turns to the girls.

CELINE (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm the General! Captain Nina,
(tells her what to do
in french)

NINA
Oui!

JESSE
Who made you General?

CELINE
The General, okay?

JESSE
Oh.

CELINE
Captain Ella,
(tells her what to do
in french)

ELLA

Oui!

CELINE

Private Clean-Up, you don't touch anything.

JESSE

Oui. D'accord.

EXT. ARRIVAL HOME - AFTERNOON

The car pulls up outside an estate by the shore. They get out and the girls sprint through the entryway.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

On the patio outside the house, a soccer game is going on with Jesse and many other participants.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

At a wonderful seating area, PATRICK listens to a story NATALIA is telling him.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

In a small garden, Celine, Nina and Ella pick vegetables. Celine has a nice moment where she's just looking at her little girls in nature, engaged with the earth.

CELINE

The red one.

ELLA

Cela?

CELINE

Très bien... Okay. Pepper.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jesse, PATRICK, and STEFANOS are relaxing at the far end of the patio where there's a beautiful ocean view.

STEFANOS

I actually read them both. The first one is called THAT TIME, the second one is called THIS TIME.

JESSE

The first one is THIS TIME, the second one is THAT TIME.

STEFANOS

Yeah.

JESSE

We've got a joke in our family that "This" brought us back together and "That" paid for our apartment.

PATRICK

Okay.

STEFANOS

Well, it must be a little weird for Celine, man, the way she's in a book like that, no?

JESSE

Why? I think she's gotten used to it.

STEFANOS

But the second one is sexy, man. When he misses the plane and they black out the windows and they have sex for days and days and days like there's no tomorrow. I mean wow, did you guys actually do that?

Jesse shrugs his shoulders.

STEFANOS (CONT'D)

You did that, uh?

PATRICK

Have you read Jesse's third book? It's actually better than the first two.

JESSE

It certainly took longer to write than the first two put together.

STEFANOS

No, the third one I didn't read. I mean, my wife gave it to me but it's just a little bit too long for me, man. Even the title is long. What's the title?

JESSE

"Temporary Cast Members of a Long Running But Little Seen Production of a Play Called Fleeting."

STEFANOS

Well, exactly my point.

JESSE

Ah, well, you're not alone. Everybody else thought it was too long.

PATRICK

It's a better book. It's so much more ambitious.

(in Greek)

The first two were so so.

STEFANOS

(speaks Greek)

Really? Do you think?

JESSE

What's that?

STEFANOS

No, he says he likes all the books. He does..

Jesse laughs.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Natalia, Ariadni, and Celine are sitting at a table in the kitchen, chopping vegetables.

CELINE

I mean, I love it here. This place is amazing. These tomatoes are so amazing. I can... I can smell them! They smell so good.

ARIADNI

Yeah, Patrick is very proud of them.

CELINE

I know it's stupid but when we were about to leave Paris I was a little nervous to come here. And now that we're about to leave, I don't want to go.

NATALIA

Why were you nervous?

ARIADNI

Yeah, why was that?

CELINE

I don't know. This place is so full of thousands of years of myth and tragedy and I thought something tragic was going to happen.

NATALIA

What, you thought the Minotaur was going to eat your children or something?

CELINE

Yes. Exactly.

All three women laugh.

EXT. PATIO - AFTERNOON

Back with the guys...

JESSE

All right, well, the whole time I've been here, I've been working on this idea about a group of different people with all these brain abnormalities. So the book would be like a day in their life from all their unique points of view, right? Like there's this older lady who has a condition that makes you feel like you're in a perpetual state of déjà vu. Every single experience she has, she feels like she's had it before. I mean she can be sitting here with us, talking seemingly functional right? And in her head, she's thinking: Didn't he already say that? I mean; weren't we here yesterday having this exact same conversation.

STEFANOS

So just like Deja Vu.

JESSE

Yeah, except all the time.

STEFANOS

Ah.

JESSE

Right, that's the thing, right? Everything she takes in. Breakfast, a newspaper, a movie. She's convinced she's encountered it already.

STEFANOS

So that's a real condition?

JESSE

Yeah. It's called persistent deja...
It's real but I can't pronounce it.

The men chuckle.

JESSE

Then there's these two other characters with facial recognition extremes. Like there's this one guy and he can't recognize his wife of twenty years. He looks at himself in the mirror and he feels this disconnect with that man he's looking at. Then the other character is the opposite, middle-aged housewife with a categorical exacting memory of every face she's ever seen; so she lives in a big city but to her, it's a small town. Like, a taxi drives past and she thinks 'Oh, that's the driver who dropped me off at Place de Vosges three Christmases ago.' And some old lady walking on the street, she thinks; 'Oh, she sat two seats down from me on the Metro last year.' So, everyone she meets, to her feels intimate and connected.

STEFANOS

Well, I'm just like the first guy.
Like I feel connected to nothing
most of the time, man.

We see Patrick's grandson, Achilles, and girlfriend, Anna, come walking by, just from the beach. Anna slaps his butt playfully before heading indoors while Achilles joins the guys.

JESSE

Oh, Achilles! Anna! Hey, you guys.

PATRICK

Hey, look at this kid. He's having
the best summer of us all.

ACHILLES

Hello, Pappou.

STEFANOS

So you were saying... there's three
characters, right?

JESSE

No, it's not just three characters, it's a whole group of people. It's like, I'm working on a chapter right now about a young Greek man named Achilles.

ACHILLES

Me?

JESSE

Well, he's named after you. And this guy is caught in a loop where all he sees is the transient nature of everything, right? Like he looks out to sea and thinks of the day it's gonna be dry and littered with fossils.

STEFANOS

Well... I dunno. It sounds a little pretentious to me.

JESSE

Ah, no-no-no. It won't be pretentious, I promise. No, it's gonna be funny. Really funny. He picks up a book and he immediately wonders: Who's gonna be the last person to read this?

STEFANOS

And that's funny?

All laugh.

ACHILLES

Sometimes I kind of think like that.

STEFANOS

Well, okay, so he doesn't get excited about tits, cars, booze, nothing. He just thinks about death.

JESSE

Well, not so much death, right? It's just like transformation, you know. Like he's seeing too far into the future.

STEFANOS

Okay.

PATRICK

I like this idea for a novel. But you should add a character of an old man like me - a poor sap who can't remember what he had for breakfast, but he can still hear the song that was playing when Sheila Campbell danced topless on the bar at Jury's when he was 14 years old.

JESSE

That'll work.

STEFANOS

Okay. You have these people lost in time, right ok? But what's the connection? Are they going to have sex? Don't you need something like that?

JESSE

It's not time that they're lost in, right? It's like perception. That's the deal. No, I'm thinking of setting the whole novel at a movie. Like, every character in some way comes in contact with the film 'On the Waterfront.'

(to Achilles)

Have you seen "On the Waterfront"?

He's not sure until Stefanos tells him the Greek title.

ACHILLES

Oh, with Brando!

JESSE

Yeah.

ACHILLES

Uh-huh.

JESSE

Yeah, yeah. Okay, well, the first chapter of the book is opening weekend, Times Square, 1954. That old lady, with perpetual deja vu walks into the matinee screening, right? Except the whole time she's thinking: haven't I already seen this?

STEFANOS

Yeah.

JESSE

Right. And then another chapter is a 1979 Paris film studies class. Then we have a Kazan retrospective in Munich, 1993.

STEFANOS

Well, man, that is time. How is that not time?

JESSE

Yeah, it's time but, it's more perception. You don't like it.

STEFANOS

I think it's going to be too long.

They laugh.

PATRICK

Well, I like it. Don't listen to him - he makes bicycles. Send it to me in galleys.

JESSE

Will do.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

All five kids are playing a game together somewhere on the property.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Ariadni, Stefanos, and Celine are in the kitchen, preparing the meal.

CELINE

In France we stuff the tomatoes with tomatoes and the peppers with peppers.

ARIADNI

Oh, really? Because we use the same stuffing for both, because of the way it reacts differently, in terms of taste. Oh, and Celine, make sure you don't stuff them too much because of the way it overflows in the oven later and gets kind of nasty.

CELINE

Okay okay, yeah.

STEFANOS

You're doing fine, Celine.

ARIADNI

And especially don't listen to
Stefanos here because he's never
made this dish before, or any other
dish for that matter.

He takes her knife.

CELINE

(Laughing)

Okay.

STEFANOS

You know, I mean...

ARIADNI AND STEFANOS
(Yelling, Speaking
Greek)

STEFANOS

Let go of me,
(Greek)
Let go of me!

ARIADNI

(in Greek)
Stefanos, why are you taking my knife?
Stop stealing people's knives. Here
is a knife perfectly good for what
you're doing.

STEFANOS

(in Greek)
Sweetie, I cannot cut with this little
fucking knife.

CELINE

Are you guys fighting, with knives?
Okay, stop it! Stop fighting with
knives.

ARIADNI

We're not fighting. We're
negotiating.

Anna enters the kitchen and goes over to the refrigerator.

CELINE

Okay, negotiating, that's what you
call it? Wow,
(in French)
Negotiating with knives.

ARIADNI
(in French)
Exactly.

CELINE
(In French)
Not bad.

STEFANOS
This is a system that we have.

CELINE
Wow, so you found a system that works
for you.

ARIADNI
Mm-hm.

CELINE
I thought it was called a
relationship. But I like "system",
that's pretty good. That's ready,
right?

Ariadni walks over and takes a drag off his cigarette.

STEFANOS
That's ready.

Celine takes a platter of appetizers and begins to leave.

CELINE
(to Anna, in French)
And you, what's your system?

Anna gestures oral sex.

CELINE (CONT'D)
(in French)
What about this system?

Celine puts her tongue between her fingers by her lips.

ANNA
(in French)
Not bad.

Celine exits.

STEFANOS
We used to have that system.

Anna laughs.

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

Jesse leads the kids down the rock steps to the little patch of rocky beach under Patrick's house.

JESSE

Not too far, you guys!

We catch a nice moment where Jesse is looking out at the sea, and at the kids, soaking it all up. He checks a text and the moment is gone.

EXT. DINNER TABLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Now in the middle of their dinner, Jesse taps his wine glass and gets everyone's attention.

JESSE

All right, I don't want to let this meal go by without saying thank you to everyone. And especially you, Patrick. We had no idea what we were getting into these last six weeks. A letter arrives from the university, inviting us to the Southern Peloponnese of Greece, to the guest house of a great writer? 'Sure, why not?' And then at the airport earlier today, Hank turns to me and he says this has been the greatest summer of his life.

