

WITH THE SOUTH WIND

Written by

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Story by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN

1

The sun is starting to light up mesmerizing colors of the sky at dawn. The scene is covered in bluish-greenish-orange colors. The flock of birds flies by us.

We PULL OUT and go through the 1940s steam train that's passing by (inside, a bougie-dressed, disdainful PARISIAN WOMAN has been offered champagne).

We continue to PULL OUT of the train, which is going over a very high and prepossessing, oval, stone railway viaduct.

The train overpassing the river is hissing and chugging, creating this "chuffing" rhythm -

The wind starts to blow, changing the course of the train's steam; We are now engulfed in the cloud of gray smoke turning white, which -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAWN

2

The aerial POV of the village livelihood - CAMERA is high in the air, it PUSHES IN -

SOLEIL (V.O.)
I don't think you ever noticed.
(beat)

There are eco-friendly houses almost glued to the ones next to them; Narrow, cobblestone streets.

SOLEIL (V.O.)
(CONT'D)
-- But the nature of the villagers
has never been timid when it comes
to expression...

Camera SLOWLY BOOMS DOWN and lands on the ground looking at - The villagers, who are walking in a hurry, chattering in French. Unlike the Parisian woman -

They aren't people of means, and they aren't 'going' anywhere.

EXT. STONE HOUSE - DAWN

3

Camera PANS INTO the right and climbs up the old stone house which stands on high ground, (alongside of climbing Wisteria).

We see open, double windows with rustic pastel green, wood shutters.

I/E. STONE HOUSE / VIEW FROM THE BEDROOM - DAWN

4

SOLEIL (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

I guess some things never change.

(beat)

Immersed in writing a letter - is **SOLEIL**: a twenty-five-year-old clandestine dreamer, good-natured, yet very obedient and restrained: long cotton nightgown, red crochet triangle shawl; loose dark, curly hair, and big, sad hazel eyes. A taciturn that communicates mainly with facial expressions (painfully shy, yet aware of everything); A true **eccedentesiast**, that never truly opened her heart to anyone.

SOLEIL (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

My mother always used to say:

MOTHER & SOLEIL (V.O.)

" The house doesn't stand on the ground but on the woman."

SOLEIL (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

- After seven years of living with you -- I'm beginning to understand that now, more than ever.

CUT TO:

I/E. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

5

She is seated at her petite, provincial writing desk that looks at the village street, and the distant, yet appealing view of greenery and the constant passage of trains going to the places she never visited, and perhaps never will.

We are CLOSE ON the salutation of the 'so-called' love letter.

We see the date: May 17, 1940 (WW2, Battle of France).

The camera moves DOWN to reveal - Everything she said is hand written in the letter.

We now see her writing the following -

SOLEIL (V.O.)
(cont'd)

"I know that a good woman makes an empty house full, but what if she herself has never felt whole?..."

She's writing more and more vigorously, and -

As she's about to end the letter with: Love, Soleil, we hear the loud sound of a steam trumpet/train whistle, and she only gets to write - Love, Sole. (Sole comes from the Latin - Solus, which means - Alone.)

Soleil lifts her head, to look at the train vanishing into the distance, leaving nothing but the smoke behind it.

She crumples the letter and tosses it on the old, oak floor.

We PULL OUT and SLOW BOOM DOWN on the floor to reveal -

Seven other crumpled pieces of paper (representing the years she spent with her husband).

Soleil turns around and gazes at them longingly.

Camera is on the floor, but slowly comes back up and focusses on one crumbled piece of paper, which...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN DINING TABLE - AFTERNOON

6

It is a hot summer afternoon, and we hear **FLIES** buzzing everywhere around the room. There is an unknaded bread dough on the wooden dining kitchen table.

We see Soleil's hands kneading the dough tenderly; She then starts scoring sourdough bread and leaves it to wash her hands.

We hear and see Soleil letting out the water from an old water hand pump converted into a faucet. She's washing her hands.

In the meantime - GEORGES is agitated by one fly that's going around the dough. (We hear him sign and murmur something in his chin, while the fly buzzes.)

(Focused on the dough, we see only the motion of their hands.)

Fly finally lands on the bread, and he decides to slam it onto the dough itself, with a FIST - leaving a hole inside the bread.

The sound of water stops.

We see Soleil from the dough's POV -

The dough and the barely moving fly are blurry, while Soleil is in the focus.

Soleil is getting closer, and the fly is also in focus now -

She looks at it, trying to hide the disgust, then looks at Georges -

Having no reaction from him, she slowly looks back at the dough, thinking what to do, almost emotionlessly.

The camera shoots from above' It is close on the almost-dead fly, lying on the table, in the circle of dough; Its wings move a couple of times tremulously.

We see Soleil's hands scoring, and taking out the piece of dough and dead fly, carefully.

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

7

Soleil takes out the baked bread (with a hole in it), out of the stone oven and puts it on the beautifully set dining table...

There is everything one can dream of !

