

BEFORE SUNSET

INT. RESTAURANT:

Celine

I was thinking, for me it's better I don't romanticize things as much anymore. I was suffering so much all the time. I still have lots of dreams, but they're not in regard to my love life. It doesn't make me sad. It's just the way it is.

Jesse

Is that why you're in a relationship with somebody who's never around?

Celine

Yes. Obviously, I can't deal with the day-to-day life of a relationship. Yeah, we have, you know, this exciting time together and then he leaves and I miss him, but at least I'm not dying inside. When someone is always around me, I'm, like, suffocating.

Jesse

No, wait, you just said that you need to love and be loved...

Celine

Yeah, but when I do, it quickly makes me nauseous. It's a disaster. I mean, I'm really happy only when I'm on my own. Even being alone—it's better than sitting next to a lover and feeling lonely. It's not so easy for me to be a romantic. You start off that way, and, after you've been screwed over a few times, you forget about all your delusional ideas, and you just take what comes into your life. That's not even true, I haven't been screwed over, I've just had too many blah relationships. They weren't mean, they cared for me, but they were no real connection, or excitement. At least, not from my side.

Jesse

God, I'm sorry, is it really that bad? It's not, right?

Celine

You know, it's not even that, I was fine. Until I read your fucking book. It stirred shit up, you know? It reminded me how genuinely romantic I was, how I had so much hope in things. And now it's like I don't believe in anything that relates to love, I don't feel things for people anymore. In a way I put all my romanticism

into that one night, and I was never able to feel all this again. Like somehow this night took things away from me and I expressed them to you and you took them with you. It made me feel cold, like if love wasn't for me.

Jesse

I don't believe that. I don't believe that.

Celine

You know what? Reality and love are almost contradictory for me. It's funny. Every single of my exes, they're now married. Men go out with me, we break up, and then they get married. And later they call me to thank me for teaching them what love is, and that I taught them to care and respect women.

Jesse

I think I'm one of those guys.

Celine

You know, I want to kill them. Why didn't they ask me to marry them? I would have said "No", but at least they could have asked. But it's my fault, I know it's my fault, because I never felt it was the right man. Never. But what does it mean "the right man?" The love of your life? The concept is absurd, the idea that we can only be complete with another person is evil. Right?

Jesse

Can I talk?

Celine

You know, I guess I've been heart-broken too many times. And then I recovered. So now, you know, from the starts, I make no effort because I know it's not going to work out. I know it's not going to work out...

Jesse

You can't do that. You can't do that, you can't live your life trying to avoid pain at the expense of engaging...

Celine

Ok, you know what? Those are words. I've got to, I've got to get away from you. Stop the car. I want to get out. No, it's

Jesse

No, don't get out. Keep talking. Hey, hey...

Celine

No, You know what, it's being around you...Don't touch me! You know, I want to get on a cab. *French talk.*

Jesse

No, keep going...No, listen, I'm just so happy...thank you, just keep going...All right. Look, I'm just so happy, all right?...to be with you. I am. I'm so glad you didn't forget about me. Okay?

Celine

No, I didn't. And it pisses me off, ok? You come here to Paris, all romantic, and married. Okay? Screw you! Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to get you or anything. I mean, all I need is a married man. There's been so much water under the bridge. It's not even about you anymore, it's about that time, that moment in time, that is forever gone, I don't know.

Jesse

You say all that, but you didn't even remember having sex. So...

Celine

Of course I remember it...

Jesse

You did?

Celine

Yes. Women pretend things like that.

Jesse

They do?

Celine

Yeah, what was I supposed to say? That I remember the wine in the park, and us looking up at the stars fading away as the sun came up? We had sex twice, you idiot!

Jesse

All right, you know what? I'm just happy to see you, even if you've become an angry, manic-depressive activist. I still like you, I still enjoy being around you!

Celine

And I feel the same. I'm sorry, I don't know what happened. I just—I had to let it all out. I...

Jesse

Don't worry about it.

Celine

I'm so miserable in my love life, in my relationship, I always act as, like, you know, I'm detached, but I'm dying inside. I'm dying because I'm so numb, I don't feel pain, or excitement. I'm not even bitter, I'm just...

Jesse

You think you're the one dying inside. My life, is twenty-four-seven bad.

Celine

I'm sorry...

Jesse

No, no, I mean, the only happiness I get is when I'm out with my son. I've been to marriage counseling, I've done things I never thought I would have to do. I've lit candles, bought self-help books, lingerie...

Celine

Did the candles help?

Jesse

Hell, no! All right, I don't love her the way she needs to be loved, and I don't even see a future for us. But then I look at my little boy, sitting at the table across from me, and I think I would suffer any torture to be with him for all the minutes of his life, you know? I don't want to miss out on one. But then, there's no joy, or laughter in my home, you know? And I don't want him growing up in that.

Celine

Oh, no laughter? That's terrible, my parents have been together for 35 years and even when they have a bad fight, they end up laughing like crazy.

Jesse

I just—I don't want to be one of those people who are getting divorced at fifty-two, and falling down into tears, admitting that they never really loved their spouse, and they feel their life has been sucked up into a vacuum cleaner. You know, I want a great life. I want her to have a great life. She deserves that. All right? But we're just living in a pretense of a marriage, responsibility, and all these, just...ideas of how people are suppose to live. Then I have these dreams...

Celine

What dreams?

Jesse

I have these dreams, you know, that I'm standing on a platform, and you keep going by on a train, and you go by, and you go by, and you go by, you go by, and I wake up with the fucking sweats, you know? And then I have this other dream, oh, where you're pregnant, in bed, beside me, naked, and I want so badly to touch you, but you tell me not to, and then you look away. And I touch you anyway, right on your ankle, and your skin is so soft, I wake up in sobs, all right? And my wife is sitting there, looking at me, and I feel like I'm a million miles from her and I know that there's something wrong, you know, that I can't keep living like this, that there's got to be something more to love than commitment. But then I think that I might have given up on the whole idea of romantic love. That I might have put it to bed, that day when you weren't there. You know, I think I might have done that.

Celine

Why are you telling me all this?

Jesse

I'm sorry. I don't know, I'm...I should... I shouldn't have.

Celine

You know, it's so weird...people think they are the only one going through tough times. I mean, when I read the article, I thought your life was perfect. A wife, a kid, a published author. Your personal life was more of a mess than mine. I'm sorry.

Jesse

Well, I'm glad it's good for something.