

Céline and Adèle

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Céline and Adèle

by [aldeana](#)

Summary

This story is the continuation of the fanfic Noémie and Adèle. This time, from Céline's perspective, but not just her own. It is a tribute to Céline Sciamma and Portrait of a Lady on Fire, who have changed my life.

It's translated from Spanish by Google with some fixes. The original Spanish version is also published. I appreciate your suggestions with translation issues and comments in general.

Thank you for reading.

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Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

- A translation of [Céline y Adèle](#) by [aldeana](#)

Chapter 1

Adèle opens the door with her own key. She takes off her coat and smiles at me. I am on the sofa reading. She takes the book out of my hand and rests her head on my lap so I can caress her hair.

- I'm reading.

- No longer.

Giggling. She has that silly laugh that doesn't suit her at all.

- And Noémie?

- At home. What's wrong, do I have to take her everywhere?

- Hmmm.

I stroke her hair. She closes her eyes.

- How about your tics.

- Well, lately out of control

- I have already noticed. I've been watching some interview videos.

- And?

- You have that tic with your tongue constantly.

- It's because of the interview on Mediapart. I am going crazy.

- There's nothing left. Everything will be fine.

We were silent for a long time. She with her eyes closed. I look at her face, which I have kissed so many times. And she tells me that Noémie is determined that I go home at Christmas.

- And are you going?

- Not.

- Why do you make her suffer?

She opens her eyes and looks at me intrigued.

- I don't want to meet her family, her family hates me and they don't even know me. Can you imagine me getting there and not even talking to anyone?

- Of course they will talk to you.

- Her father ... She's been showing me pictures of her family. Her father is in a wheelchair. Had an accident.

- Adèle.

- What.

- I was so calm reading my book and now you tell me about Noémie's life, when are you going to stop?

She can no longer focus on my caresses, neither can I.

- When am I going to stop?

- Yes. You told me: I have to go my way. But it wasn't true, you're still in my life. You come and go from your life to mine, and vice versa. You go in and out when you feel like it. I have to tell you something.

She blinks in surprise.

- I've started a relationship.

- Sex?

- It's not just sex. I like her and I want to continue seeing her and you cannot suddenly enter the house when we want privacy.

- Who?

- Does it matter now?

- Are you kicking me out of your life?

- I'm not kicking you out of my life, I'm just saying it would be easier for me if you called before coming.

Adèle gets up from the sofa, goes to the coat rack and looks in the pocket. She takes my key out of her key ring and puts it on the table. She puts on her coat and leaves without saying goodbye.

I look out the window and watch her ride off on her golden bike. It breaks my heart. How is it possible that every time I see her leave home my heart breaks like the first time?

Monday 4 November 2019, 6 p.m.

Adèle will be on the TV in one hour talking about Ruggia. Noémie comes to watch the interview with me. Adèle did not want us to accompany her to the television studio, she went

with Marine.

- You're freezing. Did you come by bicycle?

She nods. She hardly speaks. She's in shock, just like me. It is not that she is very communicative anyway, I suspect that neither of us will say a word the duration of the program, but it will be a good company. She sits next to me on the couch.

- I have served some snacks.

I point to the table, the bottle of wine, the cheese, the bread. But we will not eat, we are not hungry. Noémie sits next to me. A year and a month ago we met and now I really start to see her. I think when we made the movie I didn't see her at all, I just saw myself. She was doing my role, the one I would have done if I had been an actress, representing my own life, my own love story. It was a very big burden, all the time I was frustrated because it seemed to me that she could not do it as I wanted. I don't know how the poor thing could have done it. I don't know how she could express something in the end, with all the weight I put on her shoulders. And Adèle ... Adèle was very brave to accept playing herself in the film because she knew it was a tribute to our love story, she knew where each scene had come from, she had all the references, all the conversations that inspired the dialogues. What if she didn't agree with how I represented something? I think she stayed on the sidelines not to argue, she just ignored that it was "our story."

I'm excited. I look at Noémie, who is trying not to scream and run away. Just like me.

- Do you remember that scene that I made you repeat four times? When you ran down to the beach to apologize to Héloïse.

She nods.

- Tell me the truth. Was it very hard to film other people's love story and have to put up with my bad mood? I say this because in all the interviews you say that I was very kind and sweet.

- And you were. But you were also demanding.

She stays thinking. Noémie is one of those kinds of people who, if you give them enough time, they tell you more and more, you just have to be patient, but if you cut her off, she won't tell you what she was about to say. Now I know why I chose her, now that I know her more and I see that her personality fits exactly with the first idea I had of her, seeing her appear at the casting.

- Do you remember in New York, when you told us that your mother had asked you if you weren't going to miss Adèle?

- And I answered that saying to someone I love you is something that has a future and that is why I did not feel nostalgic at all.

- Yeah...

Noémie looks at me curiously. I know that she is not a person who asks you about your life, I know that it took her a long time to ask this question.

- How do you do it? How is it possible to continue loving that person without going crazy, without dying of pain? I don't know ... Forgive me. You know? I drank before I came. A whole bottle of wine.

- Wow!

I look at her amused.

- I just want to know how it is possible.

- I'd love too. Not, seriously. How is it possible to love Adèle when our love relationship has ended? What a question. I do it to myself sometimes too, don't believe it. Sometimes I'm writing something and I stop because I ask myself this question and I can't find the answer, but still I still love her.

She is shocked listening to me.

- Do you remember that in the interviews Adèle says that she imagined the last scene as if she were skiing?

- Adèle is like that.

- Why does she do this? If it was our love story, it would hurt me she speaking of the emotion of the memory as if it were the same as skiing.

- Adèle does not want to succumb to sentimentality, she is afraid to show her emotions when they are very strong.

- And you are sure that for her that scene meant the same as for you?

- I'm sure it meant much more than going down a big slalon.

We are silent. She finally accepts the glass of wine that I have served her. I wonder what she's thinking so focused while taking the first sip.

It has become night. TV plays in the background. The program is about to start.

- I'm scared, Céline.

- Of what.

- She will leave me.

- But if you are starting!

- I don't know what we are starting. It is as if time had stopped.

- Because you have the patriarchal model on your head.

- What patriarchal model?
- Get married, have children. So it seems to you that until you have that you will have nothing.
- And is it strange to want to have a future together, to commit?
- Is having children a future and committing yourself? There are more things, I assure you. We have a future and we don't need any children.
- Have you never wanted to have a child with her?
- Yes, I came to think about it, but I never felt that we had nothing if I didn't have all those things. On the contrary, I felt that we had something very real, very strong before asking her to live together. And here is the proof.

She looked around.

- The proof is that now you live alone?
- The proof is that I still love her.

I think I said the last word. I take a sip of wine. Edwy Plenel's face appears on TV, the program has started.

Chapter 2

November 1, 2019 at 5:50 p.m.

I enter the house and lie on the couch. Noémie is looking at me.

- What's wrong?

But I don't want to speak nor can I. I cover my face with my hands.

- You are scaring me.

I feel that something is eating my insides, it is a scream that I am containing and that comes out from far below. I have eyes full of tears. I want to run back to her house, get the key back, tell her I'm sorry, and leave that woman. We will live together again, we will be happy again, but I will start fucking everything up again, I will not be able to love her as she deserves and I will continue looking to sleep with others. So why ask anything? I'm a coward, I'm shit.

Noémie comes to the couch and puts her hand on top of my hands.

- What is it, my love?

My God, don't touch me, don't insist, I just want to cry and scream and hit the walls.

I start to cry and cover with my arm. I can imagine Noémie terrified looking at me, I don't want to see her face. I get up and go to the bathroom. I close inside. I sit on the toilet seat and scream.

November 4, 2019, 10:30 p.m.

We finally got to Céline's house. I go in Marine's car thinking that everything is over, that justice has been done. I try to convince myself of it. I tell Marine to come up for a while.

- I know you're tired, just to toast.

She accepts.

Céline and Noémie are waiting for us. It has been an exciting, unforgettable day, all the way I've been receiving congratulatory messages from friends and acquaintances. Many people are sharing it on social networks. Positive reactions. Marine insists that some critical voices will come now, so don't despair. I must have patience.

- You have raised many blisters, it is normal for them to complain. When you remove the foundation from the system, everything starts to creak. But you can only be proud.

We stayed at Céline's house just a little while. The first thing I do is hug Céline because this fight is ours, of the two, without her it would not be the same. We have been carrying this weight on our shoulders for many years and now I feel relieved and I know she does too. I am about to cry, but I don't want to.

- Everything will be fine, she tells me.

I kiss Noémie on the lips. We toast.

Marine is leaving now. It's too late. When she leaves, I see the bread and cheese on the table and I jump.

- What about dinner? I ask.

Céline looks at me smiling. Noémie says:

- Honey, let's go now.

- Oh no, let me enjoy the moment, I won't be able to sleep anyway.

I eat something while they look at me proud. I feel like I'm their little daughter. I am not that? A baby. All my life I have been and behaved like a little girl and I have loved being pampered. Suddenly I feel a little ashamed.

- Okay, let's go, Céline has to rest.

We left Noémie's bike and headed home by taxi.

When we arrived, she finally says:

- Adèle, stop one moment.

- What?

- Come here. You don't stop moving and getting away from me. You are so nervous. You have those tics. Come let me hug you.

We hold each other tight. I smell her hair, her neck. I want to make love, but I'm so tired. I will not be able to finish, I will fall asleep in the middle.

The next day, she is looking at me sitting on a cushion on the floor.

- What are you doing there?

- What did you dream of?

- Huh?

- Tell me what you dream. You were moving as if you were fighting.

- I don't remember.

- It's easy to remember when you just woke up.

- I don't remember.

She looks me straight in the eye.

- You don't want me here, do you?

- Why do you say that?

- I feel it. You're gone. It seems like you're thinking about something else all the time.

- Can't think of other things, should I think only of you?

Now she looks at me disappointed. I can't bear that look and hide my face on the pillow. She sits on the bed and strokes my hair. I turn around and look at each other. We are saying so many things to each other with that look. She slides in next to me between the sheets. We kiss and light up. It's automatic. I think: how easy it is with you, I wish I had this with her.

- What happens...