GROUP

(Reacting)

JESSE

And I have to say the same. So, thank you Patrick, and not just for what you have done for me and my family but for all the ways you've given back, all right. So, to Patrick!

OTHERS

To Patrick...

Glasses clink.

PATRICK

Thank you, thank you, thank you. You know, when I first saw you at the airport I thought, 'No way a man dressed like that could be a man of letters.'

GROUP
(Laughing)

PATRICK
But now, now I think I've learned
your secret. We've had many great
writers here over the past decade
but never one who had a partner more
interesting than themselves.

GROUP
(Reacting)
Ohh. Oh.
(Laughing)

CELINE
I keep telling you.

PATRICK
And Celine, it's been so great to
have you and your daughters' wonderful
vitality around here, and I'm so
happy you've been able to meet my
dear friend, Natalia, who's husband
Elias was like a brother to me.

CELINE
(to Patrick)
I'm so sorry about the curtains.

PATRICK
Don't worry. It's nothing.

JESSE
I know. I shouldn't have thrown
those cherries-

CELINE
No, I mean, really -

JESSE
It was my fault.

PATRICK/CELINE
No, no. That's sweet of you.

ACHILLES
And Grandpa, thanks for including
Anna and me this summer... because
you know he usually puts me to work
but when I bring Anna he lets me sit
at the table of the grown-ups.

JESSE

Welcome to the grownups table! Hear hear!

CELINE

(to Anna)

How long have you two been together?

ANNA

Since last summer.

ACHILLES

We met one year ago in my last few days here with grandpa before I had to go back to Athens.

ANNA

Yeah, we met at my closing night cast party. I was doing Shakespeare at Epidavros...

JESSE

So, who did you play?

ANNA

I was Perdita in "A Winter's Tale".

STEFANOS

And she was fantastic! Remember, Patrick, we went to that?

PATRICK

Ahhh Perdita... "When you do dance, I wish you a wave of the sea, that you might ever do nothing but that."

GROUP

(Reacting, Applauding)

Bravo!

STEFANOS

The way he just performed that was much better than the guy at the play!

ACHILLES

Actually, people are still talking about that production.

ANNA

Yeah but... the after party was even better. It's where we met.

ACHILLES

I had an old BSA motorcycle.

JESSE

Nice.

ACHILLES

Yeah. We drove around all night.
And then I had to drive her back to
the theater to get her stuff. And
it was dawn.

ANNA

I'll never forget it. It's outdoors
and seats 12,000 people, but it was
now completely empty.

ACHILLES

Yeah. And she was sitting way up in
the back row. So, I went up on stage
and whispered to her...

ANNA

Yeah, the acoustics there are
incredible. I could see his mouth
move and then, three seconds later,
I could hear his voice in my ear.

JESSE

(to Anna, quietly)
What'd he say?

Anna just smiles, not saying.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Woah! Okay!

ARIADNI

(Laughing)
That's private.

ACHILLES

And then she had to fly back to Paris
a couple of days later.

CELINE

How did you keep in touch?

ACHILLES

We Skyped. Pretty much everyday
since then.

ANNA

Yeah, and when we're apart we have a
thing of putting our laptops by the
pillow and falling asleep together.

CELINE

Ah, that's the new romance!

ACHILLES

And when I wake up the screen is usually frozen... and Anna's face is in some funny position like...

(Mimes)

STEFANOS

Okay. Can I ask you a question?
Please?

ANNA

Yes.

STEFANOS

When you guys Skype, do you, you know, do you go a little crazy?

ARIADNI

God, you're being so vulgar!

STEFANOS

No, I'm not being vulgar. I'm just being an amateur anthropologist who is interested in virtual words, on a theoretical level.

ARIADNI

So now you're an anthropologist?

STEFANOS

Yeah. For instance, the sex of the near future, okay, and I'm not making this up but, it's gonna be just like plugging in, attaching something to your genitals - I'm sorry - and then you'll be having virtual intercourse with anyone of your choice. You will be able to program in all your preferences. You'll be able to type in exactly what you want Marilyn Monroe to whisper in your ear.

GROUP

(Reacting)

Hm..

CELINE

Oh, I might like that.

JESSE

Come on.

ACHILLES

I mean, why not? I mean, more and more of our experiences are going to take place in the virtual world.

ANNA

Yeah... And you are a writer, how are you going to feel when a computer can write a book better than "War and Peace"?

PATRICK

It'll never happen.

ACHILLES

I think it's only a question about WHEN it's going to happen, grandpa.

JESSE

You know, I think I'm probably gonna feel about the same way as Kasparov - you remember how all those chess players felt when they could no longer compete with that big-ass computer -

STEFANOS

The Big Blue.

JESSE

Right, right, right! Remember at first nobody thought a computer could ever beat our best.

STEFANOS

Right.

JESSE

(Accent)

A machine lacks that ineffable human instinct.

GROUP

(Laughing)

JESSE

And now we can't even compete.

CELINE

I saw this documentary where they were doing an experiment on a lab rat and he was wired up and he could push a switch and have an orgasm.

GROUP

(Laughs)

CELINE

And so scientists were sort of
laughing at this pathetic little
creature while it ignored its food
and water and didn't do anything
else, and eventually it just died.
I mean, I think that's the future of
humanity. You know, just
 (Demonstrates Rat
 Dying)
... And die.

GROUP

(Laughing)

PATRICK

Well, maybe so but every generation
believes that they're witnessing the
end of the world but... I feel that
I'm actually living it.

JESSE

Okay. All right, I have a question
for you Patrick. I think a lot of
people are feeling that way. You
know, that we're this kind of pleasure
obsessed, porn-addled materialists,
ceding our humanity to technology...
At the same moment that computers
are becoming sentient, right? So
what my question is: what is this
notion of self to begin with?

PATRICK

It's written over the portals to the
Temple of Apollo at Delphi: It says
"Gnothi seauton", which means "Know
Thyself".

JESSE

Yeah, but we're kind of 99% automated
already. Our personality - or this
thing we think of as ourself right -
it's just a tiny fraction of what
the brain is doing, right?

STEFANOS

Yeah.

JESSE

Most of it's just automated body
function.

CELINE

Okay.

JESSE

So then what is it we're actually ceding?

CELINE

(Interrupting)

If this notion of self is such a small percentage of you, sweetie...

JESSE

Yes.

CELINE

How come I always hear so much about it?

GROUP

(Laughs)

STEFANOS

Well, it's just like my penis. I mean, it's not that big, it's a small part of myself, but it needs a lot of attention.

CELINE

His too!

ANNA

And how did you two meet?

ARIADNI

You don't know?

ANNA

What?

STEFANOS

Well, you have to read Jesse's books.

CELINE

Yeah, especially if you want to know exactly what it's like to have sex with me, read away.

STEFANOS

Read away!

CELINE

Oh, excuse me, Stefanos.

STEFANOS

No, no. I mean it's well written.

JESSE

Thank you. We met about 18 years ago. We kinda, sort of, fell in love a little bit, and then we lost track of each other and a decade later we ran into each other.

CELINE

No, no, no, we didn't run into each other, sweetie-pie.

JESSE

We didn't?

CELINE

No. You wrote a book "inspired" by our meeting...

JESSE

Yeah, yeah...

CELINE

And I read about it and went to look for it.

ANNA

That's pretty romantic.

JESSE

It was really romantic.

CELINE

Not really. Not really. He neglects to mention he was married, had a kid...

JESSE

Details, details...

CELINE

Yeah, that part was a disaster.

JESSE

It wasn't a disaster. It was inevitable.

CELINE

Yeah. Okay. And the first time we have sex without a condom, twins!

JESSE

Yeah, one pitch, one homerun. Boom!

CELINE

And I've been chained to the sink
ever since! I'm sorry to say that,
but -

ANNA

It's not that bad, is it? The girls
are so beautiful.

JESSE

Thank you.

CELINE

They're cute.

GROUP

(Laughs, Reacts)

CELINE

Okay, no no, it has some upsides.
Let me tell you right now, Anna, how
to keep a man.

Anna nods.

CELINE (CONT'D)

You've gotta let them win at all the
silly little games...

JESSE

Oh, okay.

CELINE

... They like. When I met Jesse,
the first night we were playing
pinball, and of course I was
winning...

JESSE

Is the foundation to our entire
relationship a lie? It is. It is.

CELINE

... And at the last minute I let the
ball go down the middle. It builds
their confidence.

JESSE

No, she can't beat me at one game,
not any game.

CELINE

If I didn't let him win at every
game... we would never have sex.

(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)
I mean, I'm sorry to say it, but
he's actually a closet macho. He
dreams of having a bimbo for a wife.

GROUP
(Laughs)

CELINE
Dreams!

JESSE
It's my greatest aspiration. A bimbo,
that's it.

Celine changes her demeanor and voice, playing really dumb.

STEFANOS
Whoa!

CELINE
(Baby voice)
So...

STEFANOS
Uh-oh.

JESSE
Yes?

GROUP
(OS, Laughing)

CELINE
So you're a writer?

JESSE
Yeah. Yeah, sure.

CELINE
So you write like... books?

GROUP
(Laughing)

JESSE
I've written a few, sure. Sure,
yeah.

CELINE
Wow. I've never met a writer before.

JESSE
(Laughing Nervously)
Really. Yeah?

CELINE
You must be really smart.

JESSE
Well, I - you know.

CELINE
You know, I can't even write my own
name sometimes when I'm tired.

JESSE
What kind of books do you like?

CELINE
Well, I like stories with a meaning
behind them, like a really beautiful
love story...

JESSE
Oh, sure, yeah.

CELINE
You know, I read this book once,
"Romeo and..."

JESSE
"...Juliet". Right?

CELINE
Yeah!

JESSE
Oh, yeah.

CELINE
Wow, you know it!

JESSE
It's very good, yeah. It's a play
actually, not a book. A play.

CELINE
Oh, I thought it was a book based on
the movie.

JESSE
No -
(Laughs)
No, a play, yeah.

GROUP
(OS, Laughing)

CELINE

Okay, it was a play. Wow. Well, actually I didn't read the whole thing because you know, sometimes I have to keep up and read those magazines to know exactly what is going on in all those people's lives.

JESSE

Well, that is important.