Camera is TRUCKING -

From pastry and Coquilles Saint-Jacques, baked Camembert with baguette, and traditional French - Cassoulet, to the most beautiful desserts, such as Rye, pastry cream, and pear galettes and a magnificent blueberry lilac crepe cake.

There are also white candles in wine bottles, strawberries in a jar, and in a vase.

Even though they are, like most families at that time, without means, Soleil always finds a way to make something out of nothing.

She picks one small strawberry from the strawberry bouquet in vase and smells it, before eating it; She savors precious moments neglected by many.

Snoring and eating voraciously, while sweating all over the food - is **GEORGES**: early 30s, shallow and negligent, with blinkered attitude: wearing overalls on a bear skin, his left bib overall buckle loop is open and dangling around, slovenly slicked hair parted in two; Has no communication or listening skills, and absolutely no interest in his marriage.

SOLEIL
How was your day?...

Georges continues to eat sloppily, not noticing Soleil.

SOLEIL (CONT'D)
I heard you had a week of hard
labor at work. You must be tired?

Georges burps and finishes his meal, tapping his stomach, showing his full. Still inattentive.

Soleil stands up and brings beautifully detailed, butter cookies to the table.

SOLEIL (CONT'D)
I baked them this morning... I hope
you will like them. It has a little
bit of lemon zest and caramel...

Soleil doesn't even finish her sentence, before she sees him gulping them, and leaving nothing for her -

Except table full of crumbs waiting to be cleaned.

GEORGES
I'm full. (burps) Prepare me a
bath...

Georges starts taking his working clothes off. Soleil still sitting at their dining table with her head resting on her right hand, looking at the empty cookie plate abstractedly.

She's moving all the crumbs in the center of the plate, with her index finger.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - VINTAGE WALL CLOCK

8

We are focused on the left corner of the clock.

It is 02:25pm.

The clock ticks at a normal speed, then starts moving forward. It is going at an increasing rate of speed, faster and faster.

Then it -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STONE HOUSE / SOLEIL'S GARDEN - DAY

9

EXTREME CLOSEUP - FLOATING FLOWERS

Camera PULLS OUT slowly, to show that flowers are moving clockwise - inside the tea cup.

- Soleil's hand is slowly starting to turn the spoon inside it, blending the flavours together.

She and her mother sit in the midst of an exuberant mix of flowers, drinking tea; Beneath them is a stone circle patio.

It is a wondrous little space, surrounded by a low stone fence; A modest wildlife-friendly wonderland, delighting in the birds and butterflies it draws, but not necessarily humans, even though they are curious.

On the green pastel, iron table, (completed with the same colored chairs) we see two pieces of transparent lemon tart cake.

There are also freshly picked, same purple flowers, in the center of the table.

Trying the cake with caution, is Soleil's MOTHER: a victim of her own mother who was a victim of her mother as well; Deprived of matriarchy she spends her whole life doing the same that has been done to her, and is unconsciously expecting the same out of Soleil:

MOTHER

When did you start eating plants?

(beat)

Soleil looks at her piece of cake, and the little, purple, edible flowers on top of the cream. The sun is making it shine, and it looks miraculous.

She looks surprised at her mother's comment - While looking at the cake and shrugging with her shoulders lightly.

Her mother tries another small piece of cake, and starts talking to her, with food in her mouth -

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Tell me you're not feeding Georges
with this!

Changes the topic very quickly, while the digestive process
is still happening inside her mouth -

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Your father and grandfather put so
much work into making this stone
house.

(beat)

Finally looks at her, while she's talking to her -

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I am glad you're taking good care
of it!

Mother puts down the cutlery, and wipes her mouth with a
napkin.

Soleil raises her eyebrows and gives a half-smile, and
pushes her neck forward slightly (as a shy way of saying
thank you, but also with a great deal of uncertainty) while
looking down at her tea, still turning the spoon clock wise.

MOTHER

You know that...

(sighs)

My marriage was also arranged by my
parents. And your grandmother's
too. It is not common for land-
owning families to marry
for...love! You know that...

Soleil stops and puts her spoon down on the tea saucer, and
turns her head slightly towards her mother before she slowly
looks up at her - shyly, but also in disbelief.

Mother looks down, a little bit to the left, to seem like
she didn't notice how Soleil feels.

The CAMERA does a SLOW BOOM DOWN, to reveal every motion and
emotion of Soleil's mother -

She holds the teacup handle with her three fingers, with
unnecessary strength while pursing her lips together in
(still restraining) anger - Her leg is nervously shaking
under the table;

Impatience is ruling over her.

She looks more to the left to see if no one is listening to their conversation, then she looks back at Soleil, bends towards her, and more and more intrusively and boldly starts speaking almost in her face, while somehow maintaining to stay calm at the end -

MOTHER (CONT'D)

The faster you get used to everything, the faster it will become normal. Give it a chance! You will come to love him in time.