I shake my head. Nothing happens. Let's not talk. We will continue. To continue caressing us, licking us. I do not want to think. But she does not want to continue.

There is a subliminal language in caresses, in the connection of our minds and something has told her that it is not worth giving herself now, that I am not really here.

Stockholm, November 8, 2019

Céline has dedicated her award to me: she has had the happiest and most painful conversation of her entire life, she said. But before that phrase, I have not heard anything. I had my head on other things, I was thinking of Céline telling me a long time ago that she can't continue with me, of Céline yelling at me, throwing things at me, of Céline waiting for me awake, until I come home the next day, of Céline hugging me and kissing my hair, like I'm going to leave her side tomorrow.

After the ceremony we will not go to the dinner they offer us and we apologize. We are exhausted, physically and emotionally, and we are not hungry, we prefer to go buy something to take to the hotel. We buy the usual: grapes, cheese, breadsticks, wine. I am happy because I imagine that we are again the same ones that fell in love ten years ago. And I like to imagine it. I imagine it so strongly that in the taxi I take her hand. But when we go up to the hotel room, she says to me:

- Stop doing that.

- What.

- Putting eyes on me.

- I'm not putting eyes.
- You've been doing it all afternoon, sitting in the audience.
- What if I get to put eyes on you, what?
- That I am a human being, I have my feelings and I cannot bear it.

I don't know what to say. I drop the food bag anywhere. My hunger is gone. I lie on my back without undressing. I just took off my coat. She sits on the edge of the bed, like she's afraid of me. I look at her: her back is turned. I love her, I think. But I'm not telling her... if I told you, how far could we go?

- I think I'm going crazy.

She doesn't say anything.

- I don't want to hurt you.

- Well, don't do it to me.

- Who is that woman?

She won't say anything.

- It doesn't exist, right?

She turns around and shoots me a murderous look.

- Do you think you have the right to ask, to be jealous?

And she laughs incredulously.

- You're going over the line, as always. You're thirty years old, Adèle, but you haven't changed a thing. You are still the same girl who came to take everything that needed and left me nothing.

I get out of bed. I have left my clothes on and now I am sweating. It's hot from hell in that hotel room. I start to take off my clothes. She looks at me. I take off everything and stay naked. She doesn't look away. She never looked away, not like me, who, when she asked me for something that I didn't feel like giving, made excuses.

- That movie, I say with contempt. That movie you made is not true.

She is looking at me totally incredulous.

- There is no love without possession. I am yours and you are mine. The proof is this. We keep arguing. I keep waiting for you to love me like always and you keep waiting for me to let you go.

She takes off her clothes slowly. She is also sweating. Sighs.

- We are going to die both charred.

She says it with resignation.

I lie on my side and reach my hand out and stroke her back. And I ask her not to speak.

- Because when we talk we hurt ourselves. Come, come here.

Chapter 3

She clings to my back and I feel her breasts, I feel her skin on mine after ... how many years? The contact takes all the air out of my chest. She holds me in her arms. If she didn't hold on, I would fall to the ground. We lie on the bed together. I close my eyes because it seems to me that if I open them, everything will disappear. She sits on me, takes my hands and puts them on her breasts, but my hands do not believe it at all and she has to hold and squeeze them, and give them life. When she succeeds, she leans over me and kisses me on the mouth. And I struggle between crying and desire. Connected to her lips and her body, the blood flows through my veins again, a flame ignites that had been extinguished for so long, I feel my heart knocking on the door of my chest, demanding me to open, to live again. I feel my fingertips burning in the flame of her sex. I see her parted lips again, her gaze fixed somewhere behind me, as if looking inside, and I feel her sex catching my fingers like a stocks, her thighs hard as iron. And I see that muffled cry that is drawn on her face in the orgasm and the calm that comes later.

I've been looking at her for a few hours. I don't know how many. I could see sunrise. Now the sun comes in through the window. She sleeps on her stomach, as always. Her blonde hair spreads on the pillow.

- Adele.

- Mmm?

- It is daytime hours ago. I'm going to take a shower.

- Mmm.

I get in the shower and look at the turquoise tiles, like her eyes, an irony. I smell my fingers before I erase her scent from my skin, forever? I turn on the water, pick up the shampoo, stroke the gel. I touch all those things like I just came from another planet. I'm in shock, I think. I get out of the shower and she's still in bed ... like always. I look out the window as she gets up. My whole body is alert, again I have that feeling that I had when we lived together, when she was about to leave and I did not know when she would return. I touch the window pane and look at the city. It's cold out there, but here too, I sense it. I'm scared. I am afraid that when she comes out of the shower, she will be the other one again, the Adèle who left me. So I prepare myself mentally not to give it importance, nothing has happened, I tell myself, you are here, you have a future when she comes out of your life again. After all, it's only been a few hours, just sex ... But no, I don't believe any of this, everything has happened, and I'm still glued to the window glass as if I want not to be there, in the room, when the time comes.

She gets out of the shower, gets dressed, we don't talk. I try to cool my heart again. You don't know, but now I'm busy protecting myself, I'm trying to distance myself and reflect on all this as if I were an entomologist who examines an insect under a microscope, but I can't. Then she finishes dressing and looks at me with a shy smile on her face. And I smile back.

- Let's go to breakfast.

- We will call it Stockholm parentheses, which almost sounds like Stockholm syndrome, I say as I spread a toast.

- What are you talking about?

- About what happened last night.

Her expression suddenly hardens.

- The parenthesis is the other thing.

- What other.

- You and I separated.

- Adèle, you know perfectly what is going to happen now, as always. You will return with the others, you will make your life as you have always done. I do not judge you. I just need you to definitely leave me, not to come back for me.

She throws the toast on the plate.

- Well, let's change things.

I cross my arms.

- Yeah? What do you propose?

- The three of us will live together.

I burst out laughing. I have to admit that it is not a surprise, at some point I thought about it, but only as a joke, to lower the tension. Now I don't know what to say.

- I'm going to propose to Noémie.

- What about me? Don't you propose it to me? You take for granted that I will accept anything, don't you?

- Don't you say that love is not possession? Well let's check it out.

- What if we accept all of us? So will Noémie and I go to bed too?

She said yes. But doesn't believe it, neither do I. I laugh.

- What are you laughing at?

- Forgive me, but this is all ...

- We are very open in theory, but we find it difficult to put it into practice.

- The question is if I want to sleep with her, but it is something that is taken for granted apparently ...

- Would you sleep with her?

- And why should I?

- You wouldn't have to.

- Adele.

- What.

- Look at me.

Looks at me. She is frustrated.

- I feel bad, she says.

- Why.

- I think I have a fever.

I put my hand on her forehead and it seems like yes, it is very hot.

- You got cold.

We were wondering what to do. She has a screening plus Q&A along with the director of The Heroes Don't Die. It is at three.

- Maybe you should cancel this afternoon, I say.

We stayed in Stockholm until November 10, but she call Noémie to tell her we are back on the eleventh. When we got to the airport, Adèle takes my hand. We do not have to check in our small luggage. We are holding hands the whole way. She looks out the window and sleeps at times. I have a heart shrunk with love, joy and sadness, all at once. Upon arrival in Paris, she stays at home.

I take care of her. I watch her while she sleeps in my bed and watch her fever, I sit on the floor, with my back against the wardrobe. I see myself as a classic tragedy heroine: it's me, the one who sits there offering her life entirely to this woman. No heroine has offered her life to another woman as far as I know ... So I have to settle for Eurydice again. Always Eurydice. Maybe she dropped into hell as a sacrifice so Orpheus didn't have to carry her. "Carry", that's the word. She feels a burden for him and decides to remain idealized, perfect in his memory, instead of disappointing him with coexistence, with everyday ... She said "turn around" although in the myth that phrase doesn't appear by any side. But surely she told him so that he would not give his life to her too, to "rid him of her." She set him free. And that's how I feel about Adèle. I will set her free again and fall back into hell. Only in our case,

I have to make that decision a second time, so that the myth of Eurydice begins to seem absurdly like that of Sisyphus.

I open the drawer of the nightstand and pick up a book. It is the myth of Eurydice. I open the cover and there written in my handwriting is that phrase: “in solitude I felt the freedom you told me about, but I also missed you”. How lonely I have felt these years, Adèle. So much so that I couldn't fill it with anything. No one was enough. Parties, dinners, movies, projects ... Nothing could stop me from looking around looking for you, I wanted to share with you every second, each moment of happiness, each moment of sadness. But you weren't. I'm crying.

November 11, 2019, 12 noon.

Adèle leaves. She has made her bag and puts it behind the door. I don't want to say goodbye to her, I stay where I am, a little far away, with my hands in my pockets. Watching her come and go. At one point she stops and sees me there, small and fragile. She comes up with a smile on her lips and kisses me. She hugs me tight.

- Why are you leaving ?, I ask her. It's the question of my life.

- Because I have to talk to Noémie.

She leaves. She closes the door herself. And now I can hear an imaginary clock that has started counting every second until she returns.

Chapter 4

Noémie had prepared lunch.

- How about in Stockholm?

- How about here without me?

She turned around and looked at me.

- Well, it's only been a few days. I have survived.

She laughed. I laughed. I didn't know what else to say. I didn't want to talk about Stockholm, it was obvious. But she kept looking at me. She saw something in my expression that made her alert.

- Aren't you going to tell me about Stockholm?

- I got sick.

- Yeah? My love, poor thing.

But I had to tell her. I had to tell her what had happened and I didn't know where to start. I sat on a stool in the kitchen, and twice I started saying something that I didn't finish. She stopped what she was doing and looked directly at me.

- What do you want to tell me?

I looked down.

- Adele.

- I slept with Céline.

She blinked. In front of her was a basket of bread and she threw it at my face. She removed her apron and threw it at me. She threw the dishes from the table and the food fell on the floor. The pasta ran down the table leg slowly, like worms.

She cried, but I did not approach, I was in shock. Then she took a deep breath and went to the room. When I approached the door I saw that she was taking her things out of the closet. I ripped the clothes from her hands and she hit me with her fists. I took her arms, hugged her tight, and she went still.

- How is it possible?

- Love...

- Don't call me love.

- Love, listen to me, listen to me for a moment.

- I can't, I feel like throwing up.

She sat on the bed and I sat with her.

