Before Midnight

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

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

JESSE
So you got everything?

HANK
Mmm-hmmh.

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

HANK
Probably read some.

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

HANK
Yeah.

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

HANK
All right...

JESSE
You got the drawings for your science deal?

HANK
Yeah, think so.

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

HANK
Thanks.

They've arrived at the concession stand. Hank grabs a couple of snacks.
JESSE
Is your computer charged?

HANK
Yeah.

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

HANK
I dunno.

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

HANK
(interrupting)
What?

Jesse is paying.

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

HANK
Yeah.

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

He gets the change and they head to the gate.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'll probably make it over there in October, you know? Try to see you in that first recital and then hopefully catch a soccer game while I'm there.
(to cashier)
Efharisto.
HANK
I might not even play soccer this year.

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

HANK
I'm not that good.

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

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

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

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

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

They've arrived at the security line.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Here we are. I love this airport, don't you?

HANK
It's awesome.

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

HANK
Yeah, and all my friends.
JESSE
Yeah, right. What about your boarding pass, passport...? Okay. You feel confident about making the connection?

HANK
Yeah, I've done this before.

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

HANK
It's not a problem.

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

They hug.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna do my best to make that recital, okay?

HANK
You know, I wouldn't bother.

JESSE
What makes you say that?

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

JESSE
How come?

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

JESSE
But... I want to see you play.

HANK
Look, it's because Mom hates you so much. She'd be really stressed if you were there, and then it'd be tense for me.
Jesse motions to the person behind him to go ahead.

HANK (CONT'D)
We wouldn't have any time to hang out, anyway.

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

Hank nods.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Why do you think she still hates me so much?

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

Hank playfully punches Jesse.

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

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

HANK
I don't know.

JESSE
But you know that I love you, right?

HANK
Yeah.

JESSE
Right, okay.

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

JESSE
Really?

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

HANK
And it was.

A final moment.

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

HANK
I love you too, Dad.

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

HANK
Bye.

JESSE
Bye. See ya.
(sighs)

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

EXT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

As they hit the highway, Celine lowers her volume as she
wraps up her conversation.
CELINE
(into phone)
Oui, oui, Lucia. Au'voir.
(hangs up, speaks french)

JESSE
What's going on?

CELINE
They voted against it.

JESSE
What, the wind turbines?

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

JESSE
Oh. So what happened?

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

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

CELINE
It was! It practically was--

JESSE
Well, can--

CELINE
That's what's so infuriating.

JESSE
Can they do that?

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

JESSE
I'm sorry.

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

(MORE)
CELINE (CONT'D)

(beat)
I'm gonna take that job with Remy.

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

CELINE
Why not?

JESSE
For the government?

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay.

CELINE
A real bitch, okay? That's it.

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay. Are you sure?

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

JESSE
All right, all right--

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

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

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

JESSE
Well, I know it has. I know.
CELINE
...And I should do it. And I'm doing it!

JESSE
All right then, just - then do it.

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

JESSE
(laughs)
There's always a catch.

CELINE
Yeah, the world is fucked.

JESSE
Yeah, baby.

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

JESSE
Or the perfect son who lives a million
miles away.

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

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Hey, did uh, did Ella finish that apple?

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

JESSE
Yeah.

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

CELINE
Okay. Well. It's all brown.

JESSE
Oh, there's a spot here.

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

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

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

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

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

Celine puts the phone away.
CELINE
God. I love your mom. You're always so hard on her.

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

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

JESSE
Two kitties?

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

JESSE
Oh, no.

CELINE
But he would take five of them--

JESSE
Oh, no.

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

JESSE
(laughs)
That's terrible.
CELINE
He had forgotten the lie he and my mom had told me as a kid.

JESSE
How did he decide which ones he wanted to kill?

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

JESSE
Oh.

CELINE
Poor Daddy.

They realize they're driving by some ancient ruins.

CELINE (CONT'D)
Oh, we said we were going to stop. They wanted to see the ruins.

JESSE
Yeah, but should we?

CELINE
Well, Ella really wanted to.

JESSE
Yeah, but should we wake them up?

CELINE
I don't know.

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

CELINE
You know we won't.

JESSE
Yeah, probably not.

CELINE
Okay.

JESSE
We'll be like, so long, ancient ruins! What's so great about you anyway?
CELINE
Psh! Seen one, seen them all! Oh my god, we are shitty parents. We should have stopped.

JESSE
Aw, it's okay.

CELINE
It's culture. Come on, go back.

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

CELINE
Yeah, yeah.

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

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

JESSE
(laughing)
Okay, okay. Well, we are shitty parents.

CELINE
I know.

JESSE
Saying goodbye to Hank sucked.

CELINE
Why, was he upset?

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

CELINE
Well, that's great!

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

JESSE
What?

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

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

CELINE
Oh, please!

JESSE
What?

CELINE
That's all you think about!

JESSE
What?

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

JESSE
I don't ogle girls.

CELINE
Yeah you do.

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

CELINE
Oh, wow.