Soleil, downheartedly looks down with half-closed eyes and focuses on one point on the table, and we hear such sorrow and demure in her faintly voice -

SOLEIL

Will... Will he ever love me?
(beat)

She then pauses for a second, looking at her mother with teary eyes.

Disheartened, she looks down at the table again -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

Maybe seven years isn't enough for someone...

Mother doesn't let her finish, interrupts her.

She losses her temper - Starts speaking bitterly, and somehow manages to end up the sentence with such chagrin, and finally insincere concern about Soleil's feelings -

MOTHER

He already loves you!

Mother looks to the side AGAIN to see if there are no villagers/neighbors to spy on them.

The cost is clear. She continues -

MOTHER (CONT'D)

He goes to work every day and brings food to the table!... Well, isn't that enough?!

Soleil shrinks her shoulders while clenching her fist with her left hand nervously, and looking slightly to her right side while doing that.

Then slowly comes back to look at her mother, who is on her left side (as if she's waiting for an answer from her).

Mother puts her right palm on her chest, eyes closed, then shakes it. She's trying to justify herself -

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I never taught you to be
 ungrateful!

She calms herself down a bit, throws herself against the back of the chair, and brushes her skirt off, even though there was nothing on it;

Then comes back into Soleil's face and talks more quietly, with a fake smile -

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Besides - Who could not love you?
 (beat)

Grabs Soleil by the chin, and shakes it lightly.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Look at that face! Hmm?

Then they both turn to the left (at the same time) and see a tall, corpulent lady, with a scarf wrapped around her head. It is Soleil's NEIGHBOR.

She is standing outside of their garden, on the village street.

Soleil's mother immediately rushes to greet her, leaving Soleil alone.

Camera is FOCUSED on Soleil, who is zoning out.

We hear and see her mother and neighbor in the distance -

Soleil's POV.

NEIGHBOR
 What were you talking about,
 ladies?

MOTHER
 Oh, what can we women talk about?
 Just sharing some recipes! Isn't
 that right darling?

Mother turns to Soleil, but -

Soleil get's lost in her thoughts completely, and doesn't even hear their conversation anymore.

The neighbor arrogantly raises her eyebrows and looks at Soleil, and then at the mother too.

She tries to explain her daughter's behavior - again - through a fake smile, by saying -

MOTHER

She's been very tired working
around the house... Plus, she
misses Georges of course...

- implying how good of a wife she is.

The neighbor fake-smiles with her whole face as well now.

Camera slowly BLURES OUT on them and everything behind Soleil (and by the end we can't hear them clearly).

Her longing face is the only thing in focus.

PAN TO reveal -

BACK TO:

INT. & EXT. WINDOW VIEW - AFTERNOON

10

Soleil - With the same longing look on her face; Her head rests on the palm of her hand.

CRA - CK - CK - CK - CK - CK...

She comes back from her daydream when she hears the creaking sounds her windows makes;

They open wide, and she stand up holding onto them.

WHIP PAN to the right -

She looks at the clock and realizes she has been living in her head for a couple of hours now.

PAN to the left; Then slowly PUSH IN on her -

Soleil feels a breeze while holding both of her hands on the open double door window.

A slight breeze slowly turns into a strong southerly wind.

ARC AROUND Soleil; We see her standing freely with her head up and closed eyes. It feels like flying. Her red shawl is nonchalantly 'hanging' over her open arms.

The wind gets stronger, and it lifts her hair up in the air, making it seem like she's truly flying.

Behind her we see objects from her bedroom levitating.

We can hear villagers shouting and rushing to their homes because they think the storm's coming up - But Soleil's smiling. She's never felt so free in her entire life, despite the hastiness of the villagers outside.

Out of nowhere, she hears the sound of broken clay (The wind stops blowing, and her hair, along with everything behind her comes down); She opens her eyes to see -

A broken clay pot full of flowers right below her neighbor's window.

A young man rushes out of the house to see the damage the wind created.

His wife comes out on their small balcony and sees the pot on the floor, and starts pulling her hair and shouting at him -

YOUNG WOMAN / NEIGHBOR
Why didn't you hurry? This was my
mother's anniversary gift to us!...

YOUNG MEN / NEIGHBOR
I told you to put it inside! You
never listen to me!

YOUNG WOMAN / NEIGHBOR
Yeah? And how can they grow
inside?! Do you ever use your head,
or do you just collect piles of
dust there?

The young man gives up and raises his hands in the air, and walks inside the house;

Woman continues to bicker, but comes back into the house, closing her windows.

There is no one on the street, and Soleil feels tranquility, but by being the only one enjoying this weather, she starts feeling conscious again and decides to close her window as well.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

11

We see her 1930s modest collection of kitchen utensils and cookie materials all neatly lined up - mostly a collection of antique springerle cookie molds hung;

A bunch of recipes are written on small pieces of paper, and stuck on the wall of the kitchen.

This is what Soleil is looking at, pondering, while she sits at her kitchen table.

She stands up from the chair and heads towards her 1920s brass gramophone which is standing next to her kitchen counter - Puts the needle on the vinyl, then goes to her recipes to pick one.