- I love you, but I also love her.

She looked at me with hatred.

- Well, you don't have to choose.

She got up and picked up her clothes again, which were on the floor.

- I'm not choosing, I don't choose who I want.

She stopped.

- You could have chosen to talk to me before going to bed with her.

- And how important is it? I love her anyway, even if I don't sleep with her.

- God, why are you telling me this. I just want to get out of here.

- Stay with me.

Again she stopped. She did not understand.

- With you? While you sleep with her?

I did not say anything. It was obvious that yes, I wanted her to stay with me while I slept with her, with both of them.

- You are so selfish, Adèle. Do you want us three to live together and make you breakfast every morning and tuck you in your bed every night?

- I'll tuck you in your bed too every night.

I took the clothes from her hands, piece by piece, and let her fall to the ground again.

- I dreamed of this.

- Of what.

- With the three of us living together ... It's incredible. I didn't really dream it, I figured it out. And it was true, it was an intuition I had ... From the beginning.

She dropped onto the bed and I fell next to her. That was something that was happening to both of us, not just me. It was our love story and was opening up to someone else and she couldn't do anything, just like me.

She began to cry silently. I looked at her and saw that tears ran down her face to her hair, to the mattress and she did not dry them. I kissed her tears. She slapped me.

- You told me you didn't want her that way.

- I thought so.

- And what changed?

- She told me that she had started a relationship with another woman and I went crazy.

- Shit, Adèle. Fuck off.

She sat down on the bed and picked up her clothes from the floor.

- Stay.

- Is she going to live with us?

- I don't know. I don't know yet.

- Poor woman.

- Why poor woman?

- Because she loves you. I don't know what I will do, Adèle. But now I don't want to see you.

- Well, I'm leaving. You stay and decide what you want to do. You don't have to go.

- And where will you go, to her flat?

- Yeah.

She covered her face with her hands.

- Don't go, she said, and started crying again.

We spent the afternoon like this, holding each other. At 18:00 I got out of bed and went to drink water. I had a hole in his stomach, but I didn't want to eat. I leaned out onto the balcony and looked out at the street. What is Céline doing now? I took the mobile and sent her a message, a heart. Nothing else. I waited for her response, but it didn't come. It shouldn't be that painful, I thought. Love should be easy and joyful, but my love hurts the people I love the most. Noémie appeared on the balcony and stepped into my arms.

- I thought you were gone, she said.

I dipped my fingers into her hair and stroked her. I told her I loved her and repeated her name several times, in a low voice, in a diminutive. But she wanted to hurt me, she asked:

- And I can also bring someone else to our relationship?

My heart ached when she said it.

- If it's someone you love, yes.

She pulled away from me to look at me.

- I don't believe it, Adèle.

- I wouldn't like it, but what can I do.

She slipped back into my arms.

- I do not love anyone else, but I swear I will try.

Again, I felt another stab in the heart.

November 18, 1:13 a.m.

Noémie has not returned home. I don't know where she is, who she is with. She wants to kill me with grief. I sent her a message:

- At least tell me where you are, when will you come back.

Nothing. Does not answer. I'll go crazy.

I can't stay home, so I'm going to look for her, by car. It occurs to me to go look at her friend's house. I perfectly remember the address. I park my car in a disabled space. I go to the portal. It is impossible to know what floor that woman lives on. Instantly, I remember she had an attic. I look at the names of the tenants on the top floor. Whoever it is, I can't call at this time. I go back to the car and sit down to wait. And I think of Céline, what she has been through. And I start to cry. I imagine Noémie in the arms of that woman or someone else, she touches her skin, makes love to her, caresses her hair.

Finally, I go home and find Noémie sitting in the living room with the light off. I sit next to her and look at her. I dare not ask her anything.

- I tried to cheat on you, it was horrible, she says.

I lay my head on her lap and she strokes my hair.

- I went looking for you.

- And what did you feel?

- I felt that I was broken, that I was missing a piece of myself.

- It's what I feel when you leave with Céline.

- Come with me.

- I do not want.
- Let's live together the three of us. I am serious, Noémie.
- I know you mean it.
- And what do I paint in your relationship with her? Do you want to have a threesome? I have no stomach.
- I don't want to "make a threesome". I want to live with you and with her, love you both, take care of both of you.
- And why does it have to be what you want?
- I just can't stop loving her.
- I'm looking for a flat.

I incorporated. She kept talking:

- I didn't want to tell you anything, I wanted to go by surprise, but I'm not going to behave like a girl myself.

I was sick of us throwing knives at each other all the time.

- I am not behaving like a girl, I am proposing another type of relationship. Just because you don't want to, doesn't mean that what I'm proposing to you doesn't make sense.

But she ignored me.

- My plan is to leave before Christmas.

She stared at me. Although we were in the dark, I could feel her gaze on me as if it were driving me.

- And I'm going to buy a dog and I'm going to have a child, and I'm going to find someone who loves me more than you, Adèle.
- You're not going to do any of that.

I caught her face with one hand and kissed her. We kissed and bit, and we hit each other and made love.

Chapter 5

Saturday November 16, 2019

On Tuesday I turned 41, today I celebrate it. This afternoon. I have also invited Adèle and Noémie. I have invited many people and it will be almost impossible to be alone with anyone or to have a private conversation, so I feel protected. We don't have to talk about what has happened, for now.

I already have everything ready and I still have plenty of time, so I sit down to look at our photos. I look at photos of our past together, I can't help it. I open the folder where I have our memories of when we were a couple, "Adèle 2006-2015". I can spend hours watching this, however I haven't been here for a long time. What happened in Stockholm has made me return to this folder, to these memories, with a heavy heart. The first photos of Adèle are from the casting for Water Lilies, shortly before the summer of 2006. I open any folder without knowing what I am going to find, what image is going to hit my retina next, what memory is going to break my heart. For example, in this little video, Adèle is eating an orange. The juice runs down her mouth, the scene it's so hot. I remember what happened just before, what made me point the camera to save the entire memory. She had split the orange in half and in the center was a small protrusion of segments. The fleshy segments so separated looked like a vagina with its clitoris. She showed me "her work" proudly and mischievously stuck the tip of her tongue. That scene froze in my memory, it remained forever as it is, however in the video only the later moment appears, when she laughs at me, at my amazed expression. The beauty, sensuality, emotion of that revived moment makes my hair stand on end even today. I immediately thought about putting the scene in a movie, but it stayed in a project because two years later we sank into the hell of separation. In this photo, Adèle is repairing her bike and has smudged her face with grease to make me laugh, she's kind of a Rambo, but deliciously sexy. I wonder when she didn't seem sexy to me and I don't remember a single moment.

The guests are arriving for the party. I have kept the album deep in the closet. When Adèle arrives there are already many people, so we do not talk about what happened, we just look at each other, our eyes cross the room, looking for each other. When I see her come into the house and hang up her coat, I think of the photos I have been looking at a while ago: "Dear Adèle, do you have any idea of the happiness you have stolen from us, the years that belonged to us and that we are missing now? Forever. From 2015 until now, every single day I missed you." I look at her, at them both, also at Noémie, they are both pale. I guess anyone can read in our eyes that we are sad, even if we are partying. After Stockholm I have not met Adèle alone again. I have not wanted. I have not had the strength. But here, with so many people, almost thirty people, celebrating my birthday, I feel a little stronger. I take refuge in my friends, I take refuge in Claire, who looks at me with sweetness. She doesn't know what has happened and I will not tell her, because I don't want to end what is starting between us. It's not fair. I don't want to lose everything, this too. I'm just trying to keep going. Clarie has brought a *Portrait* bookmark, which she has ordered made and which reproduces the drawing on page 28 where Marianne paints her self-portrait. It says: "in solitude I have felt the freedom you told me about, but I also missed you". These are the details that I like, the small

things, fragile even, those that are in danger with the passage of time and put us to the test taking care of them.

Claire starts telling us about the time she was in Japan and visited some gay places.

- I can't imagine you going to one of those places, I tell her, just to annoy her.

- Why? I look shy, but I'm not.

She strokes my hair and plants a kiss on my lips. I adore how this woman looks at me, she makes me feel the center of the universe. It is now when the others realize that we are together. It can be said that we are making our relationship official. Some of our friends smile in surprise. I wonder if Adèle has seen that gesture, I can't help but think of her, what she does, what she feels. But I don't seek her gaze this time.

- Can I say something?

It is the voice of Adèle. We all look at her. She is by our side.

- I want to toast Céline.

The group agrees, some send the others to silence, all prepare to listen to Adèle's little speech. My heart is going to jump out of my chest. Someone remove the music. In a minute we are all waiting. And she begins, in her classic run-over way that I adore.

- Everyone here today knows what Céline means in my life. So I want to say a few words, although they will fall short. I mean I love you, Céline, I will never stop doing it I guess, and the last few months on tour with you, taking our film everywhere, have been a gift. This film has given us something beautiful, that we had not lost, it was only asleep and we had to wake it up.

Raises her glass and we toast. I am about to die, I have a disturbed gesture on my face and I cannot remove it. Noémie is watching us and toasts. I raise the glass like an automaton. Adèle kissed me on the lips. I look at Claire, she's serious. She doesn't understand anything. It was a passionate speech, too.

Then some of us went upstairs to smoke and Claire comes up with me. She is respectful and doesn't ask me anything, but I can read in her eyes that she expects an explanation from me.

- Adèle is having a crisis, I tell her.

- It was so intense ...

- I did not expect.

- She said "I love you" ...

- Yes, she said "I love you".

I don't know what to say, actually.

Adèle has also gone up to smoke and sees us chatting there.

- I don't like this time of year, she says.

I notice her restless gaze. She keeps talking:

– December is coming ... It's a month I hate.

Claire finishes her cigar and apologizes.

- It's cold, she says. And goes down to the living room.

I stay a little longer because Adèle has not yet finished hers.

- Is it her? She asks me.

- Yes.

- Are you still together?

- Yes, I haven't told her anything and I'm not going to tell her.

She throws away her cigarette and leaves the terrace. When I go down to the living room, behind her, I see how she takes her coat and leaves without saying goodbye to anyone. But I see that Noémie is still there, talking to someone, without flinching. After a while of restlessness and not knowing what to do, I approach her.