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE
I like the Spanish guy. Or is it Greek?
JESSE
(Spanish accent)
I don't know where I'm from, but I'm very hairy.

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

JESSE
What?

CELINE
That little Melina girl.

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

CELINE
Oh, are you kidding?

JESSE
What?

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

JESSE
Because he and I had a good time together?

CELINE
Jesse...

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

CELINE
Of course.

JESSE
You think they kissed?

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

JESSE
What'd he say?
CELINE
I'm not supposed to tell you anything, so I'm not gonna talk but--

JESSE
Come on.

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

JESSE
What, he asked you that?

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

JESSE
Wow. So he and Melina were a real thing.

CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
What's gonna happen now?

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

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

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

JESSE
No, I just - I mean -

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

JESSE
I'm just, it's -
CELINE
I mean, first love, do you even remember who it was?

JESSE
Uh, yeah, I do. It was you.

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

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

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

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

CELINE
I don't think so.

JESSE
What, I wasn't your first love?

CELINE
(beat)
No, of course not.

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

CELINE
No!
(laughs)
Jesse, stop this. It's dumb.

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

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

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

A beat of silence, then they both laugh.
CELINE
You are so, so working on our little night, aren't you?

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

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

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

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

Her phone rings. She picks it up.

CELINE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hi, sweetie. Yeah. Oh, okay, okay, okay, okay. Well, well, it's fine. It's fine! Call me from London. Have a good flight. Bye.

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

JESSE
But - but -

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

(a beat)
What?

JESSE
I don't - I dunno. I dunno.

(sighs)
I just don't think I can keep doing this.
CELINE
Why?

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

CELINE
I know. It makes me ill every time.

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

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

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

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

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

CELINE
No. What do you mean?

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

CELINE
Yeah, you're right! Maybe it's time. I mean... I really think it's time. (MORE)
CELINE (CONT'D)
Just tell his mum all this and ask if he can come and live with us. He'd love it, we can put him in that bilingual -

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

CELINE
Do you want to call that lawyer again?

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

CELINE
Should I call his mother?

JESSE
Uh, no. Please. Never again.

CELINE
No, I know.

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

CELINE
Who cares?

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

CELINE
That's not your fault.

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

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

JESSE
No, it's an example, okay? It's a metaphor for everything. He's turning fourteen and he needs his father.
CELINE
Jesse, I'm not moving to Chicago.

JESSE
Well, did I ask you to?

Celine rolls her eyes.

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

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

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

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

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

CELINE
Oh, my god.

JESSE
What?

CELINE
This is where it ends.

JESSE
What're you talking about?

CELINE
This is how people start breaking up.

JESSE
Oh, my god. What'd you just... you just jumped off a cliff.
CELINE
No, no. I'm marking this. This is the day you light the ticking bomb that will destroy our lives.

Jesse laughs.

CELINE (CONT'D)
Yeah. Watch.

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

CELINE
Oh, okay, whatever! Whatever, okay.

JESSE
- That's why it ticks.

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

JESSE
Right.

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

JESSE
You're just doing this to shut me up.

CELINE
Not at all. Not at all!

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

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

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

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

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

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

ELLA
How much longer to the ruins?

CELINE
Oh, they were closed.

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

CELINE
Exactly.

JESSE
Okay?

CELINE
We'll leave early, right? Yeah.

JESSE
Yeah. Yeah.

ELLA
What happened to my apple?

CELINE
Your apple. La pomme, elle était fini, cette pomme. Right?
EXT. FISHING VILLAGE STORE - AFTERNOON

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

CELINE
Give me the list.

JESSE
I don't have it.

CELINE
It's in your wallet.

JESSE
Oh.

CELINE
In your wallet.

JESSE
Okay.

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

CELINE
Voilà!

She turns to the girls.

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

NINA
Oui!

JESSE
Who made you General?

CELINE
The General, okay?

JESSE
Oh.

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

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

JESSE
Oui. D'accord.

EXT. ARRIVAL HOME - AFTERNOON

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

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

At a wonderful seating area, Patrick listens to a story Natalia is telling him.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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

CELINE
The red one.

ELLA
Cela?

CELINE
Très bien... Okay. Pepper.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

Yeah.

JESSE

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

PATRICK

Okay.

STEFANOS

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

JESSE

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

STEFANOS

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

Jesse shrugs his shoulders.

STEFANOS (CONT'D)

You did that, uh?

PATRICK

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

JESSE

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

STEFANOS

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

JESSE

"Temporary Cast Members of a Long Running But Little Seen Production of a Play Called Fleeting."
STEFANOS
Well, exactly my point.

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

PATRICK
It's a better book. It's so much more ambitious.
(in Greek)
The first two were so so.

STEFANOS
(speaks Greek)
Really? Do you think?

JESSE
What's that?

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

Jesse laughs.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

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

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

ARIADNI
Yeah, Patrick is very proud of them.

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

NATALIA
Why were you nervous?

ARIADNI
Yeah, why was that?
CELINE
I don't know. This place is so full of thousands of years of myth and tragedy and I thought something tragic was going to happen.