We hear "*J'attendrai*" / "*I will wait*" by *Tino Rossi*.

Touching, almost caressing recipes as she goes - It almost seems like she's not walking, but sliding; She's vivacious because she's in her own little world.

Camera is SLOW TRUCKING her hand.

She then stops on the one recipe which says - *Heart's Delight*.

Starts making delicious cookies in the shape of the heart. We see a true artist in the making - With each step, she becomes more joyful;

She starts harmonizing quietly in 5ths with Tino.

Dancing to the beat of her heart's drum.

Feeds the **CAT** and the **MOUSE**, which eat together side by side.

Just like everything in Soleil's life, their relationship is uncanny, yet endearing.

(It's inviting us to reconsider how we look at our relationships with those who differ from us.)

The anthropomorphic mouse is part of Soleil's imagination; Psychologically - Soleil is speaking to herself when she's conversing with him.

She feels small and insignificant in the world, like a mouse, but she's also 'feeding' someone who is her threat; Often needs to check in with the mouse, when in communication with others, due to her low self-esteem. Even though she's almost always surrounded by other people she feels misunderstood and alone most of the time - The mouse is her one and only friend.

The white Mouse breaks the cookie into small pieces and feeds the chubby, self-centered cat from his hand -

SOLEIL

(re: mouse)

"You can eat all you want. There is enough for everyone!

(beat)

You've taken such good care of me Mouse - But all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!

(smiles at him)

The Mouse smiles back and his cheeks turn vermilion.

The cat unwittingly bites him while eating, doesn't flinch -

MOUSE

(re: cat)

Ouch! You bit me!

(licks his little finger)

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

... After I finish the glaze, we're going to surprise our neighbors.

Mouse loudly swallows his saliva, moon-eyed; With pointed ears, he pauses and looks at her in surprise and fear -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

(beat)

Everyone deserves to feel loved... Especially these days...

We see Soleil's face now. She's smiling while making cookies.

She hears a murmur - Someone is talking behind her back (literally and figuratively).

Her smile fades away and she slowly looks to her left without moving her body (still moving her arms like she's doing something).

The gramophone starts producing the sound of a damaged vinyl, and it soon stops playing completely.

I/E. STONE HOUSE / VIEW FROM THE KITCHEN'S WINDOW - SAME TIME

CAMERA SLIDES a little bit to the right; The windows in the kitchen are wide open, and we see in the distance (behind Soleil's shoulder) - **THREE OLDER LADIES / NEIGHBORS**, huddled up together, trying to see what Soleil is doing in the privacy of her home;

Known for wagging tongues and 'sniffing at' everyone who's unconventional / out of the box.

They are maliciously observing Soleil with half-closed eyes. Since the village was put under their surveillance from the beginning of time, they are 'cursed' with being short-sighted, amongst other things -

Not particularly beautiful, since the ire is coming out of their eyes; One of them is short and cross-eyed, the other one is sullen-faced (she's the tallest of them all), and the third one is suffering from the worst disease man has ever known - Envy.

DOLLY INTO their faces (They are on the right side of Soleil). Their heads are enlarged.

Soleil works on her last heart cookie, and attentively listens to their gossip.

She reacts to their words with facial expression, trying not to fall apart -

The ladies often interfere with each other -

LADY NO. 1
(crosses herself)
Father, Son and Holy Spirit...
(continues to say a
prayer)

LADY NO. 2
(Watches in disgust and frowns)
Tststststs (showing disapproval)

LADY NO. 3
Look at her making cookies...
Celebrating! Huh!

LADY NO. 2
... While her husband is at war!

LADY NO. 3
 (resumes)
 ... While we are all on the edge of
 our seats!

LADY NO. 1
 She should be grateful that that
 poor man married her at all, given
 that she's (gets closer to them,
 and whispers loudly - looking at
 them and then at Soleil) -
Infertile!

Soleil is on the brink of crying - She closes her eyes.

We can see that she's in a lot of pain, but somehow manages
 to stay unruffled.

LADY NO. 3
 She is?! I heard it, but I couldn't
believe it! Her husband is a saint!

LADY NO. 2
 He is! And how does she repay him?

FAST DOLLY OUT of the village street and the neighbors -
 Soleil is all alone, crowded only by her thoughts.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

13

BOOM DOWN on Soleil hands holding a well detailed, red
 cookie in the shape of a heart.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - SOLEIL'S HANDS HOLDING A HEART-SHAPED
 COOKIE

The cookie has "Mon Coeur" written on it, in the same color.
 She strokes the heart with her thumb.

One drop of tear falls on it and melts it perfectly in half.
 The heart breaks in two pieces - One is resting in her left
 palm, and the other in her right.

Camera BOOMS UP and we see Soleil wiping the tears away.

She turns around slowly, her lowered head goes with the
 shoulder. There is a distinguished shame on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - SAME TIME

14

When ladies notice her turning towards them, they start walking away, as if they weren't spying on her.