- Can we talk?

She nods.

- Let's go up to the terrace for a moment, I suggest.

Now on the terrace there are fewer people than before. I look at her intensely, I want her to know that I didn't want to hurt her, that it got out of hand.

- Sorry, I say.

She looks down.

- I love Adèle, but I will not continue with her, I don't have the strength to follow her.

Noémie is now looking me straight in the eye. I can see that she is sad. Sadness makes her even more beautiful.

- I'm not going to continue with her either.

We don't have much more to say. We are two different women with Adèle in common, that's all. And adds:

- I'd like us to keep seeing each other. I don't want what has happened to separate us. I admire you very much, Céline. I don't want to lose your friendship.

She has done her typical nod. The one that Marianne does when she tells Héloïse what she says to her models to distract them, “this is what I tell them”, and Marianne makes that gesture. It is the same gesture of Noémie. I smile to recognize it.

Chapter 6

November 25, 2019

Noémie called me because she was worried: Adèle hadn't come home for two days, she didn't answer the calls. I went to her house. She told me that they had been arguing, as always lately, that she was preparing her move. I went in and looked around, I saw Noémie's bags ready. How sad, I thought, it reminded me of the day that Adèle left my side.

- Where can we find her? Noémie asked crying.
- I think I know where. It's just an intuition, but it could work.

We went in my car.

Along the way, I asked Noémie if she was determined to leave. I said if she really loved her to try it. She looked at me in disbelief.

- How can you say that?
- Because I love her.
- I love her too.

She didn't say it like it was a competition. It was a statement she made out loud, not to me, but to herself. She had probably already said "I love you" to Adèle, but she hadn't thought about it like she did now. Now she realized the dimension of it all, what it meant to love her, the sleepless nights, the fights, the frustration. Adèle was such a passion that it was beyond her control. Adèle wanted everything.

- Where are we going? She asked.
- To her family's house on the coast.

Noémie remained silent looking at the road, I thought: how different she is from Adèle. Adèle always speaks in the most difficult moments, she always tries to have a theory for the drama that's happening. She doesn't. Both Noémie and I had put our lives on pause, she her bags ready to go, I Claire sleeping at home. And however we had nothing to say. We just did it. I thought of Claire. Claire had turned a blind eye to the scene of Adèle on my birthday. She didn't want to know anything. That same night she stayed home and asked nothing more. It was clear that both she and I wanted to look ahead and the last thing we needed was to go around the past. Poor Claire. Before leaving, I wrote her a note because she was still sleeping.

Noémie started laughing. I had to look at the road, but I couldn't help but take a look. Her laugh was like a cool breeze, a challenge to our anguish. It infected me. For a minute, we laughed together and everything seemed easier. It was going to be four hours away, so after

two hours we stopped and went down to stretch our legs. We entered a bar and ordered two coffees and a bottle of water. We called Adèle, but she was offline.

- Long ago this happened too.

- What?

- I had to go look for Adèle at her beach house because she didn't pick up the phone.

- And why was she gone?

- Because we argued. We argued all the time at the end.

- And how is it possible that you are willing to leave your life for a relationship that hurts so much?

- I love her, I love her more than me.

- And Claire?

- I guess I'm trying to have a life.

Noémie was looking at me curiously, but she was no longer surprised. Her capacity for surprise had been exhausted.

- Do you think she could have done crazy?

- Don't.

I reassured her.

- I think she's drinking in front of the sea.

- I'm scared, she said.

She seemed so fragile ... Her caramel eyes shot me furtive glances that sought to understand everything that was happening to us. I started talking to relax a little.

- When I was little I was a loner, you know? I used to go to the cinema to live the life I didn't have, to feel accompanied, understood. If they told me a story that got me hooked, I could tell that someone else thought like me and was no longer so alone. I think I became a filmmaker because of that. I rode my bike eight kilometers and went three times a week. It was a small cinema, but they played everything. Everything I saved I spent there. But it wasn't easy, you know? Movies were the friends I didn't have, the love impossible to find. I was a strong person, but vulnerable, because I had no one to tell what was happening inside me. But with Adèle for the first time I felt that I had found my soul mate. Not only was she the most beautiful woman I had ever met, but with her everything was more interesting, more exciting, she made me think, she made me want to be smarter and more interesting and prettier. But all of that disappeared when we started arguing.

- Why did you start arguing?

- Because she wanted to be free, she wanted to meet other women. You know, she was younger than me. It was tough from the beginning actually. I don't think she ever loved me blindly.

- What do you mean...

- She loved me, but I was never her type, you understand me. I think I never seemed enough.

Noémie took my hand on the table.

- Sorry, I did not want to give pity.

I laughed a little, to take drama away from my confession, but she didn't laugh.

We continue our journey.

- Do you know I was jealous? She said, after half an hour of silence.

- Of whom?

- Of you.

- Since when?

- From the beginning. I competed with you. I thought you were still together and I wanted to take her away from you.

I huffed.

- Seriously? And what were you going to do to "take her from me"?

- I was going to read a lot.

I was stunned. I did not expect that answer.

- In two days is my birthday, said Noémie thoughtfully.

- Do you want me to congratulate you now?

- No, just ... I will be 31.

- How old!

- Not seriously. I am in shock.

She laughed again. She had an easy and pretty laugh. I imagined that living with her was full of silences and easy laughs like those. And I smiled.

Finally we arrived. It was already five in the afternoon. We parked near the house and skirted the road that I knew and that brought back memories. We knock on her door and look at each other. We were desperate. Adèle opened the door and saw us there, covered her face with her arm. In one hand she had a cigar and in the other a glass. She was drunk. We took everything from her hands and put her in the shower. Adèle was sitting in the tub and I was standing, pouring the cold water over her. Noémie watched from the bathroom door, seemed to be in shock. For a while, we didn't say anything.

- Bring a towel, I said at last.

We get her out of there and put her to bed. It was late and she needed us, so we would stay for the night. I searched the closet for bedding. There were enough rooms for all three. Noémie took a grandmother's pajamas and put it on with a half smile on her lips.

- Not so bad, don't worry.

But it was cold in the house, you had to wrap up. We took blankets, made beds. We had faces of circumstances, but every time we looked at each other, we tried to smile.

- Are you going to sleep with Adèle? I asked.

It was not expected.

- She's shaking, you will have to sleep with her to warm her up.

Since she was not reacting, I offered her to sleep with Adèle, after all she was her last partner. But she said:

- Let's both sleep with her.

And she made that gesture of hers and of Marianne.

- Okay.

There was not anymore to say. I thought that meant a lot, it meant that she was trying, that she was trying to understand Adèle by offering me to sleep with them. I thought it was a nice gesture on her part, but I thought: it's one thing to sleep with someone and another to make love or listen to how the two of them make love in the other room. We went to Adèle's room, who half an hour earlier had vomited everything in her stomach and needed to warm up. We got into bed with her. Turn off the light. In the dark, I heard Noémie's laughter.

- What?

- She's freezing!

Chapter 7

I took a shower. I filled a bottle of water and started taking sips. My head was spinning. While they slept, I looked out the window and saw the sunrise.

- Are you okay? Asked Céline. She had just woken up.

- Yes, I just have to drink water.

Noémie opened her eyes.

- Well, I'm going to the shower, said Céline.

She left us alone.

I knelt down next to Noémie and put the bottle on the floor. She was staring at me. She held up a finger and started stroking my eyebrows, nose, lips, like she was painting me. I laid my head on the mattress and stroked my hair.

- What's going to happen now? She asked me.

- Don't leave me.

- If you want an open relationship, I can't go on. I can not stand it.

I looked at her again and kissed her on the lips.

- And I don't want you to disappear any more without warning, she added.

- I will not leave without warning, I promise.

- And Céline?

I was silent, I did not have the correct answer.

So she made a decision. She got out of bed and went to the shower. Céline was still there, but she entered. I stood in the doorway in suspense.

She undressed. She gave me a look that didn't mean anything, as if I were the door and asked Céline:

- May I?

Céline looked at me. I looked at her. Neither of us said anything. Noémie entered the bathtub then and asked, as if that was a movie and she knew the script and we didn't.

- Do you wash my hair?

Céline picked up the shampoo, poured it a little into the palm of her hand, and looked at me. She put her hands in Noémie's hair and massaged her head. As the foam fell down her back and I saw Céline's fingers in Noémie's hair I noticed that it was turning me on. Noémie leaned against Céline's chest and said:

- Caress my breasts.

Did she want to test me or did she want to test herself? Céline leaned her head against the wall and closed her eyes, and began to caress her breasts.

There was no turning back. The three of us got excited. I went to the bathtub and got down on my knees, I put my hands in the water, I caressed their thighs, I kissed them on the mouth, I masturbated them with both hands, I bit them and I kissed them. The three of us made love, me on my knees, they in the water. That was the most exciting and most beautiful thing that had ever happened to me. Then, as if nothing new had happened, I brought them a towel and went to breakfast.

But something had changed, of course. While we ate breakfast I looked at them briefly, I wanted to know what they thought about what had happened, what they felt but I didn't dare ask. Céline was texting and Noémie was sipping her coffee.

I huffed.

- I can't eat anything, I said, to break the ice.

- Well, don't drink that much, Noémie said.

Céline continued with her messages.

It was all we said over breakfast. Hardly anyone was hungry. We finish soon. Céline said she was leaving and looked at us:

- Does anyone want me to take her?

I smiled.

- What are you laughing at?

She was serious, almost angry.

- I'm not laughing.

Noémie was watching us.

- Can I say something?, I said finally.

They said no at the same time.

- Well, I'm going to say it anyway: what are we going to do now?

They looked at each other.

- Please, can we leave this conversation for now? I'm still taking in what has happened, Noémie said.

Céline looked down.

- Well, I'm leaving now.

I walked her to the car and hugged her. She resisted a little, but in the end she relaxed. We hug each other for a long time. I kissed her hair and told her to be careful on the road.

- I love you, I said. But she didn't answer.

Noémie stayed with me one more day. As soon as Céline left, she got into bed. She also wanted to know what had happened and felt that if we did not talk about it, we would not understand it.

- What did you feel? She asked me.

- Happiness.

She hid her face in the pillow. I got under the covers with her.