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

CELINE
Yes. Exactly.

All three women laugh.

EXT. PATIO - AFTERNOON

Back with the guys...

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

STEFANOS
So just like Deja Vu.

JESSE
Yeah, except all the time.

STEFANOS
Ah.

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

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

The men chuckle.

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

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

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

JESSE
Oh, Achilles! Anna! Hey, you guys.

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

ACHILLES
Hello, Pappou.

STEFANOS
So you were saying... there's three characters, right?
JESSE
No, it's not just three characters, it's a whole group of people. It's like, I'm working on a chapter right now about a young Greek man named Achilles.

ACHILLES
Me?

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

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

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

STEFANOS
And that's funny?

All laugh.

ACHILLES
Sometimes I kind of think like that.

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

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

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

JESSE
That'll work.

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

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

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

ACHILLES
Oh, with Brando!

JESSE
Yeah.

ACHILLES
Uh-huh.

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

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

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

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

STEFANOS
I think it's going to be too long.

They laugh.

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

JESSE
Will do.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

CELINE
Okay okay, yeah.

STEFANOS
You're doing fine, Celine.
ARIADNI
And especially don't listen to
Stefanos here because he's never
made this dish before, or any other
dish for that matter.

He takes her knife.

CELINE
(Laughing)
Okay.

STEFANOS
You know, I mean...

ARIADNI AND STEFANOS
(Yelling, Speaking
Greek)

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

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

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

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

ARIADNI
We're not fighting. We're
negotiating.

Anna enters the kitchen and goes over to the refrigerator.

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

CELINE
   (In French)
   Not bad.

STEFANOS
   This is a system that we have.

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

ARIADNI
   Mm-hm.

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

Ariadni walks over and takes a drag off his cigarette.

STEFANOS
   That's ready.

Celine takes a platter of appetizers and begins to leave.

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

Anna gestures oral sex.

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

Celine puts her tongue between her fingers by her lips.

ANNA
   (in French)
   Not bad.

Celine exits.

STEFANOS
   We used to have that system.

Anna laughs.
EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

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

JESSE
Not too far, you guys!

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

EXT. DINNER TABLE - LATE AFTERNOON

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

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

GROUP
(Reacting)

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

OTHERS
To Patrick...

Glasses clink.

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

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

GROUP
(Reacting)
Ohh. Oh.
(Laughing)

CELINE
I keep telling you.

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

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

PATRICK
Don't worry. It's nothing.

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

CELINE
No, I mean, really -

JESSE
It was my fault.

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

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

CELINE
(to Anna)
How long have you two been together?

ANNA
Since last summer.

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

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

JESSE
So, who did you play?

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

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

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

GROUP
(Reacting, Applauding)
Bravo!

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

ACHILLES
Actually, people are still talking about that production.

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

ACHILLES
I had an old BSA motorcycle.
JESSE
Nice.

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

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

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

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

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

Anna just smiles, not saying.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Woah! Okay!

ARIADNI
(Laughing)
That's private.

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

CELINE
How did you keep in touch?

ACHILLES
We Skyped. Pretty much everyday since then.

ANNA
Yeah, and when we're apart we have a thing of putting our laptops by the pillow and falling asleep together.
CELINE
Ah, that's the new romance!

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

STEFANOS
Okay. Can I ask you a question? Please?

ANNA
Yes.

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

ARIADNI
God, you're being so vulgar!

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

ARIADNI
So now you're an anthropologist?

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

GROUP
(Reacting)
Hm..

CELINE
Oh, I might like that.

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

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

PATRICK
It'll never happen.

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

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

STEFANOS
The Big Blue.

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

STEFANOS
Right.

JESSE
(Accent)
A machine lacks that ineffable human instinct.

GROUP
(Laughing)

JESSE
And now we can't even compete.

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

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

(Demonstrates Rat Dying)

... And die.

GROUP
(Laughing)

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

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

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

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

STEFANOS
Yeah.

JESSE
Most of it's just automated body function.

CELINE
Okay.
JESSE
So then what is it we're actually ceding?

CELINE
(Interrupting)
If this notion of self is such a small percentage of you, sweetie...

JESSE
Yes.

CELINE
How come I always hear so much about it?

GROUP
(Laughs)

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

CELINE
His too!

ANNA
And how did you two meet?

ARIADNI
You don't know?

ANNA
What?

STEFANOS
Well, you have to read Jesse's books.

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

STEFANOS
Read away!

CELINE
Oh, excuse me, Stefanos.

STEFANOS
No, no. I mean it's well written.
JESSE
Thank you. We met about 18 years ago. We kinda, sort of, fell in love a little bit, and then we lost track of each other and a decade later we ran into each other.

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

JESSE
We didn't?

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

JESSE
Yeah, yeah...

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

ANNA
That's pretty romantic.

JESSE
It was really romantic.

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

JESSE
Details, details...

CELINE
Yeah, that part was a disaster.