They are going in the wrong direction, colliding with one another, pointing fingers where they should go - All going separately in the end - leaving the street empty.

CUT TO:

Soleil throws the cookies in the wicker trash basket and goes to her bedroom.

MANU / V.O.

"A peculiar being she was... "

A cat goes inside the bin, while a saddened mouse goes after her, with one hand in the air (she wants to stop her) but stops.

PULL OUT of the small mouse, standing alone.

MANU / V.O. (CONT'D)

"... Stopping herself from doing what she loves at any given chance.
(beat)
The comfort of other being the sole purpose of doing so..."

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

15

Camera is TRACKING Soleil's feet to her bed.

She takes off her noted red shawl. It falls on the floor next to her feet.

The room is illuminated only by candle lights, giving the room soft orange light.

EMMANUEL / V.O.

(CONT'D)

"...They say that after you repeat the lie, a lie becomes the truth. Soleil was a good example of that behavioral pattern..."

A sudden gust of wind gets stronger, while Soleil falls asleep.

Her windows open a bit more, they make a screeching sound.

Draught is moving her shawl away and to the entrance of the house, where we see that the door is open as well (the camera follows it all the way).

EMMANUEL / V.O.
(CONT'D)

"...She decided to be an obedient daughter, wife and eventually being. The lie that she repeated to herself was that she will be able to sustain her reputation as such for as long as she may live..."

When it gets to the door, we see a corpulent **FEMALE FIGURE** leaning against the door edge (only the lower part of the body, her skirt) - She's bending over to catch the scarf and puts in on the table and closes the door.

EMMANUEL / V.O.
(CONT'D)

"...But she forgot one thing - God is laughing at our plans, while we make them."

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

16

Soleil is sleeping on a warm and inviting log bed; Right next to it are her books converted into the night table. On top of it is the last night's tea and an open book, and a peculiar bedside wall lantern/lamp.

We see and hear the rustling of the paper moving on the floor like a butterfly's wings. A slight breeze turns into a (south) wind.

Windows unexpectedly open -

Soleil suddenly wakes up and sits upright.

White, letter carrier **PIGEON** flies in her bedroom.

The picture frizzes.

We see -

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

17

A vexed **YOUNG MAN** dressed in 1940's prison clothes is folding a letter.

EMMANUEL / V.O.

From one thief to another -- A perfidious young man, in need of help, is digging his own grave - habitually.

(beat)

Traveling all the way from London to a small village in France -

He looks up malevolently at his **CELLMATES**, without moving his head -

They are all asleep.

A **WHITE PIGEON** lands next to the prison window bars.

The man puts a rope, with a letter attached to it, around his neck.

CAMERA PULLS OUT and we see a slow motion of a white homing pigeon flying into the freedom of a blue sky - As the camera pulls away, we see the bird behind the prison bars - The prisoner is holding onto them, and looking at the pigeon flying away.

The scene turns black and white, and dissolves into a white light.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PIGEON LOFT - DAY

18

FLASH! One slow motion camera flash.

Hundreds of flashes continue at a normal speed -

A pigeon and his **FANCIER** are surrounded by other pigeons in their large lofts. The fancier is gripping him with his hands. He's proud, not of a bird -- but of himself; They are posing for the cameras.

The master opens the cage and puts the pigeon inside. Turns around to pose alone.

We come to the conclusion that the life of a bird symbolizing peace, flying freely 'over the sea of opportunities', doesn't differ that much from the prisoner's life.

CAMERA FLASHES are blinding the fancier, but he still smiles while blinking with his eyes; He holds his head up high, proudly -

FADE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - NOON

19

Bedazzled by the dance of the sunlight on the glass on Soleil's opened window -

He goes straight into her room, pausing (flying in place) right as he enters -

EMMANUEL / V.O.
(CONT'D)

- A well-trained, white-homing pigeon got destructed by the unexpected opening of Soleil's window -- And the dance between its glass and the sunlight's reflection, makes him unconsciously change the course of the prisoner's, and Soleil's destiny.

(beat)

Not being able to deliver his best performance, by the mercy of God - He still achieves to deliver a crucial message, not to its original recipient, but to - Soleil.

Surprised, she sits in awe and puts her hands up for him to lend. She then takes a little rolled message that hangs around the pigeon's neck and opens it.

It is hand written, and it says -

We are running out of time. Your life depends on your action.

Soleil, confused and frightened, goes straight to her window and lets the pigeon fly away; Looking at the letter, then at him, processing what just happened.

Camera is TRUCKING Soleil (but it is shooting from a ceiling) She moves from her bedroom to the kitchen - Rereading the message, with one hand holding her lower lip.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

20

Soleil puts the MESSAGE on her kitchen counter and collects the remaining cookies.

She's about to toss them in the trash, but someone COUGHS;

She stops, and turns around to see -

Standing on the threshold of her house, leaning against the door frames, with crossed arms - is **IRENE**: retired French music teacher, early 70s, with short fluffy hair, a black and white polka dot dress, and light yet visible traces of slightly smeared makeup; Broad-minded, sharp-tongued, sagacious woman with a kind heart - Known for her tough-love; A bit eccentric and long-winded.