CELINE

Okay. Well, you're very, very smart and

(whispering)

I bet you have a gigantic penis.

JESSE

Why am I finding myself so attracted to this woman!

CELINE

Yes, he is - calm down!

GROUP

(Reacts)

STEFANOS

Wow.

CELINE

And that's the funny part of it! The not-so-funny part of the closet macho, okay -- is that today, after we drop Henry off, he tells me that even though I have an offer for an amazing job, he wants me to throw it all away and move to Chicago.

JESSE

That's not what I said.

CELINE

Yes.

JESSE

I said I missed him. You were expressing something you felt conflicted about and I did the same.

CELINE

So we can baby sit every other weekend for his ex-wife! I mean hilarious.

ARIADNI

Hey, hey, hey! You guys stop it.
It must have been so hard saying
goodbye to Hank today, right?

CELINE

Yeah, of course.

ARIADNI

I mean, he's such an amazing kid.

ACHILLES

Tell him I already miss my chess
partner.

JESSE

Right away.

ARIADNI

When Stefanos and I split up...

STEFANOS

Yeah?

ARIADNI

I'm getting full custody.

STEFANOS

Oh. Well that's ok for a while
because me and my 20 year old
girlfriend will be a little
preoccupied.

GROUP

(Laughs)

ARIADNI

(laughter)

I love men.

STEFANOS

And I love you.

ARIADNI

Ok, I have a story that my husband
here loves and that's going tell you
everything you need to know about
masculine and feminine. Right?
Okay, ready?

JESSE/STEFANOS

Yeah.

ARIADNI

My mom used to be a nurse. So she was there when people were coming out of their comas.

STEFANOS

Oh, that story. Yeah.

ARIADNI

Listen! Listen.

STEFANOS

I'm listening.

ARIADNI

It's an interesting story.

STEFANOS

I'm listening.

ARIADNI

So she was the one to tell them, "Hi, my name's Katerina. You're coming out of a coma."

Stefanos is mouthing words behind her.

ANNA

(Laughing)

I'm sorry.

ARIADNI

"You've been in a really bad automobile accident. You're going to be okay."

Ariadni puts her hands over Stefanos' mouth.

ARIADNI (CONT'D)

"You're going to be fine," and you know, stuff like that. She said that every woman, the very first thing, the first reaction she would have would be to ask about everybody else. "How are my kids? How's my husband? Is anyone else hurt?" Every man - with no exception - when they were told this, what was the first thing they did? Looked down at their cock.

GROUP

(Laughs)

JESSE

Well, you know what? You've gotta make sure it's still there, all right? You've gotta make sure it's still working, you have to!

ARIADNI

Of course, of course!

STEFANOS

Alive and kicking.

ARIADNI

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

STEFANOS

Yeah, all that.

ARIADNI

And only eventually, eventually, they would come around to asking about their kids, or about someone else they might have accidentally killed. Stuff like that. Important stuff.

CELINE

Doesn't that just say it all? Penis first, then the rest of the world.

ARIADNI, ANNA, WOMEN

(Chanting)

Penis, penis, penis, penis, penis,
penis--

JESSE

Okay, whoa, whoa, whoa. If you can explain it all on strictly gender terms, why do you or why does any woman waste time getting mad at or bother trying to change a man?

STEFANOS

Exactly. It's all biology. What is the problem?

CELINE

(to Jesse)

And you're so, so good at turning things around. I mean, he is a genius!

JESSE

No, I'm just trying to say it's like being pissed at a frog for being green.

STEFANOS

Exactly.

CELINE

Yeah. Yeah, exactly!

ANNA

Hearing all this, I wonder if this idea of a love affair that lasts forever is still relevant to us? I mean, we know that we are going to break up eventually.

ACHILLES

Definitely.

JESSE

(to Anna and Achilles)

Okay, but are your parents still together?

ANNA

No way.

JESSE

No. And what about you?

ACHILLES

They are. But they could be divorced.

JESSE

Yeah, they could.

ACHILLES

(Laughs)

I mean, I think that if they had more money they wouldn't still be together.

ARIADNI

God, you guys are so practical! I was born into the wrong generation.

ANNA

My grandmother's mother wrote to our whole family a twenty-six page letter from her deathbed. And she spent three pages on the costumes she did for a play and only one paragraph on her husband.

JESSE

Was she an actress too?

ANNA

No, she was a...

(in French)

How do you say, seamstress?

CELINE

(in English)

A seamstress. Seamstress.

ANNA

Seamstress...and she had all these wonderful friends. About my great grandfather she mentioned three events: He went to the war, we moved because of his job, and he died. Her big advice was not to be too consumed with romantic love. Friendships and work, she said, brought her the most happiness.

ARIADNI

I couldn't agree more. I mean, that's the thing that fucks us up, right? This idea of a soul mate, of someone who will come to complete us and save us from having to take care of ourselves. With Stefanos, I set the bar extremely low - I know he is not going to meet any of my needs.

GROUP

(Laughing)

STEFANOS

Definitely not!

ACHILLES

(to Patrick)

So what about grandma? Was she a soul mate?

PATRICK

Well, sounds appealing, but actually your grandmother was more rational than that. She took care of herself and asked me to do the same, with plenty of room to meet in the middle.

ANNA

Yeah that sounds ideal.

STEFANOS

Yeah, it is, actually. It is.

PATRICK

But it must be obvious that my wife is not here today. We were never one person, always two. We preferred it that way.

ARIADNI

That's so beautiful. I think my husband is always trying to almost colonize me, you know.

STEFANOS

I colonize you?

ARIADNI

Yes, but I colonize you, too, darling.

STEFANOS

Well okay then.

PATRICK

But at the end of the day, it's not the love of one other person that matters, it's the love of life.

STEFANOS

That's good to know, Patrick, because life I can handle, Ariadni, on the other hand... We all know that the Greeks invented tragedy, right, and on top of that she's from the region of Mani, which is short for maniac!

GROUP

(Laughs)

CELINE

Ask about the hotel.

JESSE

Hey, you guys, if we can't make that hotel room tonight, could you get a refund, or use it yourselves or -

STEFANOS

No, no, we don't get a refund.

ARIADNI

Are you trying to get out of it? Because you're going.

STEFANOS

You gotta go.

CELINE

No, it's such a great gift you've given us, but I'm so stressed getting all the packing ready, the girls and -

ARIADNI

No, no, no -

STEFANOS

We made a deal, guys, you watched our kids. You're gonna love it.

ARIADNI

We're going to watch yours.

STEFANOS

It's really, really good.

ARIADNI

It's a fantastic, fantastic walk to the hotel, and you won't regret it. And we'll be very offended if you don't go.

STEFANOS

It is.

CELINE

Okay. Thank you.

ARIADNI

You're going.

NATALIA

Well, when I think of Elias, what I miss the most about him is the way he used to lie down next to me at night. Sometimes his arm would stretch along my chest. I couldn't move, I even held my breath, but I felt safe... complete. I miss the way he was whistling walking down the street. Every time I do something, I think of what he would say: "Well its cold today, wear a scarf." But lately I've been forgetting little things. He's sort of fading and I'm starting to forget him and it's like losing him again.

(MORE)

NATALIA (CONT'D)

Sometimes, I make myself remember every detail of his face - the exact color of his eyes, his lips, his teeth, the texture of his skin, his hair - that was all gone by the time he went. And sometimes, not always, but sometimes I can actually see him. It is as if a cloud moves away and there he is. I could almost touch him, but then the real world rushes in, and he vanishes again. For a while, I did this every morning, when the sun was not too bright outside because the sun somehow makes him vanish. He appears and he disappears like a sunrise or sunset, anything so ephemeral. Just like our life - we appear and we disappear and we are so important to some, but, we are just passing through.

JESSE

(Toasting)

To passing through.

EXT. WALK - EVENING

Celine and Jesse are walking through a very old area, in mid-conversation.

JESSE

... And eventually he catches his face in the window's reflection. And he realizes he's no longer a nine-year-old boy, right? He's suddenly old, he's got a beard, his eyes are watery, and he's still -

CELINE

Oh, this one seems sad. At first I thought you were going to tell me the story about the guy that has an imaginary friend.

JESSE

Which one?

CELINE

And when he's in his fifties the imaginary friend shows up again, right?

JESSE

With the hummingbird?

CELINE
Yes, that's the one.

JESE
Yeah. Oh, you like that one?

CELINE
It's funny.

JESSE
Oh.

CELINE
Remember that letter that you let me read that you wrote when you were twenty, to yourself at forty?

JESSE
Yeah, I remember the first sentence: Dear Forty-Year-Old Jesse, I hope you're not divorced.

CELINE
No, I didn't even remember that part. I meant all the other things in that letter...you were the same guy.

JESSE
Yeah...

CELINE
I mean, we always think we're evolving, but maybe we can't change that much.

JESSE
You know how I think I've changed the most?

CELINE
How?

JESSE
When I was younger I just wanted time to speed up. You know?

CELINE
Why?

JESSE
Well. So I could be on my own. So I could be free from my parents and school and all that shit. You know?
(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to close my eyes and wake up and be an adult. And then I kind of feel like that all happened and I just want everything to slow down.

CELINE

Hm... it's strange - I've always had this feeling, no matter where I am in my life, that it's either a memory or a dream.

JESSE

I know, you've always thought that. And me too, it's like, is this really my life? Like, is it happening right now?

CELINE

It is.

JESSE

I know.

Celine and Jesse laugh.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Every year I just seem to get a little bit more humbled and more overwhelmed about all the things I'm never going to know or understand.

CELINE

That's what I keep telling you. You know nothing!

JESSE

I know, I know! I'm coming around!

Celine and Jesse laugh.

CELINE

But not knowing is not so bad. I mean, the point is to be looking, searching. To stay hungry, right?

JESSE

I know, it's true. I just wish it was a little easier.

CELINE

How do you mean?

JESSE

Well, just to maintain a certain level of passion, you know? I mean it used to come so naturally. I remember when I was younger, me and all my writer friends, we just felt like we were doing something important, you know? Like this was our time.

CELINE

But you were all a bunch of arrogant little pricks, right?

JESSE

No, we -

CELINE

Sounds like.
(Laugh)

JESSE

All right, maybe. I don't know, it just grew out of all this energy you know, this creativity or whatever ambitions people had. You know, I think you gotta be a little deluded to stay motivated.

CELINE

Young men have this thing about comparing themselves all the time. They have all these signposts they judge themselves by. You used to do that all the time.