JESSE
It wasn't a disaster. It was inevitable.

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

JESSE
Yeah, one pitch, one homerun. Boom!
CELINE
And I've been chained to the sink ever since! I'm sorry to say that, but -

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

JESSE
Thank you.

CELINE
They're cute.

GROUP
(Laughs, Reacts)

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

Anna nods.

CELINE (CONT'D)
You've gotta let them win at all the silly little games...

JESSE
Oh, okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GROUP
(Laughs)

CELINE
Dreams!

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

Celine changes her demeanor and voice, playing really dumb.

STEFANOS
Whoa!

CELINE
(Baby voice)
So...

STEFANOS
Uh-oh.

JESSE
Yes?

GROUP
(OS, Laughing)

CELINE
So you're a writer?

JESSE
Yeah. Yeah, sure.

CELINE
So you write like... books?

GROUP
(Laughing)

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

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

JESSE
(Laughing Nervously)
Really. Yeah?
CELINE
You must be really smart.

JESSE
Well, I - you know.

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

JESSE
What kind of books do you like?

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

JESSE
Oh, sure, yeah.

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

JESSE
"...Juliet". Right?

Yeah!

JESSE
Oh, yeah.

CELINE
Wow, you know it!

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

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

JESSE
No - (Laughs)

No, a play, yeah.

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

JESSE
Well, that is important.

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

(whispering)
I bet you have a gigantic penis.

JESSE
Why am I finding myself so attracted to this woman!

CELINE
Yes, he is - calm down!

GROUP
(Reacts)

STEFANOS
Wow.

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

JESSE
That's not what I said.

CELINE
Yes.

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

CELINE
So we can baby sit every other weekend for his ex-wife! I mean hilarious.
ARIADNI
Hey, hey, hey! You guys stop it. It must have been so hard saying goodbye to Hank today, right?

CELINE
Yeah, of course.

ARIADNI
I mean, he's such an amazing kid.

ACHILLES
Tell him I already miss my chess partner.

JESSE
Right away.

ARIADNI
When Stefanos and I split up...

STEFANOS
Yeah?

ARIADNI
I'm getting full custody.

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

GROUP
(Laughs)

ARIADNI
(laughter)
I love men.

STEFANOS
And I love you.

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

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

STEFANOS
Oh, that story. Yeah.

ARIADNI
Listen! Listen.

STEFANOS
I'm listening.

ARIADNI
It's an interesting story.

STEFANOS
I'm listening.

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

Stefanos is mouthing words behind her.

ANNA
(Laughing)
I'm sorry.

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

Ariadni puts her hands over Stefanos' mouth.

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

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

ARIADNI
Of course, of course!

STEFANOS
Alive and kicking.

ARIADNI
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

STEFANOS
Yeah, all that.

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

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

ARIADNI, ANNA, WOMEN
(Chanting)
Penis, penis, penis, penis, penis, penis-

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

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

CELINE
(to Jesse)
And you're so, so good at turning things around. I mean, he is a genius!
JESSE
No, I'm just trying to say it's like being pissed at a frog for being green.

STEFANOS
Exactly.

CELINE
Yeah. Yeah, exactly!

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

ACHILLES
Definitely.

JESSE
(to Anna and Achilles)
Okay, but are your parents still together?

ANNA
No way.

JESSE
No. And what about you?

ACHILLES
They are. But they could be divorced.

JESSE
Yeah, they could.

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

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

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

ANNA
No, she was a...
(in French)
How do you say, seamstress?

CELINE
(in English)
A seamstress. Seamstress.

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

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

GROUP
(Laughing)

STEFANOS
Definitely not!

ACHILLES
(to Patrick)
So what about grandma? Was she a soul mate?

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

ANNA
Yeah that sounds ideal.
STEFANOS
Yeah, it is, actually. It is.

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

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

STEFANOS
I colonize you?

ARIADNI
Yes, but I colonize you, too, darling.

STEFANOS
Well okay then.

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

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

GROUP
(Laughs)

CELINE
Ask about the hotel.

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

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

ARIADNI
Are you trying to get out of it? Because you're going.
STEFANOS
You gotta go.

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

ARIADNI
No, no, no -

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

ARIADNI
We're going to watch yours.

STEFANOS
It's really, really good.

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

STEFANOS
It is.

CELINE
Okay. Thank you.

ARIADNI
You're going.

NATALIA
Well, when I think of Elias, what I miss the most about him is the way he used to lie down next to me at night. Sometimes his arm would stretch along my chest. I couldn't move, I even held my breath, but I felt safe... complete. I miss the way he was whistling walking down the street. Every time I do something, I think of what he would say: "Well its cold today, wear a scarf." But lately I've been forgetting little things. He's sort of fading and I'm starting to forget him and it's like losing him again. (MORE)
NATALIA (CONT'D)
Sometimes, I make myself remember every detail of his face - the exact color of his eyes, his lips, his teeth, the texture of his skin, his hair - that was all gone by the time he went. And sometimes, not always, but sometimes I can actually see him. It is as if a cloud moves away and there he is. I could almost touch him, but then the real world rushes in, and he vanishes again. For a while, I did this every morning, when the sun was not too bright outside because the sun somehow makes him vanish. He appears and he disappears like a sunrise or sunset, anything so ephemeral. Just like our life - we appear and we disappear and we are so important to some, but, we are just passing through.