IRENE

I hear you and your husband have no children together?

Soleil was startled, and a little bit frightened by the stranger -

Says nothing - Puts her head down in shame.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I was a French music teacher and conductor, back in Paris.

(beat)

Ahh... Those were the days...

Irene invites herself in, and is headed towards the kitchen table -

On the way to it, she stops, while standing firmly and confidently in all her glory, and looks up, as if she's performing for a crowd; Starts singing "Roses de Picardie" theatrically, an octave higher than Tino Rossi -

IRENE

*" Nos chemins pourront être un jour
écartés,
Et les roses perdront leurs
couleurs,
L'une, au moins gardera pour moi sa
beauté,
C'est la fleur que j'enferme en mon
coeur..."*

All of a sudden - She chokes up and starts coughing -

Soleil comes to the rescue and slaps her on the back, and helps her get to the chair.

They sit together at Soleil's kitchen table. Irene grunts as she sits, but somehow manages to compose herself.

IRENE

Ohh... Everything has changed. --
Everything is destined to change!
I don't know why I'm complaining.
I have memories that should be
framed.
(nods her head, closed eyes)

IRENE (CONT'D)

I used to spend my youth days
strolling from "*Les Deux Magots*" to
"*Café de Flore*" -- That's where
Hemingway frequented the literary
get-togethers... (she smiles while
turning her head to the side, but
doesn't take her eyes off Soleil)
He was way younger than me - But
that didn't stop me!
(beat)

Irene shakes her head, with a proud look on her face.

Soleil reacts to this engaging discovery by raising her eyebrows, and a winsome smile.

IRENE (CONT'D)

His favorite drink was (whispers)
- the Dry Martini.
(she closes her eyes and bites her
lower lip) -- Oh, he would drown
himself in it, if he could!
(beat)

Of course - Back then - I didn't
know that Hemingway was Hemingway
-- But what I did know was that he
will be!

Soleil smiles sincerely and sweetly.

IRENE (CONT'D)

My aunt...
(beat)

Takes out her pocket ashtray and lights a cigarette; Starts smoking.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You smoke?

Soleil shakes her head.

Irene 'talks' with her hands, as per usual -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 She was madly in love with this
 musician -- He left her as soon as
 he found out she was - infertile...

Whispers 'infertile' and shakes her head, with a pursed
 face.

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Scumbag!

She moves her hand to the right intensely, while holding a
 cigarette - The ashes end up flying and falling everywhere,
 but in the ashtray -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Nobody wanted her after that!
 (beat)
 And what did she do?

Soleil shoulder shrugs.

IRENE (CONT'D)
 She picked up little that she had
 and set off into the world. She
 never looked back in regret.

(Soleil doesn't feel attacked by Irene - the opposite.
 Someone is being nice to her for once.)

Irene comes closer to Soleil and raises her isolated index
 finger; She shakes it, while saying -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Everyone should be the architect of
 their own fortune my Dear...

Soleil slowly looks down, (but only with her eyes) thinking
 about what Irene said.

SOLEIL
 I'll make us some tea.

Soleil puts a kettle on and brews tea for the two of them.
 While she does that, her back is turned to Irene.

The mouse appears on the table -

Irene notices him -

IRENE
Is this a mouse?

Soleil doesn't even turn around to see -

SOLEIL
A talking one -- But he doesn't
speak much.

IRENE
Oh... I see...

Irene looks at Soleil with acute discernment; Then turns to the Mouse, and pets his head, while holding a cigarette between her two fingers.

Soleil turns around, and their eyes meet - He coughs from the smoke, while looking at her.

She just shrugs with her shoulders and eyebrows; Then turns around.

Camera BOOMS DOWN, and we see her standing in her torn-out shoes. (Irene's POV)

IRENE
What lovely pairs of shoes those
once were?

Soleil looks down at her shoes and puts her feet inward in shame.

IRENE
Doesn't your husband think his wife
should have proper shoes to work
in?

SOLEIL
Well, there is always something to
repair in the house.

IRENE
You are completely right!
(beat)
Who needs shoes to walk, when love
makes you fly!?
(laughs)

Soleil turns her head slightly towards Irene with a smile, then comes back up - Her smile fading away shortly after.

Behind her shoulders, we see Irene looking at the wall in front of her, her right elbow is resting on the table -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Oh, forgive this old lady - I
 forgot how it feels to be
 completely soaked in love...That
 well dried a long time ago! Ahh...

Irene stubs out the cigarette in her vintage ashtray, and closes it.

The water for the tea boils out!

Immersed in Irene's flow of thoughts, Soleil completely forgets about the tea, and due to it gives a delayed reaction to the BOILING WATER coming out of the tea kettle. She moves it as quickly as she can.

Cleans herself with the cloth, while addressing Irene -

SOLEIL
 We have -- Chamomile, black tea...
 Globe amaranth...