JESSE

Do what? What do you mean?

CELINE

With like: Rimbaud read this by seventeen, F. Scott Fitzgerald did this by thirty...

JESSE

And Balzac wrote a book before breakfast every day, so what the hell am I doing?

CELINE

Yeah. But women don't think that way as much.

JESSE

You don't think so?

CELINE

No. We have much less to compare ourselves to maybe. Most women who achieve anything in life, the first time you hear about them, they're in their 50's, because it was so hard for them to get any recognition before then. They struggle for 30 years or they raise kids and were stranded at home before they could finally do what they want. Actually, you know what? It's kind of freeing. We don't have to spend our lives comparing ourselves to Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Tolstoy...

JESSE

(Laughing)

Well, what about Joan of Arc, right? I mean, she was a teenager and she saved France. So...

CELINE

Who wants to be Joan of Arc, okay?

JESSE

No?

CELINE

Forget France. She was burned at the stake and a virgin! Okay? Nothing I aspire to. What a great achievement!

JESSE

(Laughing)

Okay! All right, all right, all right. Whatever.

CELINE

(Laughs)

Oh, god.

JESSE

What?

CELINE

No, nothing.

JESSE

What?

CELINE

It's just so weird.

JESSE
What do you mean?

CELINE
Oh, just this. Us. Walking, having
a conversation...

JESSE
Oh, I know.

CELINE
... About something else than
scheduling, food, work.

JESSE
Yeah, I mean, how long's it been
since we just wandered around
bullshitting?

CELINE
Do you hear what I hear?

JESSE
The sea?

CELINE
No.

JESSE
What, oh! No small feet. Nothing
being knocked over, nothing we have
to clean up, no injustices being
done.

CELINE
Yeah. So when was the last time?

JESSE
When we had nowhere we had to be?

CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
You remember walking around Luxembourg
Gardens?

CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
Do you? I used to kick your ass at
ping pong on those concrete tables.

CELINE

Hey, congratulations! You beat a woman pregnant with twins!

JESSE

Well, it's better than losing to a pregnant woman with twins.

CELINE

Such a gentleman! Yeah.

JESSE

(a beat)

Hah-ha! You know what I think? I think its from the time we leave our parents house until we have kids - that's the only time your life is completely your own. You know I think I had about a decade of that. It was great. It was just like one long, flowing... a day, a week, a year, there wasn't much difference.

CELINE

No, I used to keep track of time through jobs and boyfriends and stuff like that. Now I can tell you every detail of the past seven years based on what was happening in the girls' lives.

JESSE

Yeah, right. Totally.

CELINE

You do that too?

JESSE

Yeah, I mean time's demarcated now...

CELINE

Really?

JESSE

Why?

CELINE

No, no, I'm just surprised. I'm surprised you do that too. No but, okay - quick test.

JESSE

Oh, no...

CELINE

August 2009. Come on, it's a quick one. What was happening?

JESSE

August 2009 - we were on vacation with your parents. Nina got the chicken pox first, quickly followed by Ella.

CELINE

I'm so impressed.

JESSE

Yeah. So do I get a gold star?

CELINE

Maybe. Hey. Can I ask you a question?

JESSE

Sure.

CELINE

If we were meeting for the first time today on a train, would you find me attractive?

JESSE

Of course.

CELINE

No, but really, right now as I am? Would you start talking to me? Would you ask me to get off the train with you?

CELINE/JESSE

(Laugh)

JESSE

Well, I mean, you're asking a theoretical question. I mean, what would my life situation be? I mean technically, wouldn't I be cheating on you?

CELINE

Okay. Why can't you just say "yes"?

JESSE

No, I did. I said, "of course"! That was -

CELINE

No-no-no! I wanted you to say something romantic and you blew it.

JESSE

Oh, okay. Alright, wait - if I saw you on a train, okay, listen. I would lock eyes with you.

CELINE

Uh-huh.

JESSE

And then I'd walk right up to you and I'd say, "Hey, baby. You are making me as horny as a billy goat in a briar patch."

He grabs her ass.

CELINE

Stop it, that's disgusting! Billy goat. No, the truth is, you failed the test. And the fact is, you would not pick me up on a train. You wouldn't even notice me, a fat-assed middle-aged mom, losing her hair.

JESSE

Okay.
(Laughing)
Losing her hair?

CELINE

Yeah, that's me!

JESSE

You set me up to fail. Honestly, you did.

CELINE

Okay, true. True.

JESSE

Alright? Alright? But in the real world, baldy, on game day when it mattered, I DID talk to you on a train. I did that, it was the best thing I ever did.

CELINE

Really? Look at the goats. Hello.

JEESE

Hey. Alright. You know, that's not even a good question, all right? The real question would be if I DID ask you to get off a train...

CELINE

Yeah?

JESSE

Would you get off with me?

CELINE

No, of course not. I have people waiting for me.

JESSE

Yeah, see, so?

CELINE

You know, and

(Laughing)

A forty-one-year-old horny billy goat? How creepy! I'm creeped out right now. Help, poliztia!

JESSE

I can't believe I'm 41.

CELINE

Yeah, me neither. You've gotten so old. I never thought I'd sleep with anyone over 40.

JESSE

Yeah, yeah... what?

CELINE

Actually, you know what? You're the oldest guy I've ever slept with.

JESSE

Well, that's something. That's good.

CELINE

It's true.

JESSE

I know I'm not the oldest guy you've ever blown.

CELINE

What?

JESSE
That conference in Warsaw?

CELINE
What conference?

JESSE
Lech Walesa.

CELINE
Lech Walesa... oh, what are you
talking about?

JESSE
It's okay. It was before we were
together, you can admit it. I can
remember the way you talked about
how he "opened your heart". You
definitely blew him. Definitely.

CELINE
Oh, okay. You're really crazy.
That was Gorbachev, okay? You
geographically challenged, football
obsessed, donut loving American.
That was Gorbachev.

JESSE
I'm sorry, I got my Eastern Bloc
leaders mixed up. Okay?

CELINE
And I didn't blow him at all! Okay?
Take it back!

JESSE
Okay. All right, okay. Okay!

CELINE
God!

JESSE
So was it Vaclav Havel? Or -

CELINE
All right, you know..

EXT. WALK PART TWO - EVENING

They're now walking through a small, very old town.

JESSE
Listen to this. I was going to wait
to tell you this until later but,
whatever. I'm so bad with secrets.

CELINE

What? You have a tumor in your brain?
You're going to die?

JESSE

No, no, no, no. Nothing like that
alright? Well actually, it's kinda
like that. My grandmother died.

CELINE

What? When?

JESSE

Yeah, my dad texted me right before
we ate.

CELINE

Oh, I'm so sorry. Why didn't you
tell me?

JESSE

Ah, I know. Well, everybody's been
expecting it. You know, she lived a
long time, had a great life. She
was ninety-six.

CELINE

Okay. She didn't live much longer
after your grandfather died, though.

JESSE

No, barely a year. I mean the funny
thing is, this woman was a frickin'
saint.

CELINE

Yeah.

JESSE

She was a nurse in the war, she took
care of all of us, you know. I mean,
she never said an unkind word about
anybody.

CELINE

Ah, I wish I'd met her.

JESSE

No, it's okay, because by the end,
you know, she just really wasn't
into meeting new people. I mean
after a lifetime of being sweet as
pie - once grandpa died, she got
kinda ornery.

CELINE

Well you know, it happens, she was
in mourning, no?

JESSE

Well, my dad said she was just waiting
to die.

CELINE

How long were they married?

JESSE

74 years.

CELINE

Fuck!

JESSE

(Laughs)
Yeah.

CELINE

How is that even possible? How old
will we be if we're together seventy-
four years?

JESSE

Mm... well, when would we start
counting from?

CELINE

I guess from the first time we had
sex. No?

JESSE

Okay. Yeah, good. So, so um, 1994.
(Muttering, Calculating
Under His Breath)

CELINE

Okay. '94... fifty-six years from
now.

JESSE

Okay. We will be ninety-eight.

CELINE/JESSE

Ugh!!!

CELINE

Will you be able to put up with me
for another fifty-six more years? I
need to know! Okay? 'Cause I don't
know if I'm gonna be able to put up
with you.

JESSE

It's crazy if you think about all the change they saw. I mean, when they met neither one of them had electricity. He used to take her to school on his horse, right?

CELINE

Oh, that's so romantic... it's incredible.

JESSE

I know. When they graduated, he was valedictorian and she was salutatorian.

CELINE

What is that?

JESSE

He was top of the class and she was second.

CELINE

I bet she knowingly got a couple of answers wrong just to make sure he didn't feel threatened.

JESSE

Well, if she wanted to get laid, she'd better have.

CELINE

Yeah, obviously like you-know-who.

JESSE

Right. Well, anyway, so I called my dad, right? After I got the text, just to...

CELINE

Yeah, yeah, of course, yeah.

JESSE

... You know, tell him I was sorry... but I think I kind of screwed up. At some point I told him 'Hey Dad, you're an orphan now.' He didn't think that was funny.

CELINE

No, it's not funny at all.

JESSE

Yeah, I guess not.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)
(Laughs)

CELINE
He's next, then you.

JESSE
I know. Well, he told me that my grandparents want to have a joint service. They want to have their ashes intermingled and be buried as one.

CELINE
Your grandfather didn't have a funeral?

JESSE
No, remember? They vowed to each other they'd never have to attend one another's funerals.

CELINE
Oh, yeah. I kind of like the idea of you attending mine.

JESSE
(Laughs)
What?

CELINE
Imagining you in a suit, clean shaven for once... and holding hands with the girls... I don't know, I like it.

JESSE
You're gonna outlive me.

CELINE
Well, I'll see. I guess one of us will see.

JESSE
You think you want to go to the service with me?

CELINE
To Texas?

JESSE
Uh, it's not going to be in Paris.

CELINE

How bad do you want me there? I mean I would come but it's really expensive with the flights...

JESSE

Just skip it - it'd be simpler to go alone.

CELINE

(To Barking Dog)

Oh, hello.

JESSE

Hello, buddy.

CELINE

Well you know, if I'm not there it'll be easier for you to fuck your cousins.

JESSE

(Laughs)

Yes, that's true.

CELINE

Yeah. Isn't that common where you come from? I mean... you didn't answer the question.

JESSE

What question?

CELINE

Will you be able to put up with me for another 56 more years?