JESSE
(Toasting)
To passing through.

EXT. WALK - EVENING

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

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

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

JESSE
Which one?

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

JESSE
With the hummingbird?
CELINE
Yes, that's the one.

JESSE
Yeah. Oh, you like that one?

CELINE
It's funny.

JESSE
Oh.

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

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

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

JESSE
Yeah...

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

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

CELINE
How?

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

CELINE
Why?

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

(MORE)
JESSE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to close my eyes and
wake up and be an adult. And then I
kind of feel like that all happened
and I just want everything to slow
down.

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

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

CELINE
It is.

JESSE
I know.

Celine and Jesse laugh.

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

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

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

Celine and Jesse laugh.

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

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

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

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

JESSE
No, we -

CELINE
Sounds like. (Laugh)

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

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

JESSE
Do what? What do you mean?

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

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

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

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

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

CELINE
Who wants to be Joan of Arc, okay?

JESSE
No?

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

JESSE
(Laughing)
Okay! All right, all right, all right. Whatever.

CELINE
(Laughs)
Oh, god.

JESSE
What?

CELINE
No, nothing.

JESSE
What?

CELINE
It's just so weird.
JESSE
What do you mean?

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

JESSE
Oh, I know.

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

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

CELINE
Do you hear what I hear?

JESSE
The sea?

CELINE
No.

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

CELINE
Yeah. So when was the last time?

JESSE
When we had nowhere we had to be?

CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
You remember walking around Luxembourg Gardens?

CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
Do you? I used to kick your ass at ping pong on those concrete tables.
CELINE
Hey, congratulations! You beat a woman pregnant with twins!

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

CELINE
Such a gentleman! Yeah.

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

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

JESSE
Yeah, right. Totally.

CELINE
You do that too?

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

CELINE
Really?

JESSE
Why?

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

JESSE
Oh, no...
CELINE
August 2009. Come on, it's a quick one. What was happening?

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

CELINE
I'm so impressed.

JESSE
Yeah. So do I get a gold star?

CELINE
Maybe. Hey. Can I ask you a question?

JESSE
Sure.

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

JESSE
Of course.

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

CELINE/JESSE
(Laugh)

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

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

JESSE
No, I did. I said, "of course"! That was -
CELINE
No-no-no! I wanted you to say something romantic and you blew it.

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

CELINE
Uh-huh.

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

He grabs her ass.

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

JESSE
Okay.
   (Laughing)
   Losing her hair?

CELINE
Yeah, that's me!

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

CELINE
Okay, true. True.

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

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

CELINE
Yeah?

JESSE
Would you get off with me?

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

JESSE
Yeah, see, so?

CELINE
You know, and
(Laughing)
A forty-one-year-old horny billy goat? How creepy! I'm creeped out right now. Help, politzia!

JESSE
I can't believe I'm 41.

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

JESSE
Yeah, yeah... what?

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

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

CELINE
It's true.

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

CELINE
What?
JESSE
That conference in Warsaw?

CELINE
What conference?

JESSE
Lech Walesa.

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay. All right, okay. Okay!

CELINE
God!

JESSE
So was it Vaclav Havel? Or -

CELINE
All right, you know..

EXT. WALK PART TWO - EVENING

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

JESSE
Listen to this. I was going to wait to tell you this until later but, whatever. I'm so bad with secrets.
CELINE
What? You have a tumor in your brain? You're going to die?

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

CELINE
What? When?

JESSE
Yeah, my dad texted me right before we ate.

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

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

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

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

CELINE
Yeah.

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

CELINE
Ah, I wish I'd met her.

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

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

CELINE
How long were they married?

JESSE
74 years.

CELINE
Fuck!

JESSE
(Laughs)
Yeah.

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay. We will be ninety-eight.

CELINE/JESSE
Ugh!!!

CELINE
Will you be able to put up with me for another fifty-six more years? I need to know! Okay? 'Cause I don't know if I'm gonna be able to put up with you.
JESSE
It's crazy if you think about all the change they saw. I mean, when they met neither one of them had electricity. He used to take her to school on his horse, right?

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

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

CELINE
What is that?

JESSE
He was top of the class and she was second.

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

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

CELINE
Yeah, obviously like you-know-who.

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

CELINE
Yeah, yeah, of course, yeah.

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

CELINE
No, it's not funny at all.

JESSE
Yeah, I guess not.

(MORE)
JESSE (CONT'D)
(Laughs)

CELINE
He's next, then you.

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

CELINE
Your grandfather didn't have a funeral?

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

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

JESSE
(Laughs)
What?

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

JESSE
You're gonna outlive me.

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

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

CELINE
To Texas?