- And you?

- It was all very strange.

- You didn't like it?

- I liked it. But if I didn't understand our relationship before, now less.

- We are a family. We can call it that, I said.

She looked at me without believing it.

- You know what? She finally blurted out.

- What.

- Céline is the perfect woman.

- I already know it.

- You're very lucky that she and I love you.

- Because I don't deserve that you love me?

- Exactly. I slept with her to hurt you, but now it turns out I like her. And I'm not going to ask your permission every time I want to. That will be between her and me.

I looked down. But immediately she got tired of attacking me. She lay down on my chest and said.

- You have the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen.

- You are the girl with the beautiful eyes.

We spent quite time stroking each other, remembering what had just happened, listening to the clock on the nightstand.

- Do you know there's a castle around here? When the beach is flooded the castle is isolated, I said.

- Kiss me, she said.

She propped herself up on one elbow and watched me for a while. I kissed her.

- Why am I so fucking in love with you?

I didn't say anything, I didn't want to screw up.

- Do you want to take me to that castle? She asked.

I nodded.

- Do you know that Chateaubriand's grave is there?

- Who is Chateaubriand? She asked.

- He is the first romantic writer. Do you want us to go on foot? Now it must be low tide.

She looked at me curiously.

- What if the tide rises and we can't go back?

Now she wasn't speaking about the castle, but debating whether to let herself be driven into madness or staying where she was. After a few seconds she smiled.

- Okay, take me to see that guy, but I also want you to take me out to lunch. Your fridge is sad.

December 24, 2019

We are going to see the family of Noémie to Rezé. Four hours by car. We take turns driving. As she drives I put a hand on her leg and look at her from time to time.

- You're so sexy.

- What?

- Do you want me to repeat it?

She laughs.

- You. Are. Sexy.

Noémie turns up the volume on the radio.

- Why are you turning up the volume when I'm talking to you?

- I don't want to hear you. You're so silly.

She's angry. She has had a hard time bringing me, but here we are, on the road. I prepare myself mentally for the questions they will or will not ask me. I turn down the volume on the radio.

- What if they don't talk to me? I ask her.

She sighs with impatience.

- They are not savages, they will talk to you.

- What if they ask me if I'm the man in the relationship?

- Oh please.

- What if they ask us if we are going to have children?

- I don't think it goes through their head.

Noémie doesn't know, but I went to buy a puppy two days ago, it's her Christmas present, only I ordered it for after the holidays. It is a very ugly dog, an American Staffordshire Terrier, but all dogs seem ugly to me and I did not know which one to choose. All I knew was that she liked big dogs. The woman placed it on a red mat on a table and took a photo, then told me that they would make a postcard, what did I want them to put on it.

- I don't know what one can put in a photo with the face of a dog ...

- You can put something the dog says.

I raised my eyebrows. It sounded a bit strange, but I let myself go.

- It's okay.

She kept proposing things.

- You can give the dog a name and sign it as well.

Again, I chose to let go. She was the expert. The woman thought for a few seconds, surely she had many things to do, so she was not going to waste any time. With a professional air, she composed a simple phrase and submitted it to my approval:

- "Greetings from Gino." What do you think?
- Who is Gino? I asked.
- The dog, she replied.

Chapter 8

December 1, 2019

It's Sunday. I walk around the house like a caged lion. If someone calls me, I don't pick up the phone, if someone knocks on the door I don't answer. But soon I'm going to have to, if I don't want to have the police here.

I have decided to go to my mother's house in Pontoise and spend a few days to escape. Along the way I am thinking about what has happened: last week, when Noémie and I went to the coast and later, when I had to confront Claire and tell her that "I'm not sure about this". I didn't tell her what happened at the beach house, but she imagined I was with Adèle. I had to contemplate her disappointment. I had disappointed her. And then, in January the four of us have to go to Los Angeles. We to continue promoting the film and she to collect the award from the Association of Film Critics. What will happen then?

I think of "page 28". I think about what Adèle told me in Stockholm: your film is a lie, which was like saying that our love is a lie.

And I think again about that scene in the bathtub, about that surreal scene. The three together. My hands on her breasts, her hand between my legs, her mouth on Noémie's mouth ...

I come to Pontoise for dinner. As soon as I see my mother, I feel like crying and I realize how devastated I am. She realizes and is afraid to touch me, just in case I collapse. She has prepared what I like, she says.

There is also Hélène.

- What a bad face... She says, and hugs me.

During dinner they tell me the latest news about the family, but I can't help but be often distracted. When we started to clear the table, Hélène asks me:

- What happened?

And then yes, I start to cry.

- Adèle? She asks.

It is amazing how Adèle has become the answer to all my worries. Hélène did not have to think much: it is Adèle. And there is nothing more to say, because it is always the same story.

- What happened this time?

- She's back, that's happened. Just now that another relationship was starting.

- Oh dear, come here.

And hugs me again.

- I think Adèle is the love of your life, for better and for worse.

I take a handkerchief from my pocket.

Mom appears.

- What happens now?

- Don't worry, says H  l  ne, everything is under control.

- I don't believe a word, my poor girl!

They both hug me. We are as a team. When we finished with the dishes, H  l  ne and I bundled up and went outside to smoke on the terrace. We take some blankets that are on the chairs. It is not a very cold night, anyway.

And I tell her. I tell her what happened on the beach and she listens to me with her mouth open. She says nothing. Doesn't know what to say. If she tells me not to think so much, to enjoy, that I think a lot, that I want the Ad  le that I knew to come back and that is the problem ... It won't do any good because she has said it all other times. Now she just listens to me and I appreciate it.

But then it happens what deep in my heart I was waiting for: we see her figure approach the fence. We hear her voice:

- Hello!

It's Ad  le.

- Go with her, H  l  ne tells me. I entertain mom for a while.

I had been thinking all week how I was going to react when we saw each other. If I see her, I will greet her coldly. If she calls me, I will tell her that I am busy, if she tells me to come back, I will tell her that it doesn't make sense, that I don't want to share it with No  mie. I had everything ready. Anyway, I avoided her all week because the more time passed, the stronger I would feel. It was the opposite. I already knew that this meeting was going to be like that of Icarus and the sun.

- How did you know I was here today? Icarus said.

- Aren't you going to open? Asked the sun.

I was ashamed not to open the door for her. I was like a little girl who does not open to a stranger, like the little goat who must not open to the wolf. I felt stupid. I opened.

We walked for a moment, aimlessly, like our relationship.

- Listen to me, said the sun, under the light of the street lamps.

I did not want to hear her if she was not going to tell me that I am the only love of her life, as she is mine, that there would be no more arguments. I thought: how I wish we had both come together to my mother's house today, as it used to be! And how I would like to plan with you the weekend, Christmas, your next birthday. I wanted to plan my life with you, and instead, my life has stopped.

The sun said to me:

- Don't get out of my life, please.
- I don't go out, but you go in and out when you want.
- I will stay with you, I will not leave anymore, she promised me.
- It will not work.
- You haven't even tried.

I tell her what I had in mind as if I were reading it:

- You don't love me, you just don't know how to live without me. You have to emancipate yourself.

And I turn around. But she hugs me.

- I hurt you, honey, I know, but I was a kid. Now I know I can't live without you. I love you so much, my love. Stay with me.

She holds me so tight that I can hardly breathe, she holds me in her arms, I am like a leaf in the wind. What can a leaf do against the wind?

- I want us to live together again.

I don't say anything. I only cry.

- The other day at the beach house, what did you feel?

I looked down, I remembered everything. Why lie? I let myself go, just like them.

- She liked it.

I find it strange to hear her say that: "she"

- She liked making love with us.

She is crying. She wipes away the tears with the back of her hand. I take a tissue from my pocket and dry it myself.

- It seems to me that you have grown a little more.

- Are you speaking figuratively?

- No. You're taller.

She shows me the heels.

- We went to a party and I ran away earlier.

I sigh. I look aside: as expected, her embrace has burned my wings.

- Do you want to come in?

Adèle is the prodigal daughter of my mother, who is my greatest opponent in the task of forgetting her. Seeing her enter the house, Mom gets up and hugs her.

- We missed you. We saw you in Cannes, how beautiful you were.

Adèle smiles shyly. I serve her wine, but she stops me:

- I'm just going to drink water.

I can't help but remember her drunkenness and everything else.

- Are you going to come home this year at Christmas?, asks Mom.

She smiles and does not respond. She'll only stay half an hour.

When she leaves, I accompany her to the car.

- Come with me. Tonight we sleep together, we hug.

But I tell her I was planning to stay with Mom for a couple of days.

- Maybe until Wednesday. I do not know yet.

- Will you call me when you come home?

I nod.

She takes my face in her hands and kisses me. We kissed. A long, warm kiss that drags me inside.

And I return to Paris on Wednesday. When I get home I look at my cell phone, look for her name in the contacts and write the message that I promised to send her: "Hello, I'm already home." Only that. So she calls me.

- Look under the mat.

I walk out the door with the phone in my hand and lift the rug.

- There is an envelope, I say.

- Open it.

It is a ticket for the opera: Le Parc, by Angelin Preljocaj.

- It's on Saturday. How about?

- Great ...

I don't know if I'm going to the opera on Saturday. Noémie also goes. I give myself until Saturday to know what I am going to do with my life. I can picture them on the doorstep of the Paris Opera on Saturday. The two of them smoking wrapped in their coats, waiting for me.

Chapter 9

The next day, Hélène, on the phone told me:

- How much longer are you going to hide?
- Please come take care of me, I feel bad.

My sister came that same afternoon. She opened the door with her key. She dropped the shopping bags on the floor and put her hand on my forehead.

- You have a fever, she said.
- I'm sure it is because of the disgust.
- Maybe we should go to the doctor.

Then she got comfortable, aired the house, and started cleaning. She wanted to stay and take care of me that night. She was worried about me and she couldn't go and leave me to my fate, was what she said. At night, she started watching movies while I dozed on the sofa. I saw the changing light from the TV on her and thought for a moment that it was Adèle.

- You know what? She said. I wish I had an Adèle in my life. I need a little excitement.

Her theory was that Adèle looked in Noémie for what she lacked with me and in me, what she lacked with Noémie. The thing is, she wants it all, she said. Anyway, if two hot guys younger than me propose to me that we live together, I would not think twice.