JESSE

I am looking forward to it.

CELINE

Shit, you're really working it.

JESSE

(Spanish accent returns)

Ze nectar of your sex ages like a fine wine.

CELINE

Uh-oh, my hairy Spanish lover is back.

JESSE

Greek. I'm Greek now, for sure. Greek, yeah.

CELINE

(a beat)

Oh! Look at this! Wow. This place sort of reminds me of this film I saw when I was a teenager. It was a black and white film from the 50s. I remember a couple walking through the ruins of Pompeii, looking at bodies that had been lying there for centuries. I remember the bodies caught in their sleep, still lovingly holding each other. I don't know why, sometimes I have this image in my mind when, you know, we're asleep and you hold me.

JESSE

What, of being buried alive under molten ash, that's what you're thinking about?

CELINE

Yeah!

(Laughing)

JESSE

That's not very fun.

CELINE

(Laughing)

Well... I don't know, it's not horrible. They had some bodies with little kids sleeping between them...

JESSE

Oh, that's nice!

CELINE

Yeah! I guess I was young and a bit morbid - I mean at that age you romanticize the idea of dying with the person you love.

JESSE

Well, you wanna die with me?

CELINE

Maybe, if it were, you know, our first night together, then, a long time ago. But now, no. I'd like to live!

JESSE

Well, I just wanted you to say
something romantic and you blew it!
Putain de merde!

CELINE

Oh, no! Putain de merde, I blew it.
Okay, if we're both 98 you can ask
me again, but anytime sooner...Ehhnt!
(Whispers)
Sorry.

They are walking by an old, tiny Chapel.

JESSE

Hey, this is the chapel I was telling
you about. It's from the Byzantine
era, it's like a thousand years old.

CELINE

Can we go in?

JESSE

Yeah. I think so. Check this out.
Hello? Hello.

CELINE

Oh, wow!

They enter.

INT. CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

JESSE

It's a shrine to Saint Odilia, a
patron saint to eyesight. People
come from all over, they leave little
dedications to the blind, to help
restore sight.

CELINE

I'm sure it works.

He is looking at the old faded paintings on the walls.

JESSE

Maybe. These paintings here, they
make me think of those Japanese monks,
you know, with their deal on
impermanence. They like to paint
with water on rock on a hot day so
by the time they're done it's already
evaporated.

Celine notices all the icons have been subtly defaced.

CELINE

All the eyes are scratched out. Is that about the blindness?

JESSE

No, I thought that too, but the caretaker guy, he told me that the Turks did that during the Occupation.

CELINE

That's it! I'm never eating Turkish food again.

JESSE

Oh, okay. Well, that'll send a shiver through the international community.

CELINE

Okay fine, then I'll never suck another Turkish cock.

JESSE

(Laughs)

Now THAT's gonna have a global impact.

CELINE

Oh, that's terrible. No, I forgot you're a closet Christian. Is it really bad to make blow-job jokes in a church?

Jesse just shrugs.

JESSE

Kind of is, okay? But we've done worse.

CELINE

(a beat)

The girls asked me again what our wedding was like.

JESSE

Yeah? What'd you say?

CELINE

I said it was very low key.

JESSE

Yeah, very low key. So low key I don't even remember it.

CELINE

Very Quaker.

(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

I don't know why they want us to be married so badly. It's important to them.

JESSE

We're in a church. You want to get married?

CELINE

No.

JESSE

No.

CELINE

It's just all those fairy tales they like so much, you know? Remember when they were little, at the end of every cartoon they watched, they'd be all "Oh they're getting married!" Even if it's Pinocchio and his dad, or Donald Duck and his nephews.

EXT. WALK PART THREE- EVENING

They are now walking through the town on their way to the shore.

CELINE

So if we're going to spend another fifty-six more years together...

JESSE

Yeah?

CELINE

... What about me would you like to change?

JESSE

(Smirks)

That's another one of your can't-win questions. I'm not answering that.

CELINE

What do you mean? There's not one thing you'd like to change about me? I'm perfect?

JESSE

Okay.

CELINE

Okay.

JESSE
Actually...

CELINE
One thing.

JESSE
... If I could change one thing about
you...

CELINE
Uh-huh.

JESSE
... It would be for you to stop trying
to change me.

CELINE
You're a very skilled manipulator,
you know that?

JESSE
Well, I'm onto you. I know how you
work.

CELINE
You think?

JESSE
Yeah. I know everything about you.
Here we go. Let's go through here.

CELINE
I don't think you do, actually.
(Laughs)

JESSE
(Laughs)
No? Well, I know you better than I
know anybody else on the planet.
But... maybe that's not saying much.

CELINE
I mean right now?

JESSE
What?

CELINE
This is great. You know?

JESSE
Right. Yeah.

CELINE
I feel close to you.

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE
But sometimes, I don't know, I feel like you're breathing helium and I'm breathing oxygen.

JESSE
(helium voice)
What makes you say that? Huh?

CELINE
See? I'm trying to truly connect -

JESSE
(Helium voice)
What? Come on, I'm just being myself!

CELINE
- And you make a joke! That's exactly what I'm talking about!

JESSE
Oh, listen, come on, come on. If we're ever going to truly know one another, I think we'd probably have to get to know ourselves better first.

CELINE
Yeah. Do you remember this friend of mine? George, from New York.

JESSE
No.

CELINE
Oh, no, that was before. That was before.

JESSE
What was?

CELINE
He was this friend of mine that, when he found out he had leukemia, and he was probably going to die, he confessed to me that the first thing that came to his mind was relief.

JESSE

Relief? But why?

CELINE

Well, before he found out he had nine months to live he was always so worried about money, and now his thought was, great! I have more than enough money to live for the next nine months, I've made it!

JESSE

(Laughing)

Oh, okay.

CELINE

And then he was finally able to enjoy everything about life, even like being stuck in traffic. He would just enjoy looking at people... staring at their faces. Just little things.

JESSE

And then what happened?

CELINE

What do you mean?

JESSE

Well, like, is he still alive?

CELINE

No, he died. A long time ago.

JESSE

(a beat)

Last night I had this dream where I was reading a book. It was a lost classic, "The Rovers".

CELINE

"The Rovers"?

JESSE

Yeah, like roving around, you know, wandering? It was all these young people.

CELINE

Okay. Is that a real book?

JESSE

No, no, no.

CELINE

No?

JESSE

But it was really great.

CELINE

Okay.

JESSE

It was fresh, funny, experimental,
it had all this energy...

CELINE

I love that you read books in your
dreams.

JESSE

I know, and they're always really
good.

CELINE

I have major action hero dreams,
like I'm flying around like a
superhero, breaking through walls.
And at the end, I have an orgasm.

JESSE

(Laughs)

Well, I'm gonna try to make your
dreams come true, babe.

They arrive at the waterfront. The sun is now setting over
the ocean.

EXT. CAFE - EVENING

They are now sitting at an outdoor table with a couple of
glasses of wine, staring at the last bit of the fireball,
quickly disappearing.

CELINE

Still there. Still there. ... Still
there. Still there. ... Gone.

They sit in silence. Eventually, Jesse looks over at Celine
and notices she's moved. He just takes her hand. The sun
is now gone.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

As they are checking into the hotel, Jesse is signing various
paperwork.

HOTEL CLERK #1
I need your credit card.

JESSE
Oh, I think the room is paid for.

HOTEL CLERK #1
Yes it is, but the credit card is
for
(Speaks Greek)

CELINE
Incidentals.

JESSE
Right, of course.

Another HOTEL CLERK (#2) emerges from office with his two books.

SOFIA
Mr. Wallace?

JESSE
Yeah?

SOFIA
I am such a fan of these two books.
My husband gave me your book on our
first date and then when your second
book came out, we read it out loud
together.

JESSE
Oh, wow.

SOFIA
Would you please sign them to us?

JESSE
Yeah, of course, of course.

SOFIA
Thank you.

JESSE
I love the art work on these Greek
editions, it's really nice. Uh,
what do you need?

SOFIA
Make it to Sofia and Pavlos.

JESSE
Okay. How's the Greek translation?

As Jesse signs the books, the Hotel Clerk starts paying attention to Celine.

SOFIA
Well, it's called "Afti ti Fora,
Ekini ti Fora"

JESSE
"Ekini ti Fora."

SOFIA
But I'm not sure it's a great one.

JESSE
Well, that's because you never read
it in English, right?

SOFIA
Exactly. ... That's great. Could
you sign them too?

CELINE
Me?

SOFIA
Yes. You're the real Madeline, right?

CELINE
Madeline? Not really. People assume
it's me but it's - it's not me at
all. He's got a big imagination.

SOFIA
Would you be so kind? It would mean
so much to my husband.

The book is passed to Celine.

CELINE
I can't sign a book I didn't write.
It doesn't make -

Jesse passes the books to Celine.

JESSE
She'd be happy to.

SOFIA
Okay. Thank you.

CELINE
I'm happy to.

She begins to sign.

JESSE
Efharisto.

CELINE
Okay. Thank you.

SOFIA
Great. Thank you so much.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Celine and Jesse enter the room.

JESSE
Check it out!

CELINE
Wow, this is nice!

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE
Clean... air conditioning... I love it! Oh my god.

JESSE
It's great.

CELINE
Wow, oh wow, that bath tub.

Jesse goes over to the table to examine what's on it.

JESSE
Hey, check this out. Stefanos and Ariadni got us a bottle of wine and a couple's massage.

CELINE
They are so nice, we have to get them a present before we leave.

JESSE
I know, we should remember to get something for the kids, too.

CELINE
Yeah, I know. For sure. Wow. I miss the girls.

Jesse seductively touches her.

JESSE
Mmm, I don't.

Then kisses her. She eventually looks out the window.

CELINE
This is such a nice view. Look.

JESSE
The only view that I am interested
in...

CELINE
What?

JESSE
... Is right... here. Here. Let's
see this.

He slowly undoes her top, revealing her still-perfect breasts.
They kiss passionately.

JESSE (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
What?

CELINE
(touches his chin)
It's funny. I never noticed until
today but... all the red in your
beard is gone. It used to be one of
the things that made me fall for
you, it's crazy.

JESSE
Well, it's not gone, it's just white.
You're not gonna tell me that your
love is dependent on pigment, are
you? No?

CELINE
No, but you know, I see the red in
our girls' eyelashes. I look at
them and it makes me think of when
we met.

JESSE
You know what I'm looking forward
to?