JESSE
Uh, it's not going to be in Paris.
CELINE
How bad do you want me there? I mean I would come but it's really expensive with the flights...

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

CELINE
(To Barking Dog)
Oh, hello.

JESSE
Hello, buddy.

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

JESSE
(Laughs)
Yes, that's true.

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

JESSE
What question?

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

JESSE
I am looking forward to it.

CELINE
Shit, you're really working it.

JESSE
(Spanish accent returns)
Ze nectar of your sex ages like a fine wine.

CELINE
Uh-oh, my hairy Spanish lover is back.

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

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

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

CELINE
Yeah!
(Laughing)

JESSE
That's not very fun.

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

JESSE
Oh, that's nice!

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

JESSE
Well, you wanna die with me?

CELINE
Maybe, if it were, you know, our first night together, then, a long time ago. But now, no. I'd like to live!
JESSE
Well, I just wanted you to say
something romantic and you blew it!
Putain de merde!

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

They are walking by an old, tiny Chapel.

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

CELINE
Can we go in?

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

CELINE
Oh, wow!

They enter.

INT. CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

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

CELINE
I'm sure it works.

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

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

Celine notices all the icons have been subtly defaced.
CELINE
All the eyes are scratched out. Is that about the blindness?

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

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

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

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

JESSE
(Laughs)
Now THAT's gonna have a global impact.

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

Jesse just shrugs.

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

CELINE
(a beat)
The girls asked me again what our wedding was like.

JESSE
Yeah? What'd you say?

CELINE
I said it was very low key.

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

CELINE
Very Quaker.

(MORE)
CELINE (CONT'D)
I don't know why they want us to be married so badly. It's important to them.

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

CELINE
No.

JESSE
No.

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

EXT. WALK PART THREE- EVENING
They are now walking through the town on their way to the shore.

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

JESSE
Yeah?

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay.

CELINE
Okay.
JESSE
Actually...

CELINE
One thing.

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

CELINE
Uh-huh.

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

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

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

CELINE
You think?

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

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

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

CELINE
I mean right now?

JESSE
What?

CELINE
This is great. You know?

JESSE
Right. Yeah.
CELINE
I feel close to you.

JESSE
Yeah.

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

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

CELINE
See? I'm trying to truly connect -

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

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

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

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

JESSE
No.

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

JESSE
What was?

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

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

JESSE
(Laughing)
Oh, okay.

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

JESSE
And then what happened?

CELINE
What do you mean?

JESSE
Well, like, is he still alive?

CELINE
No, he died. A long time ago.

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

CELINE
"The Rovers"?

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

CELINE
Okay. Is that a real book?

JESSE
No, no, no.
CELINE
No?

JESSE
But it was really great.

CELINE
Okay.

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

CELINE
I love that you read books in your dreams.

JESSE
I know, and they're always really good.

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

JESSE
(Laughs)
Well, I'm gonna try to make your dreams come true, babe.

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

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

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

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

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT
As they are checking into the hotel, Jesse is signing various paperwork.
HOTEL CLERK #1
I need your credit card.

JESSE
Oh, I think the room is paid for.

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

CELINE
Incidentals.

JESSE
Right, of course.

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

SOFIA
Mr. Wallace?

JESSE
Yeah?

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

JESSE
Oh, wow.

SOFIA
Would you please sign them to us?

JESSE
Yeah, of course, of course.

SOFIA
Thank you.

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

SOFIA
Make it to Sofia and Pavlos.

JESSE
Okay. How's the Greek translation?
As Jesse signs the books, the Hotel Clerk starts paying attention to Celine.

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

JESSE
"Ekini ti Fora."

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

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

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

CELINE
Me?

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

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

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

The book is passed to Celine.

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

Jesse passes the books to Celine.

JESSE
She'd be happy to.

SOFIA
Okay. Thank you.

CELINE
I'm happy to.

She begins to sign.
Efharisto.

Okay. Thank you.

Great. Thank you so much.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Celine and Jesse enter the room.

Check it out!

Wow, this is nice!

Yeah.

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

It's great.

Wow, oh wow, that bath tub.

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

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

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

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

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

Jesse seductively touches her.

Mmm, I don't.
Then kisses her. She eventually looks out the window.

CELINE
This is such a nice view. Look.

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

CELINE
What?

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

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

JESSE (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
What?

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

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

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

JESSE
You know what I'm looking forward to?

CELINE
Yeah? What?

JESSE
After uh...

CELINE
After?
JESSE
Yeah.
(Laughing)

CELINE
What?

JESSE
Is waking up next to you alone.

CELINE
You mean without Nina and Ella jumping on our heads.

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

CELINE
Think?

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

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

JESSE
It's my favorite thing.

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

JESSE
Tomorrow...

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

JESSE
I'm looking forward to right now.

CELINE
Okay, then stop talking, so we can fuck.
They kiss until Celine's cell phone rings.

CELINE (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

Oh, shit, who is it?

JESSE

The kids.

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

CELINE

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

Celine picks up.