She stayed until the next day. I was better.

- What are you going to do now?

She was eager to know the end of the soap opera. I shrugged my shoulders.

- I haven't decided.

Desperate to distract myself, I met Gisele and Marie, we went to buy a new lens for my camera. In a moment of weakness I asked them what they would do if they were offered the possibility of opening their relationship to someone else and living the three together.

- Are you proposing it to us?

We laugh.

- And why not? Don't you think I'm a good match? I joked.

They said that now they didn't want to share their partner with anyone, but that life takes many turns.

- Is it the idea of your next movie?

They did not take me seriously, nor did I want to dramatize much so that they did not suspect that this was real and it was happening to me.

When I returned home, I looked at the living room from the door. And I thought: the problem is this empty house. Patiently, I sat down on the sofa and began to disassemble the camera and put it in its box. I saw myself concentrating, keeping the camera in its box, trying not to think of anything. And I felt sorry for myself.

A message from Adèle came to my phone.

- We are going to see you.

- I'm not at home.

- I ran into H  l  ne, she says you're sick.

- I'm better now.

- Anyway I want to see you.

- You are crazy.

- Okay. I'm going alone.

In twenty minutes she was at the door. I went to open.

- What happens?

She came in, took off her scarf, gloves, beanie ... She was staring at me.

- You're good?

- Yes, I told you, I'm better.

When she took off all the layers, she hugged me.

- Adele, sit down, I said.

She sat. She stretched out her legs. She never knew what to do with her legs.

- What is your plan?

- We are going to sell my house and buy a bigger house, to have a child, to have a small garden full of cactus ...

I listened to her patiently.

- And where do I fit in there?

She didn't answer. She was angry.

- I don't like children, I added.

- I know.

I sat next to her. I didn't even have the strength to laugh. I rested my chin on my hands.

- Since when do you want to have a child?

- People change.

- Okay, I said. Let's try.

She did not expect it, but I was tired of fighting. I saw that she was not reacting.

- I thought you were going to jump for joy.

Finally, her eyes filled with tears.

It was that easy, I just had to say "let's try it" and felt relief. I no longer had to decide anything or resist, just let go. I figured the hard part would come now, but I left the worries for later. I didn't want to suffer anymore. I rested my head on her shoulder. She hugged me.

- I want you to stay tonight, I asked her.

- Do you want that I take care of you?

- Yeah.

She stroked my hair.

- I'll make dinner and we'll see a movie.

- It's okay. But I don't want American series, please.

- I don't see American series anymore.

I saw her pick up the phone.

- Are you going to send a message to Noémie?

- Yeah.

- You are going to have a lot of work between her house and mine.

- Only until we move.

She texted and dropped the cell phone. She got up and opened the TV closet. I watched her from the sofa. She was kneeling with the open closet taking out things. Looking for photos, probably. I didn't say anything, I just looked at her. I was looking at her through time: Adèle at eighteen, at nineteen, at twenty ... She brought our photo books to the couch.

- I've wanted to do this for a long time.

- You're getting old, I laughed.

Noémie texted back. Adèle read it.

- Shit.

- What?

- Doesn't matter.

I took away her cell phone and read the message. I smiled.

- It is normal that she is angry, you have stood her up.

I started to laugh. She looked at me without believing it.

- Can I?, I asked her.

She did not answer, I started to write a message to Noémie: "Come to sleep with us, love. Céline & Adèle"

- Shall I send it?

- Seriously?

- Yes, why not, since we are, we are going for all.

I wasn't being cynical at all, I was just emotionally drained. I needed to laugh at all costs and do something radical.

We sent the message to Noémie. I wanted include little hearts too, but Adèle stopped me. Noémie returned the following message:

"???"

Adèle called her. She did not answer. I was laughing on the couch.

- Do you want to stop laughing?

I called Noémie on my mobile. I looked out the window in a T-shirt so that Adèle would leave me alone. What am I doing? I thought. She picked up.

- Hello.

- Hello, I said. Not coming? We are going to make homemade pizza, salad, and put on a movie.

- Sounds good, she said. How are you?

- No good. I think she's gone crazy.

She laughed. I liked that she was laughing, it seemed to me that I was finally starting to have something under control.

- Okay, I'm going there, to help you with her.

She came on her bike. When she arrived, we were already making the dough for the pizza. Shyly she took off her coat and cast a disapproving glance at Adèle. At that moment I remembered her naked, asking me if she could get into the bathtub. She had asked me looking into my eyes. Without looking at the ground. I thought: I know what is most interesting about her, she looks at you intently and speaks little, it seems that she has some secret. She washed her hands in the sink. I imagined our relationship in a few months (if Adèle's plan went well): she would kiss me on the lips as a greeting when I got home. It didn't seem like a bad idea.

I kneaded the flour and flattened it. She made the salad and Adèle cut the vegetables. We looked at each other askance. I told a joke.

- I already knew it, said Adèle.

But Noémie was laughing.

- Did you know it?

- Yes, but you are very funny, she said.

- Shall I open a bottle of wine?

- Of course.

We had dinner and then we threw ourselves on the sofa to watch the movie. They let me choose it without protest. I put on Sunset Boulevard.

At first it was weird, I couldn't focus on the movie and I guess neither could they. I looked askance at Adèle's feet resting on the living room table to my right, and Noémie's legs crossed on my left.

I looked at Noémie's hands. Her hands were in her lap as if they were going to be painted. Adèle had her arms crossed. I closed my eyes ... I hope we can relax at some point. After a while of watching TV without moving, Adèle was sleeping. I looked at Noémie. She looked at me. I put a finger to my lips as a sign of silence and she glanced across the sofa: Adèle had fallen asleep. What impudence! She said with her eyes. We continue to watch the film, now with a smile on our lips. When on-screen Joe Gillis had just learned that one of Norma

Desmond's ex-husbands, in order to be by her side and take care of her forever, had agreed to be her butler, Noémie shifted her stance, she lay down and rested her head on my lap.

Chapter 10

When the movie ends, it's supposed to be time to go to bed. We look at Adèle, who has been in the seventh heaven for a long time.

- I'm going to smoke on the terrace, I say to Noémie.

I'm nervous. She decides to come too. We wrap ourselves in our coats and scarves and go upstairs. We smoke in silence, looking at the dark night dotted with lights.

- You have a nice house, she says.

- Thank you. I have already moved three times in this neighborhood.

- Why?

- Well, there was always something better and cheaper.

Most of the time with Noémie you spend it in silence. At first, when you don't know her, you get nervous, but then you relax and it's like being at home, you don't have to talk all the time, not even about interesting things, you feel a kind of calm happiness in her company. But I'm sure if we both spent enough time here without saying anything, she would end up telling me what she's thinking, what she's feeling. Are you as nervous as I am, as confused as I am? What do you imagine will happen now? Have you already decided to stay with Adèle even if it forces you to live with me? It is an enigma. I do know what I'm going to do, but I haven't decided anything, I feel like I'm actually leaving everything in the hands of others, I just want to let go. Do you feel that too? I am not asking you anything, because this is not the time. In a little while we will go to bed and that idea occupies my whole mind first.

- Do you know which movie of yours I haven't seen yet? She is asking. Water Lilies.

- Why? Is it for any special reason?

- I don't want to see Adèle so young. It is as if I have missed something forever.

I try to interpret her answer and spin it around as we head back to my apartment.

- What do we do? We can't leave her on the couch.

I lean in and stroke her face. "Adèle, Adèle". She wakes up and sees us both there. She must think she is still dreaming.

- We are going to sleep.

I think of the guest room. Are they supposed to go there and I stay in my bed? Am I supposed to invite them to my bed? I am going crazy.

So, I decide on the go:

- We are going to sleep a little tight because I do not have a triple bed, these are things that one cannot foresee. If anyone wants to go to the guest room ...

I'm nervous, I'm so nervous that my hands sweat.

I go to the room and think: I won't sleep all night. Adèle enters our room and Noémie remains at the door, hesitating. Adèle takes her by the hand so that she can also enter. Oh my God. We take off our clothes without looking at each other, we are like a soccer team, like the Water Lilies. All this I say to myself as we undress in my room. I'm not going to put on my pajamas. Sleeping in pajamas is so ridiculous. I laugh to myself. I stay in a shirt and panties.

- Girls, sorry, I haven't changed the sheets and I'm not going to do it now.

- Okay, says Adèle.

I don't know which side I'm going to sleep on, but it's so absurd and so artificial to ask questions. If I put myself in the center, I am separating them, if I put myself on one side, am I excluding myself? Everything is new, everything has to be interpreted. It is exhausting. I see that Adèle lies down in the middle and goes to sleep again. She has chosen to sleep naked. It makes me laugh, but I hide it. I look at Noémie, who must also be freaking out with her hard face. She gives me a shy smile. I lie on Adèle's left and expect she gets on the right side of the bed, but she comes to this side and says to me:

- Do you make room for me?

We pushed Adèle a little. I keep laughing to myself, I can't stop. Now I imagine that Adèle is thinking: why do you sleep on that side? Have I done something wrong? Do you want to make me jealous? I hope she has a good night. Noémie sleeps on her back. She puts an arm under the nape of her neck and looks at the ceiling. She has also taken off her clothes, I suppose she has left her panties on, but I could not swear it, because at some point I looked away out of modesty. I tell her a line from Water Lilies: "When you die, the last thing you see will be printed in your eyes like a photo."

- My God, she murmurs, where did you get that from?

- It's from Water Lilies.

We are whispering, Adèle turns around and makes room for us. She says nothing. I can assume that she is fully awake and now she is upset.

- It is awful. Now I won't be able to sleep on my back anymore, says Noémie.

- I'm sorry.

She turns to me. Considering that there are three of us, that the mattress is about 1.50 meters wide and Adèle sleeps at ease, she must be 15 centimeters from my face. How strange this is, I think. I am not going to speak any more so as not to wake up Adèle. Noémie, as always says nothing, just looks at me. I close my eyes because it is unbearable to be like this, looking

at each other without saying anything, without moving. After a while I open them again and her eyes are still open, looking at me.

- My God, Noémie, close your eyes, I beg you.

- Why? She smiles.