Irene looks at Soleil, then at cookies, plotting.

Soleil turns around and brings the tea looking at Irene with a soft smile.

Irene winces and their eyes meet again; Her concentrated face turns into a calm one; She smiles back and looks at Soleil as if she has been caught -

IRENE
 What about those cookies?

Moving her eyes to the right, where the cookies are.

Soleil turns around to look at them -

SOLEIL
 Oh... I, I am sorry...

She brings the cookies to Irene; Surprised she wants them; With her head slightly tilted to the side -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)
 Would you like to try them?

Then while holding them, she stops when Irene says -

IRENE
 Me!? I lack a lot of things! But
 sugar?

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)
 -- I had it enough to register as
 the youngest diabetes patient.

Soleil turns around to put them in the wicker waste basket,
 when Irene grabs her by the hand, and stops her by saying -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 I know what the villagers are
 saying about you.
 (beat)
 Pay no attention to them -- They
don't know any better... I am sure
 deep in their hearts they wish to -
 - But they don't...

Soleil looks at the ground.

Irene gently tilts Soleil's chin up -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Those who have allowed themselves
 to be molded...(nods her head while
 saying that) -- Will do anything to
 mold you!
 (in a loud whisper)

Soleil looks up at her with sad, teary eyes.

IRENE (CONT'D)
 You know there is an orphanage
 here, right up this wood's path...
 (points with a finger)

SOLEIL
 Of course I do! I used to go there
 all the time, dreaming I would come
 back home with a little one in my
 arms -- But Georges was always
 worried about how people would
 behave towards the child, knowing
 his not... His.

IRENE
 Ohhh -- What a compassionate man!
 (saying in a ironic way)

She then takes both of Soil's hands in hers and say to her -

IRENE (CONT'D)
 Why don't you pay a visit to it
 once more? I am sure the children
 would love to see you again!

IRENE (CONT'D)
 ... And you could bring them your
 cookies! The nuns would be very
 grateful! -- Huh? What do you say,
 Child?

Soleil engrossed in their conversation, wanders away with
 her eyes.

FADE TO:

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - MORNING 21

We are close on -

A WOVEN BASKET; It is being filled with muffins, cookies and
 milk.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - MORNING 22

Soleil walks on a cobblestone street with the basket in one
 hand, wearing her usual clothes: a white cotton blouse with
 long rolled-up sleeves; tucked in a black maxi skirt, her
 red knitted shawl, and her tattered shoes. Her hair is done
 in a curly twist (semi-messy, low) bun.

VILLAGERS pass her by. **TWO OF THEM** (mother in her 50s and
 daughter in her 30s) greet her with only one head motion,
 (up and down); After she passes them, they stop to look.

VILLAGER NO.1 / MOTHER
 Where is she headed to now?...

VILLAGER NO.2 / DAUGHTER
 I heard she's bringing cookies to
 the orphans now...

Soleil's POV - She hears everything they say, but tries not
 to listen by walking away. We see them behind her back -

VILLAGER NO.1 / MOTHER
 Huh... She's just trying to cover-
 up the truth!

VILLAGER NO.2 / DAUGHTER
 What truth?...

VILLAGER NO.1 / MOTHER
 Well...What... W- Are you
 questioning your own mother?

VILLAGER NO.2 / DAUGHTER
No mother... I just...

VILLAGER NO.1 / MOTHER
I thought so! -- C'mon! You better
get going. Those clothes aren't
going to wash themselves!

As Soleil goes away from them, the sound of their voices are getting lost in the distance.

They are overlapping the ringing and buzzing sound in Soleil's ear - She feels lightheaded and stops.

VILLAGER NO. 1 / Mother - Pulls the daughter away. She looks at Soleil one last time.

Soleil turns around and they see each other.

We see the woman walking away with her mother tightly holding her arm.

Soleil is walking up the hill and into the woods.

FADE TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

23

Her back is turned towards us.

Camera starts from THE CLOSE UP of her head. It slowly PULLS OUT , and we see -

Deep into the woods is - Soleil, standing in the middle of the path, surrounded by a tree tunnel.

In front of her, in the distance is a serene sight - A white **ORPHANAGE**, (one resembling the exterior of the 'Emile Louis Orphanage) with a large clock on top of the residential institution, and a perfectly manicured lawn. On her left and right, we see trees touching one another and creating a fairytale-looking tree tunnel.

We also see a small **MALE SILHOUETTE** from afar. He's looking up at the orphanage.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORPAHANGE (CLOSE UP) - DAY

24

We are close on the **CLOCK**.

It is 11:10. It ticks 11:11! (Symbolizing a new beginning or that one is on the right path, going in the right direction);

Camera BOOMS DOWN - Through the large, glass vintage windows we see **A LITTLE BOY** rushing down the stairs (He stops to look behind him); There is a **NUN**, trying to catch him with a cross in her hands.

They are on the bottom floor now - She finally catches him! Starts to sprinkle him with holy water and orders him to go to his room.