CELINE
Yeah? What?

JESSE
After uh...

CELINE
After?

JESSE

Yeah.

(Laughing)

CELINE

What?

JESSE

Is waking up next to you alone.

CELINE

You mean without Nina and Ella jumping on our heads.

JESSE

Exactly. I haven't heard you think in years now.

CELINE

Think?

JESSE

I used to wake up to that sound of your eyes opening and closing, and that brain of yours going two million miles an hour. I miss it, hearing you think.

CELINE

When you said you could hear me think, I really thought you could. But it was just my eyelids. How dumb and romantic of me.

JESSE

It's my favorite thing.

CELINE

I miss thinking, too. No more thinking in the morning, no more morning sex.

JESSE

Tomorrow...

CELINE

I'm looking forward to it so much, I don't think I will sleep.

JESSE

I'm looking forward to right now.

CELINE

Okay, then stop talking, so we can fuck.

They kiss until Celine's cell phone rings.

CELINE (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

Oh, shit, who is it?

JESSE

The kids.

Celine crawls out of bed and heads across the room toward her bag.

CELINE

I said they could call in case of emergency only. Hope the girls are okay. Okay. Oh, it's Henry. Okay.

Celine picks up.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Hi sweetie - are you okay? Are you in London? Oh! Oh, already?

(listens)

Oh, no, we found it. Uh, we'll mail it tomorrow morning.

(listens)

Yeah. Ohh, they miss you, too.

I'll kiss them for you. Okay, I'll tell him. Good luck with your mom - I love you too. Bye.

Celine hangs up. Jesse gestures for the phone are again ignored.

CELINE (CONT'D)

He's fine. He says he'll call you from Chicago when he lands.

JESSE

Why can't I talk to him? That's twice you've done that. C'mon, you could have just handed me the phone. You know I want to talk to him.

CELINE

Well, he didn't have time to talk - he said they were boarding.

JESSE

And what'd he forget? What was that?

Jesse glares.

CELINE
His science project. But we'll mail
it tomorrow. It'll be fine.

JESSE
You shouldn't have said that about
his mom.

CELINE
What? What did I say?

JESSE
"Good luck with your mom."
(Laughs)
I mean, come on -

CELINE
I didn't mean anything by it.

JESSE
I know, but it's not good. It just
reminds him of the whole thing. I
just wish you wouldn't do that...

CELINE
Oh, like you think he forgets?

JESSE
No...

CELINE
That's so American to just sweep it
under the carpet and act as if it
didn't happen.

JESSE
Why put it into his head? You know?
What if he doesn't want to be thinking
about that right now? He's too
stressed.

CELINE
It means nothing.

JESSE
It means something. It does.

CELINE
Alright, I even made a joke the other
day that his mom and I should try to
settle it in one big mud wrestling
contest.

JESSE
Mud wrestling? You said that?

CELINE

And he laughed. He might have more of a sense of humor than you do. Come on.

JESSE

We just talked about that. When you say bad things about his mom, what he hears is bad things about himself.

CELINE

Well, I didn't say anything bad about his mom. I made a joke; it's as much on me as it is on her.

JESSE

Well you're right. I know, I know, I know. Just why conjure it up at all, you know?

Jesse gets up out of bed and goes across the room, goes to Celine's purse and turns off her phone.

CELINE

I think he's old enough now. I mean, he knows how bad it is between his mother and I.

JESSE

His mom and me.

CELINE

And I didn't do anything, it's all coming from her towards me. Okay, she hates me; yes, I fucked her husband a long time ago. Or should I say, he fucked me?

JESSE

Yeah, right!

CELINE

Making a joke about the fact that his mom and I don't love each other is not the issue. That's not going to traumatize him. That already happened, alright, and now you're trying to transfer your guilt and blame me?

JESSE

No, I'm not.

CELINE

You know, on the contrary, if he can make a joke about it, maybe he'll be able to live with it better. That's what I think.

JESSE

Okay. You're right. As always. Let's just not talk about it, okay?

CELINE

It's nobody's fault if his mom is a drunk and abusive psychologically.

JESSE

Don't say that!

CELINE

I mean, it makes me sick that he has to be with her, but I guess judges assume that women have the mother instinct. She has the mother instinct of Medea!

Jesse goes to the bathroom and washes off his face.

JESSE

Medea, huh?

CELINE

Yeah, after all, it is a Greek myth.

JESSE

It's actually a play by Euripides, but -

CELINE

A woman killing her kids to punish her ex-husband? That's basically what she's doing, she's hurting him to get to you.

JESSE

No, she's making my life hell through him, that's what she's doing. You know, sometimes, you say things that just go too far.

CELINE

Okay, stop blaming me for everything that is wrong in this whole thing with your wife, okay?

JESSE

Ex-wife! Ex-wife for a long time!

CELINE

Okay, you should have dealt with it a little better back then. She wouldn't have hated us so much.

JESSE

Okay--I screwed up. And I love this little re-write you do: everything that isn't perfect in our life gets laid at my feet...

CELINE

And now you're putting this shit on me about Henry?

JESSE

What shit? What're you talking about?

Jesse takes off his pants and returns to the bed. Celine immediately begins putting on her top and gets up.

CELINE

Let me tell you what I'm talking about: the moving to Chicago and giving up of my life. Now that you mention that Henry needs you, how do you think that makes me feel? I'm miserable! Alright? How can I take that job now? Tell me!

JESSE

Okay.

CELINE

Tell me. I'll feel too guilty! No-no-no-no-no!

JESSE

Look, look. That's a choice you're making, to look at it like that, alright?

CELINE

It is in the nature of women to be the nurturah.

JESSE

The what?

CELINE

Nur-tchur-yer.

JESSE

The nurturer?

CELINE

Okay, I can't even say that fucking word! I just naturally feel bad about everything. And you give me that look, like it's my fault.

JESSE

What look?

CELINE

That look, the I-forgot-to-put-in-the-bag-the-science-project-look. I know you blame me.

JESSE

I didn't say anything.

CELINE

No. You didn't say anything. You didn't have to. Yeah, yeah, it's always my fault.

JESSE

Yeah right.

Celine walks across the room, sits on the couch, and turns on her phone again.

CELINE

I read on the fridge at work - you know those magnet words that people make sentences with? Someone had put together, "Women explore for eternity in the vast garden of sacrifice."

JESSE

(Laughs)

Wow! That's a sure sign from God!

CELINE

Yeah. That line is so damn true and it's been for ten thousand years. But that's enough! Okay. I don't want to be one of these women. Like marriage is important to gays or contraception to women rights - it's the same with giving up my hopes, with the millions of women that have had to give up their hopes. I am not going to do it. This is bigger than me. This means more than me.

Jesse bursts into applause.

JESSE

Wow! Bravo! The Nobel committee is taking note. I'm just - hold on a second, I'm gonna alert Sweden, okay? I mean, it must be a full-time job carrying that much feminine oppression.

CELINE

It is.

JESSE

You suffered so much growing up in middle-class Paris! I mean, the agony in the trenches of the Sorbonne in the post-feminist era. I can't imagine.

CELINE

You're an asshole. You know what sweetie, when are we moving to Chicago? I want to make sure we are able to find a nice house and I can sew the drapes and pick matching bed covers.

JESSE

So this is how you now want to be spending this evening? I mean, this is what you wanna do tonight?

CELINE

Well, you started it.

JESSE

No. You are the one who will not shut up about it. But if you want to talk about it, I mean, really talk about it. I would prefer to have an unemotional, rational conversation. I mean, do you think we can do that? Would that be possible?

CELINE

Here we go. Unemotional, rational. You always play the part of the one and only rational one and I'm the irrational, hysterical, hormone-crazy one because I have emotions. Yeah, you sit back and you speak from your big perspective which means everything you say is level-headed and true.

JESSE

I don't always do anything.

CELINE

The world is fucked by unemotional rational men deciding shit, alright? Politicians going to war for no reason, corporate heads deciding to wreck the environment, Cheney, Rumsfeld - very rational men.

JESSE

Cheney and Rumsfeld? Yeah, okay.

CELINE

The final solution? Very rational thinking behind it.

JESSE

(Laughs)

Oh, okay, so we're there now? Us versus the final solution? Okay! Let's do it, alright? Let me ask you this, alright? Do you think Henry's life would be helped by a more consistent presence by you and me?

CELINE

Here we go...

Jesse gets up from the bed, puts his pants back on, and joins Celine on the couch.

JESSE

No. You won't drop it, so let's talk about it. Alright? Let me just ask you one question. Do you think Hank's life would be better served by a more consistent presence from you and me?

CELINE

Yes! I think it'd be better if he lived with us...

JESSE

Okay.

CELINE

... And I think his mom is a fucking alcoholic, hateful cunt that used the time that we were in Paris and I was giving birth and almost dying to
(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

legally move Henry out of New York.
Fuck her.

JESSE

Okay. I agree with you.
Unfortunately, we cannot go get him
out of America but we could, if we
wanted to, go to him. Now, I know
it would be a big move, but what do
you think? I mean, is there any way
you could be happy in the U.S.? Is
that just out of the realm of
possibility? That you could find a
comparable job there?

CELINE

Comparable job? Are you kidding?

JESSE

No.

CELINE

Why am I the one that always has to
make the compromises?

JESSE

Oh, Jesus Christ. Don't be so
dramatic, okay?

CELINE

Well, moving to Chicago is pretty
fucking dramatic to me.

JESSE

I'm not saying we should move. I
just want to talk about it. Can you
be my friend for like two seconds so
we can talk?

CELINE

Okay, two seconds.

JESSE

Alright. Do you remember that time
that you were like 35 minutes late
to pick the girls up from school and
you were so stressed out because you
knew they were out there in the
playground wondering what the hell
had happened to you. Okay, that is
the way I feel all the time, you
know like I fucked up. I mean, I
left him behind and I just wanna go
get him.

CELINE

You always get like this when you drop him off. You're sad, so you start a fight. He's fine. He's a great kid. Okay? But the truth is, he doesn't need you the way he used to. You missed the opportunity to be with him everyday of his childhood, you just did. And you can cry about it but he's growing up. You're a great father in other ways. You got divorced, like millions of other people. Was it ideal? No. Listen, if in one month, you still want me to quit my job and give up everything I have been working towards all these years, just ask me. But right now I feel the same way I always have. I would move back to the US if that diseased ex-wife of yours would give us joint custody. But every other weekend amounts to shit Jesse, that's less than thirty days a semester and I don't think it's worth it for us to change our entire lives over that kind of time.