CELINE (CONT'D)

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

(listens)

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

(listens)

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

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

CELINE (CONT'D)

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

JESSE

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

CELINE

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

JESSE

And what'd he forget? What was that?

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

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

CELINE
What? What did I say?

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

CELINE
I didn't mean anything by it.

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

CELINE
Oh, like you think he forgets?

JESSE
No...

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

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

CELINE
It means nothing.

JESSE
It means something. It does.

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

JESSE
Mud wrestling? You said that?
CELINE
And he laughed. He might have more of a sense of humor than you do. Come on.

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

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

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

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

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

JESSE
His mom and me.

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

JESSE
Yeah, right!

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

JESSE
No, I'm not.
CELINE
You know, on the contrary, if he can make a joke about it, maybe he'll be able to live with it better. That's what I think.

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

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

JESSE
Don't say that!

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

Jesse goes to the bathroom and washes off his face.

JESSE
Medea, huh?

CELINE
Yeah, after all, it is a Greek myth.

JESSE
It's actually a play by Euripides, but -

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

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

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

JESSE
Ex-wife! Ex-wife for a long time!
CELINE
Okay, you should have dealt with it a little better back then. She wouldn't have hated us so much.

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

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

JESSE
What shit? What're you talking about?

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

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

JESSE
Okay.

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

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

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

JESSE
The what?

CELINE
Nur-tchur-yrer.

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

JESSE
What look?

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

JESSE
I didn't say anything.

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

JESSE
Yeah right.

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

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

JESSE
(Laughs)
Wow! That's a sure sign from God!

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

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

CELINE
It is.

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

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

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

CELINE
Well, you started it.

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

CELINE
Here we go. Unemotional, rational. You always play the part of the one and only rational one and I'm the irrational, hysterical, hormone-crazy one because I have emotions. Yeah, you sit back and you speak from your big perspective which means everything you say is level-headed and true.
JESSE
I don't always do anything.

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

JESSE
Cheney and Rumsfeld? Yeah, okay.

CELINE
The final solution? Very rational thinking behind it.

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

CELINE
Here we go...

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay.

CELINE
... And I think his mom is a fucking alcoholic, hateful cunt that used the time that we were in Paris and I was giving birth and almost dying to (MORE)
CELINE (CONT'D)
legally move Henry out of New York.
Fuck her.

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

CELINE
Comparable job? Are you kidding?

JESSE
No.

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

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

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

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

CELINE
Okay, two seconds.

JESSE
Alright. Do you remember that time that you were like 35 minutes late to pick the girls up from school and you were so stressed out because you knew they were out there in the playground wondering what the hell had happened to you. Okay, that is the way I feel all the time, you know like I fucked up. I mean, I left him behind and I just wanna go get him.
CELINE
You always get like this when you drop him off. You're sad, so you start a fight. He's fine. He's a great kid. Okay? But the truth is, he doesn't need you the way he used to. You missed the opportunity to be with him everyday of his childhood, you just did. And you can cry about it but he's growing up. You're a great father in other ways. You got divorced, like millions of other people. Was it ideal? No. Listen, if in one month, you still want me to quit my job and give up everything I have ben working towards all these years, just ask me. But right now I feel the same way I always have. I would move back to the US if that diseased ex-wife of yours would give us joint custody. But every other weekend amounts to shit Jesse, that's less than thirty days a semester and I don't think it's worth it for us to change our entire lives over that kind of time.

JESSE
I know, you're right.

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

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

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

JESSE
Absolutely.

CELINE
Or even worse, he would have been raised by two miserable parents.
JESSE
I know. I just really fucked that up.

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

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

CELINE
I knew that was going to cost too much.

JESSE
That's not what I meant at all!

CELINE
I told you not to do it.

JESSE
Stop it.

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

JESSE
Yes. Okay.

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

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

CELINE
'As a family?' Or what?

JESSE
What the fuck does that mean?
CELINE
I feel a passive aggressive threat in everything you say. Either do this, or I will resent you for the rest of our lives.

Silence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(MORE)
JESSE (CONT'D)
Like I'm gonna lose you and the girls?
No. Why do you make everything so difficult?

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

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

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

JESSE
I know.

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

JESSE
Don't.

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

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

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

JESSE
And you think I don't?
CELINE
I spend all day making dinner, wiping both you and your son's pee off the toilet seat, while you talk to your fellow novelists. Blah, blah, blah, you're a genius, blah, blah, blah, no, you're a genius. And the second we say goodbye to Henry, you suggest that maybe I should give up my dream job because you feel bad.

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

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

JESSE
Okay.

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

JESSE
It's an hour.

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

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

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

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

Jesse wanders off into the bathroom to take a pee.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesse comes back out.

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

CELINE
As always, OUR life works for YOU.

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

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

CELINE
6 o'clock.