- Because I'm going to have an attack.

That amused her. Finally, she makes up her mind: she caresses my face and kisses me on the lips.

- Goodnight.

And she turns around. I don't know when we fell asleep. When I open my eyes again, I am completely immobilized between the two of them because Adèle hugs me and Noémie has her back to me. I have a free arm and I place it on her. I want to know what I feel if I hug her, what Adèle feels when she sleeps with her. Is it cozy? It's soft? Exciting? Mysterious? Absurd? I press against her back and she caresses my arm. So she's already awake. With that caress she is giving me good morning without words. Since when is she awake? I imagine that she has realized that this hug is completely intentional, I am not a good actress. I'm trying to get out of there to go to the shower. I should write a comedy about this, I think. If someone was still sleeping, my efforts to get out of bed will have woken them up already. I turn around. I want to get out the other side of the bed so I don't climb on Noémie. We still don't have that much confidence. Then I meet Adèle's eyes, those blue and green eyes. Glaring at me.

- Good morning, I say.

And I climb on her, apologizing.

- Don't apologize, she says.

Finally, I hit the floor and head to the shower. In the shower all the images return to my head, all the emotions. That time in Stockholm and that time on the beach, and now in my bed. Their bodies, their smell, their heat. Everything. My body trembles as I let the hot water run over my skin. Suddenly, it occurs to me that at this very moment, while I'm in the shower, they make love and I grab the wall. And again I think, why? But I try to push all the questions out of my mind. The water continues to flow, covering all sounds, protecting me.

So they go into the bathroom too and they go into the shower without asking, they laugh. This shower is not that big, but it's two against one. They quickly calculate the space and make a delicious sandwich with me in the middle. They pass the soap bar and a dance of the hands on the skin begins. A dance where we do not know who touches whom and the skin is expecting, learning a new language of caresses, orienting itself in an unknown place, without maps.

Chapter 11

I went to record an interview and when I return home, I go up to the terrace to think, I don't even stop by the apartment. I leaned against the railing and kept thinking about Noémie last night. I don't know how long I'm up there being cold, thinking, smoking. I have to quit smoking.

The legend of Icarus and the sun: Icarus escapes from Crete with handmade wings made by his father. He flies and flies and wants to reach the sun, because he doesn't know his limitations. But the sun is too much: too high, too hot. So the sun melts the wax from which his wings are made and falls into the sea. I can imagine that the sea is a relief for Icarus after being so hot. The sea washes his body, removes the melted wax from the wings, the burned feathers, refreshes him, cradles him in the waves. Protects him. Legend tells that Icarus died at sea, but perhaps he stayed to live there so comfortable forever. I prefer to think that. And I think Noémie is the sea. And that this is the perfect combination, the only way to be close to the sun without burning.

Adèle has gone to meet Gisele to resume rehearsals of her play, they want to rehearse from January. Noémie I don't know where she is. I don't call her, she doesn't call me. We are still like two strangers, only once in a while we caress each other.

What will I do with the apartment? Will I have to move again? It would be the fourth time. I imagine that bigger apartment where the three of us will live with little Adèle. Is it going to come true? If so, we are going to give what to talk about in our group of friends.

Hélène calls me.

- Tell me what happened. I'm on edge.
- They stayed here last night.
- And what happened??
- We went to bed.
- I don't believe it.
- But in the morning the three of us showered together.
- Like three little friends?
- I assure you not.
- Okay, I can imagine that.

My sister's libido goes up every time she talks to me, that's why she calls me.

Then, while I'm having dinner, I take my cell phone without thinking twice and look for her name in the contacts. And I send her a message.

- How are you?

And she responds.

- Well...

And after a while:

- Can we see each other?

- When? Now?

- If you have time.

- I go to your house by car after dinner.

- Okay.

She gives me the address. I'm going to her new flat. I'm crazy.

Her apartment is in the XV district. I feel like an explorer entering a new territory, not because of the XV district, but because of her. I don't think I'm meeting Adèle there, but I'm not sure. I'm having trouble finding parking. In total, half an hour passes from when I finished dinner until I arrived, but I am looking for an empty parking lot for ten minutes. This time lapse helps me think about what I am doing and why I am doing it. I want her, yes. And I want this meeting. I take it on.

I go up to her apartment and realize how nervous I am. I never thought of us without Adèle, not even for coffee.

She opens the door and smiles:

- Thanks for coming.

- You're welcome. Thanks for inviting me.

- Have you already had dinner?

- Yeah.

She shows me the apartment.

- I have to furnish it, but I already have the basics.

The basics are the kitchen, the sofa, the TV, the bed, rugs and cushions on the floor.

- I feel a little strange living alone, I have not lived alone in all my life.

- Seriously?

- Yes. It's a test.

I'm speechless. I don't know what to say with her.

- And you plan to live here a long time?

- I don't know what I'm going to do.

- You are not the only one.

- The apartment doesn't have a terrace, sorry. You can not smoke.

- Bah, don't worry. I'm thinking of quitting anyway.

I would like to know why she made me come, what she is going to tell me. And then she says it to me, as if she knows what I'm thinking:

- Do you stay here with me tonight?

- Because you don't want to sleep alone?

- Is not that.

- And Adèle?

- Do you think she will be angry?

- Honestly, I don't care. But I don't know why you want to sleep with me, is it to make her jealous?

- Don't be mad, please.

- I don't get mad.

But yes. I'm on the defensive. I feel bad. I feel like she wants to use me. And deep down I am afraid that Adèle will appear and find us here, sleeping together behind her back. What can she think? Not that we're cheating on her, but it's weird. I don't know what to do now. What is right and what is wrong.

- A little while ago I had a panic attack.

- Why?

- I always have.

- Always?

Noémie is silent, looking at me. Maybe she is thinking that it was not a very good idea to invite me. That is what I am thinking. But then, she says to me:

- Can we only be together when she is?

I don't know what to say.

- She knows us well and we hardly know each other.

I think they are two good reasons to stay and I think she is being honest, more than me.

- You're right, I tell her.

She smiles and goes to the fridge.

- Beer? I have no wine.

I like the way she smiles and tilts her head, like she's gotten away with it, like we're playing and she wins.

We sit on Arab cushions with our beers.

- Tell me about yourself, then, I say.

- Voucher. I'm not very interesting, I warn you. I was born in a house on this same street, but I spent my childhood in Rezé. I was never very good at school. I was just thinking of being a star. I was one of those shy girls who dream of participating in Star Academy.

- And did you participate?

- No. But I spent my childhood singing in front of my parents. Poor little ones. Anyway, I must have done it so badly, that my father recommended the theater or the cinema. So I finished my studies at the institute and enrolled at the theater school in Paris. I paid for it by working in fashion.

- Well, it sounds interesting.

She shrugs.

- What about boys?

She laughs.

- Boys? I was not good at boys either, just like the studies. So I didn't have a lot of boyfriends. I had one in high school and another when I came to Paris. I married him.

- And you never liked girls?

- No. Well, I thought so. I'm not sure.

- I always liked girls. I have never had a boyfriend.

- Well, now I also don't know if I liked the guys I went out with or they simply put a lot of effort into it.

That answer strikes me.

- Because you were shy?

- I don't know.

I really feel like she's a closed chest. I don't know if she doesn't know or doesn't want to tell me anything else.

- Now it's your turn, she tells me.

- Well, I already told you a little about myself. I felt alone and different, and I had no one to talk to ... I went to the movies and lived other more interesting lives than mine ...

- And when did you know that you wanted to dedicate yourself to this?

- Well, I don't know. I have an answer prepared for the interviews. I always say that at twelve or thirteen I decided, but I'm not sure. Because then I studied literature at the university. I did not see myself as a director, nor did it occur to me, although I played with my brother from a young age to do theater. But I didn't see myself as an actress either. So I didn't know what to do with my life.

We were silent for a while. I think she has beautiful eyes and I think it's easier for me to make love to her than to talk to her. This idea flashes across my head and throughout my body. It is as if I started to tremble.

- My God, I say.

- What.

I get up. The beer has gone to my head. I go to the living room window. I'm worried. I feel that what I want and fear will happen in a moment. We will touch each other. I don't know if I'm ready for this.

Finally, she comes over and touches my back, and I shudder. Her hand goes up to the nape of the neck, caresses me and tugs at my hair a little.

- Sorry, she says while stroking me.

She whispers.

- I'm not good at talking.

I cannot say a word.

Chapter 12

You opened my shirt yourself and you laid me on the bed.

I thought: Adèle never takes my clothes off, she never takes the initiative.

You took off your clothes, stretched out next to me and kissed me on the mouth.

So I thought that in bed you took the initiative and not in conversations. I couldn't help but think all the time.

I felt your desire to grow as you caressed me, what an irony, Adèle's desire grew when I caressed her.

I listened to your breathing, which was a delicious siren song that promised me the greatest pleasures, Eurydice's cave, which invited me to go down to hell with it, and I wanted to go down to the bottom. Your desire was not in doubt or afraid and made me stop thinking.

We made love passionately.

You looked into my eyes when you fucked me and asked me not to close them. And the orgasm came and you saw it arise in my face. You didn't want to miss a thing. You wanted to register in your pupil every tremor, the slightest spasm, all the pleasure you caused me.

- I wanted to do this, you said.

- What.

- Caress you after making love.

I was lying on your chest, listening to your heart. If you were the sea, I was a castaway who had come to shore exhausted. And you caressed my back, just like the waves.

I have to admit: I was moved. So much passion had left me without the protection of ideas, without the desire to be ironic or funny. I felt solemn, as if I were before an altar and suddenly I was a believer.

- Noémie.

I said your name and you were waiting for my sentence to finish, but I doubted: would it be too solemn, too intense for you? But I was in such a state of extreme idiocy, that I blurted it out:

- I don't want it to be over tonight.

And instead of laughing or keeping quiet, you said:

- Neither do I.

I had changed, I seemed like someone else, someone who said phrases like those: "I don't want this night to end" and who wanted to die at that moment. When had all this started between the two of us?

- Since when? I asked you.

- Since the other night at your house. When we saw that movie and went up to the terrace. I wanted to hug you and kiss you, but I held myself back.

- Why?

- Because Adèle was also downstairs, sleeping. It was like cheating on her.