JESSE

I know, you're right.

CELINE

Right, right? See? I'm being the rational one.

JESSE

Oh, it's just such a shitty position, you know? I mean Hank didn't do anything but he's the one getting kicked in the teeth.

CELINE

We all get dragged through our parents' lives. If it wasn't me, your marriage would have ended over something else and you know that.

JESSE

Absolutely.

CELINE

Or even worse, he would have been raised by two miserable parents.

JESSE

I know. I just really fucked that up.

CELINE

You mean you fucked up by moving to Paris to be with me?

JESSE

No. That's not what I meant...

CELINE

I knew that was going to cost too much.

JESSE

That's not what I meant at all!

CELINE

I told you not to do it.

JESSE

Stop it.

CELINE

I moved to New York with you for two years and gave up everything, but I needed to be home to give birth to the twins because it was a complicated birth and I wanted to be with my mother. And you wanted it too!

JESSE

Yes. Okay.

CELINE

Okay. That's the one thing I asked from you, the one thing. And now you're going to blame me forever.

JESSE

Stop it will you? Stop it. If you don't want to move back to the States we won't. End of story. I'm just trying to find a way where I can be more of a consistent presence in his life, and ideally I'd like to do that as a family.

CELINE

'As a family?' Or what?

JESSE

What the fuck does that mean?

CELINE

I feel a passive aggressive threat in everything you say. Either do this, or I will resent you for the rest of our lives.

Silence.

CELINE (CONT'D)

No? Am I Right? You know what? I'm sensing something... I think the problem is that you don't want me to have a more substantial job. On some level, you feel threatened by my achieving anything that could diminish your status in our relationship.

JESSE

My status in our relationship? I teach two courses a semester at the fucking American school. Ok wow, that's really some status.

CELINE

Now I don't think it's any coincidence that you feel that way at the same time that I have a truly exciting job opportunity.

JESSE

This whole train of thought is complete horse shit and you know it.

CELINE

I have a question for you. If we didn't have the girls, all our crap. Would we even still be together?

JESSE

What? I mean you are the fucking mayor of crazy town, do you know that? You are.

CELINE

You know what I think? I think you need to move to Chicago. I think Henry needs you and I think I need to stay in Paris with the girls and take this job.

JESSE

Why are you doing this, huh? That is a ridiculous idea.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Like I'm gonna lose you and the girls?
No. Why do you make everything so
difficult?

CELINE

Jesse, you're unhappy with me. You're
blaming me for taking you away from
your son.

JESSE

That is a completely irrational
response to something I am just trying
to feel my way through.

CELINE

Listen, Jesse. We've just spent the
last six weeks here and it's been
great. You've been able to write
everyday and the weather's been nice.
But I didn't want to come to Greece
originally.

JESSE

I know.

CELINE

All right? There could be a
revolution any second...

JESSE

Don't.

CELINE

People eat a lot of feta and olive
oil, they act all happy but they
actually talk about how "angry" they
are... and it confuses me and I don't
know what's going to happen in the
next few weeks.

JESSE

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let me tell you
what's going to happen alright. The
same thing that always happens:
Nothing.

CELINE

Alright. You know what? I have had
absolutely zero time for myself, I
have ten thousand emails I have to
answer that I didn't answer...

JESSE

And you think I don't?

CELINE

I spend all day making dinner, wiping both you and your son's pee off the toilet seat, while you talk to your fellow novelists. Blah, blah, blah, you're a genius, blah, blah, blah, no, you're a genius. And the second we say goodbye to Henry, you suggest that maybe I should give up my dream job because you feel bad.

JESSE

Oh. Okay, now it's your dream job?! This afternoon you weren't even sure you wanted it but now it's your dream job. Do you ever listen to yourself?

CELINE

Yes it is my dream job! Just because I have doubts doesn't mean I don't want it.

JESSE

Okay.

CELINE

All right? But what do you care? Every day you go on your two hour "contemplative" walk under the olive trees. Socrates... you should get a robe.

JESSE

It's an hour.

CELINE

No, by the time you leave, and by the time you're actually with us again, two hours. You know, I could never do that. You're very good at taking care of yourself. I take care of myself, AND everything else. We're going somewhere, you pack your bag, I pack EVERYTHING else.

JESSE

You would never let me pack the girls' shit. Never!

CELINE

Because there would be no shoes and plenty of dirty underwear.

JESSE

So says you.

CELINE

I'm happy you have time to contemplate the universe and have existential problems because I don't - I barely have time to think. I work, I baby-sit, I work, I baby-sit.

Jesse wanders off into the bathroom to take a pee.

JESSE

Could you hold on a second? I just have to tune up the string section...

CELINE

You know what? The only time I get to think now, is when I take a shit at the office. I'm starting to associate thoughts with the smell of shit.

JESSE

Well, that is a good line - I want to use that in a book someday.

CELINE

I'm sure you will - and that'll be the best line in the book.

She walks over and talks to him directly while he's in the bathroom.

CELINE (CONT'D)

And by the way, you may never, EVER, use me or anything I say or do in one of your fucking books again! And that goes for the girls, too.

Jesse comes back out.

JESSE

Well, A) You shouldn't have hooked up with a writer. B) You weren't in the last book or the one I'm writing now. C) I'm gonna write about whatever the fuck I want.

CELINE

As always, OUR life works for YOU.

JESSE

No, no, no. Don't give me this put upon housewife bullshit. Okay this is not the 50's.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to ruin your perfect little narrative of oppression with the truth but I am the one who's at home everyday dealing with the bullshit cause you're at work until 6:30.

CELINE

6 o'clock.

JESSE

You take the girls to school, and I pick them up. That's fair, that's our deal. We live in Paris, France for chrissakes.

CELINE

Yeah, and you remind me of it every single day.

JESSE

I have orbited my entire life around you and you know it. So I am sorry if this Summer's vacation - and it is a vacation - because all I've seen you do is frolic in the sea and shove greek salad down your throat. Ok, but it is not indicative of you spending your life in some kind of domestic servitude.

CELINE

You know what I love about men? They still believe in magic. Little fairies around who pick up their socks, little fairies unload the dishwasher, little fairies sunscreen the kids. Little fairies who make the fucking Greek salads that you eat like a pig.

JESSE

Okay, listen to me, all right? You are great at taking care of us. You are. I mean you take care of the kids, you take care of your friends, you take care of the world. Alright? And you were like that before you were a mom and now its only magnified. But, and I've been telling you this for years - you gotta do a little bit better job taking care of yourself. Ok, you do.

CELINE

Okay, stop patronizing me, all right?
I'm the one at home every night at
6.00, not 6.30. I am reliable.
Have you ever booked a baby sitter,
ever, in your entire life? NO.
What is the name of their
pediatrician?

JESSE

Stop quizzing me, all right? It's
really fucking boring.

CELINE

Yeah, okay. You know what? I'm at
home every night and I make dinner,
I give baths, and I read bedtime
stories. Sometimes you're there,
sometimes you're at a university
event or a publicity tour. Ok?
When you get "inspired" you keep on
writing. I get inspired too
sometimes, you know that?

JESSE

You want to write? Great. Write.

CELINE

No, but you remember I used to sing
and play guitar and write songs?
I'd still like to do it. But I don't
get to - there isn't time.

JESSE

Okay. Well, first off, my writing
isn't a hobby. Secondly, I wish you
would find the time. You somehow
manage to find the time to complain
about 8 hours a day. I mean, I love
the way you sing. Okay? I fucked
up my whole life 'cause of the way
you sing. Alright? If you took one
eighth of the energy that you spend
on bitching, whining and worrying...
If you put that energy into playing
scales, I mean you would be like
fucking Django Reinhardt.

Celine exits...

JESSE (CONT'D)

Okay. All right. Whoops. You forgot
your shoes.

(sighs)

Goddamn. Hell.

And quickly re-enters.

CELINE

You think you're winning?!

(almost losing her
temper)

Very few people realize what it is like for an active or passionate woman to have a child. Some friends told me, "you'll see, you'll want to throw them out the window." Okay, but the truth is I never wanted to hurt them once but I thought about ending it all for myself a hundred times. I was so confused, and you were always away on a stupid book tour or because of Henry's custody shit and I didn't want to be a burden. Now I know why Sylvia Plath put her head in a toaster.

JESSE

It was an oven.

CELINE

(losing it)

Don't play with words. You know what I mean - toaster, oven. Same thing. You know how many times I was alone with the girls crying with no clue what to do? Do you know the guilt a mother feels when she doesn't know what to do?

JESSE

Do you think you have sole ownership of that feeling?

CELINE

I don't think you understand, okay?

(a beat)

You know what my secret fear is? With every man? Is that they all want to turn me into a submissive housewife.

JESSE

Okay, no one could EVER do that, all right? I promise, it would be easier to fit your head into a toaster than to turn you into anything submissive.

The whole conversation has taken on a calmer tone.

CELINE

I don't think I've recovered since giving birth. When they were born, I had no idea what to do. People expect women to have instinct that kicks in, like a female baboon. But I had no idea how to do anything. I loved them so much, and I was doing everything wrong. And you were away so often, calling me, asking me how my day went, and I couldn't even say it to you because I felt so ashamed for being so clueless.

JESSE

Look, I think you did great.

CELINE

No, I didn't.

JESSE

No, you did. Well, you did a good job faking it, then.

CELINE

I remember the only way I could get them to sleep was to drag that stupid double stroller down the stairs and walk them for hours and hours in the middle of the night, all the way to Pigalle and back. I almost got mugged once... I mean, the only reason why the guy didn't attack me was is that I looked so pathetic. The only upside of being over 35 is that you don't get raped as much. I read it - its true.

Jesse laughs. The tone shifts.

JESSE

Oh, Jesus.

(he takes her hand)

Once I remember I was watching the twins on a trampoline, you know, and they looked so beautiful. And I was happy because they were happy, you know. One of them had this hula-hoop that she was using as a jump rope, but then the other one wanted it so they started fighting over it. All of a sudden I saw it all, this petty jealousy and selfishness... I remember thinking: this is the natural

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

human state - always a little dissatisfied, perpetually discontented, you know? I mean, look at us, here we are, in a garden of Eden and we can't stop fighting.

CELINE

I don't think there is one natural human state. The human state is multiple. If that's what you see when you're watching the girls play, that means you're depressed.