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Okay, listen to me, all right? You are great at taking care of us. You are. I mean you take care of the kids, you take care of your friends, you take care of the world. Alright? And you were like that before you were a mom and now its only magnified. But, and I've been telling you this for years - you gotta do a little bit better job taking care of yourself. Ok, you do.
CELINE
Okay, stop patronizing me, all right? I'm the one at home every night at 6.00, not 6.30. I am reliable. Have you ever booked a baby sitter, ever, in your entire life? NO. What is the name of their pediatrician?

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

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

JESSE
You want to write? Great. Write.

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

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

Celine exits...

JESSE (CONT'D)
Okay. All right. Whoops. You forgot your shoes.
(sighs)
Goddamn. Hell.
And quickly re-enters.

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

JESSE
It was an oven.

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

JESSE
Do you think you have sole ownership of that feeling?

CELINE
I don't think you understand, okay?
(a beat)
You know what my secret fear is? With every man? Is that they all want to turn me into a submissive housewife.

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

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

JESSE
Look, I think you did great.

CELINE
No, I didn't.

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

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

Jesse laughs. The tone shifts.

JESSE
Oh, Jesus.
(he takes her hand)
Once I remember I was watching the twins on a trampoline, you know, and they looked so beautiful. And I was happy because they were happy, you know. One of them had this hula-hoop that she was using as a jump rope, but then the other one wanted it so they started fighting over it. All of a sudden I saw it all, this petty jealously and selfishness... I remember thinking: this is the natural (MORE)
JESSE (CONT'D)
human state - always a little
dissatisfied, perpetually
discontented, you know? I mean,
look at us, here we are, in a garden
of Eden and we can't stop fighting.

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

JESSE
Okay. Maybe I am.

Celine is slowly getting revved up again.

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

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

CELINE
And you never get angry?

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

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

JESSE
When you got it, you got it.

CELINE
Kissy, kissy. Titty, titty. PUSSY.
(snoring)
JESSE
I'm a man of simple pleasures.

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

JESSE
This place is pretty real.

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

JESSE
Okay. Well, obviously, right?

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

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

CELINE
Yeah, I know you do, Mr. Book Tour. Mr. Radisson Hilton. And I know that time when you were doing that reading in Washington, when your cell phone supposedly broke that night - how convenient. Swear on our kids that you didn't fuck that lady from the bookstore. Emily. Swear to me you didn't fuck that Emily girl. And I'm not jealous because I'm not the jealous type but I just wanna know, be a man and admit the truth.
JESSE
I am giving you my whole life, okay? I've got nothing larger to give. I'm not giving it to anybody else. If you're looking for permission to disqualify me, I'm not going to give it to you. I love you and I'm NOT in conflict about it. But if what you want is a laundry list of all the things about you that piss me off, I could give it to you.

CELINE
Yeah - I want to hear.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Petrified, she exits.

Jesse sits alone waiting for her to return.

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

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

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

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE/BAR - NIGHT

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

JESSE
Miss?

CELINE
I don't want to talk right now.

JESSE
Are you by yourself? Are you waiting for somebody?

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

JESSE
Oh. Well, just my type.

Jesse sits down right across from her.
CELINE
Okay, I'm not in the mood - I came here to be alone.

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

CELINE
Thank you very much.

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

Nothing.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Ok.. You have a boyfriend?

CELINE
Not anymore.

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

CELINE
I don't talk to strangers.

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

CELINE
You are mistaking me for someone else.

JESSE
No, we even fell in love.

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

JESSE
That's me. I'm that guy.
CELINE
I don't think so.

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

CELINE
Really. What is that?

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

CELINE
How?

JESSE
I'm a time traveler.

CELINE
Okay.

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

CELINE
Save me from what?

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

CELINE
It's not bullshit.

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

CELINE
That's you?

JESSE
Yeah.

CELINE
Guess I didn't recognize you... you look like shit.
JESSE
What can I say? I mean, it's tough out there in time and space. You, on the other hand are even more beautiful than I remember.

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

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

CELINE
I'm still alive in my 80's?

JESSE
OOOHDDD YEAH.

CELINE
How's my French ass?

JESSE
Nice. Really nice.

CELINE
I don't care about the way I look.

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

CELINE
Do I have a choice?

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

CELINE
No, no, no. Read it.
JESSE
Okay, here I go. Dear Celine, I'm writing to you from the other side of the woods. This letter is lighting a candle...

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

JESSE
May I please continue?

CELINE
Okay.

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

CELINE
Nice one.

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

CELINE
Yeah, skip away. Please, skip away.

JESSE
Okay. You sure?
CELINE
Yeah.

JESSE
Okay, all right, well.

CELINE
The boring stuff.

Jesse scoots his chair closer to her.

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

CELINE
Ground-breaking. Great.

JESSE
Yeah, I don't know what that means.

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

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

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

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

CELINE
So what about this time machine?

JESSE
What do you mean?

CELINE
How does it work?

JESSE
Well... it's complicated.

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

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

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

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

JESSE
Oh, Jesus.

CELINE
Space-time...?

JESSE
Continuum.

CELINE
'Continuum.'

JESSE
Yeah.
CELINE

Wow.

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

CELINE
Yeah?

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

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

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

FADE OUT