- And now?

- Now I couldn't take it anymore.

I fell asleep in your arms and the next day, while we were having breakfast, I asked you if she was going to notice that we had fucked without her.

- Do you think she'll notice?

- It would be better to tell her, right?

- But it shows a lot?

You laughed.

- It is evident in you.

- How do you notice it?

- It seems that I have taken a weight off you.

I propped my temple on my fist and looked at you while you drank your coffee. I was trying to figure it out. "A weight", it was true, I felt lighter now.

I smiled.

- So you're funny.

- Did you think only you were funny?

- Is that all you eat for breakfast? Coffee?

- I have to go shopping.

I thought it would be nice to go shopping together and fill the fridge. But I didn't tell you anything. I was scared to think those things.

- You know what? I told you. In bed you are not shy.
- I already know it.
- I would like to go to the cinema with you, go see a movie together, just you and me.
- And what movie would we see?
- A romantic movie. I don't care which one. Right now any romantic movie would suit me.

You knew perfectly well what was happening: I was falling in love with you. You looked pretty with wet, tousled hair, freshly dried on the towel.

- What are you going to do? Are you going to tell her?
- If you don't tell her, neither will I.

As we said goodbye, I kissed you on the lips. I went down to the street and I felt like new. I went to my car and thought that indeed something had changed in me: I no longer dragged me like a soul in pain, but I floated. I'm falling in love, I told me, but I didn't want to hear me. As I started the car's engine, I looked out the window at your floor. What am I doing looking at your apartment? Do I hope that you look out the window to say goodbye? And then, on the way home, I recognized it: I was falling in love with you and it was incredible that this happened to me now and so quickly. I am 41 years old, I thought I would never fall in love again like a girl. I hadn't fallen in love in twelve years. Twelve fucking years I suffered. How could my heart have been so deceived? I thought I knew love and that was to give her my life. But now: I could feel light again, float, and love was beautiful. No one was going to take this feeling away from me.

I came home and was suddenly faced with reality: I had kept my house empty and my heart empty so that Adèle could return. That was what I had done. And I said to me: it is she who makes me suffer, but I was the cause of my suffering. I started crying.

I spent the morning lying in bed like a little girl who has fallen in love and the world falls on her. I got a message from Adèle, but I didn't read it. I just thought it was lucky she didn't have a key. If not, she would come in and find me here, dying, and ask me for explanations. I envisioned the following surreal dialogue:

THE SUN: So you have fallen in love without my permission.

ICARUS: You burned my wings and fell into its waves. What could I do? No one can put up resistance to the sea.

THE SUN: Now what do you plan to do?

ICARUS: I'm not going to pick up the phone, I'll hide here until I decide.

THE SUN: As soon as I enter through the window, you are going to forget all that nonsense from the sea.

ICARUS: Please don't take this feeling away from me. It is so beautiful!

What were we going to do now? That was the question. I texted Adèle and told her I was not going to the opera, that I had a cold. I spent the afternoon playing my keyboard, reading, I put on a movie. I didn't want to think.

I met some friends on Sunday, who told me that I looked like someone else.

- You seem calm.

So it was true what Noémie said, she had taken a weight off me.

- Where are you going to celebrate New Year ?, they asked me.

- The truth is that I don't know, I haven't even thought about Christmas.

- What if we have a macro party?

I laughed.

- How much energy.

- We could all get together in Val-d'Oise.

- Wow, in your chalet? Will we all fit?

- Not all, but we could be twenty and sleep tight.

- It sounds great.

But I said to me: if you invite Adèle, I won't go. I don't want to see her, I have to escape her. I need to be happy a little while longer.

Sunday passed. And then Monday. But I kept thinking about you. We don't call each other, nor do we send messages. I started to feel jealousy, you know? Jealousy of sharing you with her. I was going crazy. But I didn't want to call you, I preferred to imagine that you missed me. Were you jealous too? What was going through your head? Were we going to stay like this, doing nothing? You said you didn't want it to end that night. Why don't you call me? Why don't I call you?

Finally, on Tuesday you called me.

- Hello, you said.

(Silence and overturn the heart)

- Hello.

(More silence)

- I think of you.

(Silence, tender heart and desire to cry)

- I think of you too.

I pictured you on the couch all day thinking of me, just like me.

- Do you no longer want the three of us to stay together? You asked me.

- I don't know what I want anymore.

- Please don't go.

- Why?

(Silence)

- Because I like you.

- Noémie, I'm falling in love with you. Making love with you ... Making love with you has opened my eyes, now I think it should be like this: I want to feel wanted.

Yes, that was exactly what I had felt and what I had to tell you. "I want to feel wanted without having to ask for it, without pleading and without crying." In your style, you were silent a few seconds before saying to me:

- Do you want to come home?

- And Adèle?

- She isn't here tonight.

Chapter 13

Noémie and I were in bed playing footsie when Adèle arrived. I went to get up, but she grabbed my arm and shook her head.

- She better finds out now.

I stared at her wondering if she had it prepared. "Let her know now" ... This way! But I couldn't say anything.

Adèle had a key, but she had not told me. On the other hand, why won't she have a key?

We listen to her steps to the room. She opened the door and peeked into.

It was December 26. She was supposed to be visiting her family's home. She had asked Noémie to go with her, but she refused.

- Why don't you go? I asked her. I was really intrigued.

- Because I don't want her to get used to it badly.

Because she didn't want her to get used to having everything she asked for, even if she had agreed to go see her family. It seemed like a strange argument to me.

- And she asked me just because I asked her.

I didn't dare tell her what I thought, but their relationship was building on a kind of tactical warfare that I didn't like. She asked me:

- What you think?

I shrugged my shoulders.

- No. Tell me what you think.

- I wonder if I ask you for things that you don't give me because you have some kind of counterattack plan.

- Don't obsess, she told me.

We talked while stroking me with one of her finger, so I was about to fall asleep or laugh all the time.

- Do you want to stop doing that?

- The what, she protested.

We look at each other about to laugh or fight or make love.

- Do you want me to do it to you?

- What!

- You're tickling me.

- How beautiful, she said.

- What is beautiful.

- This mole you have here.

And she kissed me. She used to do those things that melted me.

- I'm going to tell you something.

- Let's see what.

- I need to tell you, but don't interrupt me, okay?

It was my way of creating the right atmosphere for the confession I needed to make.

- I have never felt so desired as now.

She was now realizing the dimension of my relationship with Adèle.

- I felt loved and I was grateful, these two feelings have defined my relationship with Adèle. And it was all that existed. But you came and now I feel that somehow it was not right, it was not healthy.

She kept listening to me, watching me closely with her big, serious eyes.

- So I don't know how to behave with Adèle. I don't know if I'm going to be able to have a threesome with her again. I feel like ripped off.

She was still silent. Even after I pause for a long time.

- I know that she doesn't owe me anything, that it was the type of relationship that she and I built, and that I consented to all this happening. I suppose that before, feeling desired was not a priority, it was something that I left in the background myself, but now that I have met you I have the urgency to live this passion and the rest does not matter to me. I've tried to imagine a threesome and I can't. I am always jealous. So I don't want to go through with this.

She was upset, now her gaze was lost.

She didn't say anything for a while. I was used to it, I accepted those silences not as opposition, nor as indifference, but as something of her, which I liked more and more.

Then at last she said:

- Before I couldn't enjoy this relationship, I felt insecure, something was missing. I lacked caresses and attentions, perhaps. I lacked your sweetness, your patience. I can talk with you, because you give me space to speak and you don't judge me. With you I have a serene love, but I'm crazy about her, that's the truth. I have real passion for Adèle.

She looked at me with an intensity that made me dizzy.

- Stay.

And we hear the key on the door.

I had covered my head, but Noémie uncovered it. Adèle took a few steps into the room and put her hands in her pockets. I closed my eyes.

- Didn't you go see your parents? Noémie asked.

She did not answer.

That silence impressed me.

Adèle turned and left.

When I heard the door. I got out of bed and looked for my clothes.

- Where are you going?

I said nothing. I kept looking for my clothes like crazy. She got up and chased me.

- But what are you doing?

She hugged me. She didn't hug me in fact, she pinned me down. Considering her size and mine this is the right word.

- Come.

I was literally tearing me apart, but she took me back to bed and we sat down.

- Adèle had to know and we were putting it off.

- Did you want revenge?

- No. I just wanted this to be over.

- And did you know that she wasn't with her parents?

- No.

We are speechless.

- Stay, she asked me.

- And Adèle? Aren't you going to talk to her?

- Not me, and you?

I did not expect that answer.

- You are also her partner.

It was true.

- You behave like you have entered this house through the window, but you entered through the door.

I looked at her. She continued speaking:

- You are also my partner and she was out, we do nothing wrong meeting us without her.

I sighed. It wasn't a bad theory, at least it comforted me.

- Don't go, she begged me.

- And now what?

- Now we will continue as always.

Everything she said left me speechless.

- I don't know why I feel like I've done something wrong.

I was going to keep talking, but she cut me off:

- I love you.

We decided to watch a movie and sent a message to Adèle to come see the movie with us.

- "The Double Life of Veronique", by Kieslowski.

She answered:

- Do I take something for dinner?

- We have everything, Noémie wrote.

And Adèle returned home. She took off her coat and smiled. She had been crying. I am able to recognize all her moods, everything that goes through her head, all her expressions. That woman who brought beer and smiled to erase the sadness from her face was the woman of my life, for better and for worse.

- I brought beer, she said.

- We have already noticed, Noémie said, looking at her with pride.

We made room for her in the middle of the two of us and the movie started.

December 31, 2019

We are in Val-d'Oise, we are going to celebrate the New Year here. We will be about twenty people. Adèle, Noémie and I have come together. The guests are arriving and we are mixing with them, we have conversations with people we love and have not seen for a long time. Today is a really special day. We are separated into different groups, each at one end of the room, but we are together. At one point, our eyes meet and we throw a kiss.

End Notes

Dear Readers,

this is the end of this story. I have to emphasize that it is completely fictitious, although surely you already know it, but they are requirements of the script.

It's been a pleasure writing it.

I love Céline, Adèle and Noémie, and I hope they stay together in the future 😊

Thanks for reading.

aldeana

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