JESSE

Okay. Maybe I am.

Celine is slowly getting revved up again.

CELINE

When I see them fight, I see beautiful energy of going forward in life and not letting anyone step on them or take away what they want. I like it when they fight - it gives me hope for them.

JESSE

Well that's because you see anger as a positive emotion, you know, and you only end up hurting yourself, your work, your kids, me.

CELINE

And you never get angry?

JESSE

When I do, I don't see it as a positive.

CELINE

You know something? The way you write in your book, people come up to me and think I make love to some wildcat Henry Miller type... HA! You like to have sex the EXACT same way every time.

JESSE

When you got it, you got it.

CELINE

Kissy, kissy. Titty, titty. PUSSY.
(snoring)

JESSE

I'm a man of simple pleasures.

CELINE

Yeah, very simple, and I've been meaning to tell you that lately. You're no Henry Miller, on any level. You know what, this room gives me the creeps, I was expecting something quaint, like the real Greece.

JESSE

This place is pretty real.

CELINE

What the hell are we doing here anyway? This is all too planned, like we're supposed to have this great evening. There's no room for spontaneity, it is all gone from our lives. It's stupid and it's not working...

JESSE

Okay. Well, obviously, right?

CELINE

Right, yeah ... and I curse Ariadni and that perv Stefanos for doing this. A couples massage - what the fuck is that? That sounds sleazy to me.

JESSE

We don't have to do it! Okay? C'mon, this place isn't so bad. I like hotel rooms... I think they're sexy.

CELINE

Yeah, I know you do, Mr. Book Tour. Mr. Radisson Hilton. And I know that time when you were doing that reading in Washington, when your cell phone supposedly broke that night - how convenient. Swear on our kids that you didn't fuck that lady from the bookstore. Emily. Swear to me you didn't fuck that Emily girl. And I'm not jealous because I'm not the jealous type but I just wanna know, be a man and admit the truth.

JESSE

I am giving you my whole life, okay?
I've got nothing larger to give.
I'm not giving it to anybody else.
If you're looking for permission to
disqualify me, I'm not going to give
it to you. I love you and I'm NOT
in conflict about it. But if what
you want is a laundry list of all
the things about you that piss me
off, I could give it to you.

CELINE

Yeah - I want to hear.

JESSE

Okay! Well, uh, let's start at number
one - okay, number one, you're fuckin'
nuts, alright? You are, good luck
finding somebody else to put with
your shit for more than like 6 months.
But I accept the whole package, the
crazy and the brilliant. I know
you're not going to change, and I
don't want you to. It's called
accepting you for being you.

CELINE

Yeah okay, I asked you a question.
If, while I was carrying the double
stroller down the stairs and getting
ass-raped in Pigalle, you fucked
that little Emily Bronte girl?

JESSE

Ok I don't know. Emily... what Emily?
What are you even talking about?

CELINE

*The one who wrote the nice emails
about Dostoevsky? "Oh Jesse, you're
so right, "The Grand Commander" is
the deepest passage of all Russian
literature."*

JESSE

If you're asking me if I'm committed
to you, the girls, and the life we've
built together, the answer is a
resounding YES.

CELINE

So you DID fuck her! Thank you very
much.

JESSE

Do I ever ask you about the time you went to go visit your old boyfriend after his mother died? No. You want to know why? Because I KNOW the way that your fucking French ass works, and I guarantee that you at least blew that guy, but I also know that you love me, okay? I'm okay with you being a complicated human being! I don't wanna live a boring life where two people own each other, where two people are institutionalized in a box that others created - because that is a bunch of stifling bullshit.

Petrified, she exits.

Jesse sits alone waiting for her to return.

Enter Celine. She walks in, sets her room key down.

CELINE

You know what's going on here? It's simple - I don't think I love you anymore.

She exits. Jesse sits there, gazing from the cold cup of tea, to the door, to the full glasses of wine, to the rumped, empty bed. Celine doesn't come back.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE/BAR - NIGHT

Jesse finds Celine sitting near the same table where they saw the sunset earlier.

JESSE

Miss?

CELINE

I don't want to talk right now.

JESSE

Are you by yourself? Are you waiting for somebody?

CELINE

Yeah, I'm by myself and happy to be. I'm an angry person and I hurt my kids, my work, and everyone I love.

JESSE

Oh. Well, just my type.

Jesse sits down right across from her.

CELINE

Okay, I'm not in the mood - I came here to be alone.

JESSE

Yeah, listen. I've just been checking you out from across the cafe and I don't want to make you uncomfortable, but you're by far the best looking woman in this place.

CELINE

Thank you very much.

JESSE

I'd love to buy you a drink, maybe talk to you, get to know you a little bit... you know. Are you here on business?

Nothing.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Ok.. You have a boyfriend?

CELINE

Not anymore.

JESSE

Sorry to hear that. God, you want to talk about it?

CELINE

I don't talk to strangers.

JESSE

But that's the thing, I'm not a stranger. No, we've met before... summer '94.

CELINE

You are mistaking me for someone else.

JESSE

No, we even fell in love.

CELINE

Really? I vaguely remember someone sweet and romantic, who made me feel I wasn't alone anymore. Someone who had respect for who I was.

JESSE

That's me. I'm that guy.

CELINE
I don't think so.

JESSE
Well, see, I know something about
tonight that you don't know.

CELINE
Really. What is that?

JESSE
Something important. See, I know
because I've actually already lived
through this night.

CELINE
How?

JESSE
I'm a time traveler.

CELINE
Okay.

JESSE
I have a time machine up in my room.
I've come to save you just like I
said I would.

CELINE
Save me from what?

JESSE
Save you from being blinded by all
the little bullshit of life.

CELINE
It's not bullshit.

JESSE
I assure you, that guy you vaguely
remember, the sweet romantic one who
you met on a train? That is me.

CELINE
That's you?

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE
Guess I didn't recognize you... you
look like shit.

JESSE

What can I say? I mean, it's tough out there in time and space. You, on the other hand are even more beautiful than I remember.

CELINE

Bullshit! Jesse, this is not a game. You get all cute, you get in my panties and the next thing I know, I'm buying peanut butter in Chicago. You're not going to make it better by some little pick up line.

JESSE

I'm not trying to pick you up - no, no, you misunderstood me. I'm only here as a messenger. I've just traveled all the way from the future. I was just with your 82 year old self who gave me a letter to read to you. So here I am.

CELINE

I'm still alive in my 80's?

JESSE

OOOHHHH YEAH.

CELINE

How's my French ass?

JESSE

Nice. Really nice.

CELINE

I don't care about the way I look.

JESSE

Let's just say, there's even more of you to love. Okay, do you want me to read the letter to you?

CELINE

Do I have a choice?

JESSE

Oh sure, I mean, if you're not interested in what you have to say...

CELINE

No, no, no. Read it.

JESSE

Okay, here I go. Dear Celine, I'm writing to you from the other side of the woods. This letter is lighting a candle...

CELINE

Okay stop it. I would never write this - it's too flowery, "Other side of the woods," what fucking woods? What're you talking about?

JESSE

May I please continue?

CELINE

Okay.

JESSE

I am sending you this young man. Yes, young - and he will be your escort. God knows, he has many problems and has struggled his whole life connecting and being present even with those he loves the most. And for that he is deeply sorry - but you are his only hope. Celine, my advice to you is this: you are entering the best years of your life. Looking back from where I sit now these middle years are only a little bit more difficult then when you were 12 and Mathieu and Vanessa danced all night to the Bee Gee's "How deep is your love." Celine, you will be fine. Your girls will grow up to become examples and icons of feminism.

CELINE

Nice one.

JESSE

Yeah, well, you know what I just noticed, there's a Post Script at the bottom, looks kind of important. Maybe I should just skip over the rest of this boring stuff and get to that?

CELINE

Yeah, skip away. Please, skip away.

JESSE

Okay. You sure?

CELINE

Yeah.

JESSE

Okay, all right, well.

CELINE

The boring stuff.

Jesse scoots his chair closer to her.

JESSE

Yeah. Okay.

(looks around, lowers
his voice)

Yeah, it's like financial tips,
horoscopes, boring stuff. Okay, here
it is... P.S. By the way, the best
sex of my life happened one night in
the Southern Peloponnese. Don't
miss it. My whole sexual being went
to a new, ground-breaking level.

CELINE

Ground-breaking. Great.

JESSE

Yeah, I don't know what that means.

CELINE

Okay, Jesse, can you stop this stupid
game? We're not in one of your
stories. Okay? Did you hear what I
said to you back in the room? Did
you hear me?

JESSE

Yes, I heard you - that you don't
love me anymore. I figured you didn't
mean it but if you did, then fuck
it. You know something? You're
just like the little girls and
everybody else - you want to live in
some fairy tale. I'm just trying to
make things better here. I tell you
I love you unconditionally, I tell
you that you're beautiful, I tell
you that your ass looks great when
you're 80. I'm trying to make you
laugh. I put up with plenty of your
shit, and if you think I'm just some
dog who's gonna keep coming back
then, you're wrong. But if you want
true love - this is it.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)
This is real life. It's not perfect,
but it's real. And if you can't see
it, then you're blind, alright? I
give up.

Jesse crumples up the napkin/letter he was reading from and
tosses it on the table. What follows is a lengthy silent
sequence where they just sort of stare at each other,
seemingly going through everything past and present.

CELINE
So what about this time machine?

JESSE
What do you mean?

CELINE
How does it work?

JESSE
Well... it's complicated.

CELINE
Am I going to have to get naked to
operate it?

Jesse's mood shifts, and the camera starts to slowly pull
away from them as they continue talking.

JESSE
Yeah, actually. Yeah, it's been a
real issue, you know, clothes don't
travel well through the whole space-
time continuum.

CELINE
(bimbo voice)
Wow. You're so smart.

JESSE
Oh, Jesus.

CELINE
Space-time...?

JESSE
Continuum.

CELINE
'Continuum.'

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE

Wow.

JESSE

You know, there's something I have been thinking about, about your letter. You mention something about the southern Peloponnesse? We're in the southern Peloponnesse.

CELINE

Yeah?

JESSE

Do you think it could be tonight that you're still talking about in your 80s?

CELINE

Well, it must have been one hell of a night we're about to have.

The camera has now pulled far away and the conversation has become inaudible. We leave them as just another couple sitting and talking at a table on a beautiful night on the coast of Greece.

FADE OUT