Camera BOOMS DOWN to reveal - The **MAN** looking up at everything we saw with an embarrassed smile, his head tilted down.

Camera PULLS OUT and we see him now behind Soleil's back. She's looking at him, but his back is also turned to her.

He's looking around inquisitively, almost like he's trying to find something; A bit fidgety at time.

SOLEIL

Sir, are you looking for something?... Do you need any help?

A whimsical, kind-hearted, and child-like spirited, yet wise beyond one's years 28-year-old pacifist and an artist named **EMMANUEL (MANU)** is still looking around and at the orphanage, with a constant smile and awe on his face. He's holding a field easel in his right hand; Wearing a 1930's french Villette double-breasted indigo linen chore jacket, linen trousers, a red scarf around his neck, and patched leather sole lace-up shoes.

Answers Soleil with a calm and soothing voice -

EMMANUEL

No, no...

Slightly turns his head and shoulder towards Soleil, eyes still fixed on the orphanage -

EMMANUEL

I know this place like the back of my hand... It hasn't changed a bit, but -- I wonder if it's the same inside...

He finally turns around and their eyes meet for the first time; The soft south wind slowly blows between the two of them -

Making both of his dark auburn, mid-length, unkempt wavy hair, and her dark locks - fly a bit in the air; His little red, neck scarf also moves tremulously - He holds it down with his right hand, then moves his head down to his heart.

Emmanuel stands speechless; He's spellbound by Soleil.

We hear the racing beat of his heart; It pulsates under his fingertips.

He extends his left hand (because his lefthanded) to make a hand shake and smiles.

Soleil reaches out he right one -

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
Whoops! I almost forgot not
everyone is sinistral!

Then transfers the easel in his left hand; Extends his right one, only to see it is covered in red paint!

He wipes it on the jacket.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
Good thing it's still fresh!

Soleil smiles, but is still astonished by Manu's free spirit.

He realizes he's making Soleil uncomfortable so he stops for the moment to collect himself.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
... My name is Emmanuel, but --
Everyone calls me Manu!
(with his hand on his
chest)

Soleil nods her head in respect, looking down -

SOLEIL
Soleil...

EMMANUEL
(recites)
Aah...
*"Close enough to make you warm,
Bright enough to make all worries
disappear into the oblivion of the
night..."*

(beat)
*Nothing would grow without it,
The whole world would stop,*
(MORE)

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
*If only he knew how much he's
 needed -
 He would stay the whole night,
 And even night -- after that."*

Soleil watches him in wonder -

MANU (CONT'D)
 Soleil -- The... The meaning of
 your name.

She's looking left to right, shyly; In mere seconds thinking
 how to break the silence.

She then opens the door of an orphanage for Emmanuel and
 smiles timidly - He smiles back, and heads inside.

CUT TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

25

They stand in front of a long clean hallway. MANU looking
 around, Soleil standing beside him -

SOLEIL
 Did you used to work here? (looks
 at him with trepidation)

MANU
 Work?

He smirks while looking into the distance longingly; Then
 comes back into reality, but still looking in front of him -

MANU (CONT'D)
 Yes... I ~ worked, studied, played
 here...

Manu changes topic; He sighs and looks up with raised
 eyebrows -

MANU
 A lot has changed inside...
 (nodding his head and
 pausing for a bit)

Manu is continues to look around as he walks down the
 hallway, Soleil following him.

MANU (CONT'D)

They seem to be right when they say that a home is like a person -- As soon as someone new enters, its exterior remains the same, while everything changes inside.

She looks and listens to him with great interest; She's deep in her thoughts.

(Manu is aware of the calm and quiet nature of Soleil, and even though he's different and he wants to help her evolve, he doesn't push her limits - Right from the beginning, he takes care of her, like he would take care of a flower, tenderly and patiently; And like a bud, she's very closed off, but as the time goes by, his spirit helps her blossom into a beautiful flower.)

MANU (CONT'D)

How do you know about this place?...

SOLEIL

Well, I bring cookies and milk to the children -- In return, they bring me so much joy, just by being themselves...

She looks at the floor while answering, and then slightly turns towards him, while still looking down and thinking about them.

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

They are like stars - shining for us and waiting to be wished upon.

Manu looks at her with such surprise, he's speechless again.

Soleil puts her woven basket with cookies and milk on the little table on the left side of the entrance of the pantry room.

Soleil opens the door to show Manu how it looks like -

CUT TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE / STORAGE ROOM - DAY

26

We see an old, unused, dusty storage room filled with opened books laying on the floor and some rustic, time-worn furniture and peeling walls;

A LITTLE BOY (the one we saw rushing down the stairs) is drawing windows with charcoal on the wall, in the middle of the room.

We **PUSH IN** on him - A **NUN** comes in with a bucket of water, gets angry at him, and makes him clean the wall. She leaves the room, right after she throws the sponge in the water, making the water splash all over the little boy.

Camera is now close on **A PAIR OF LITTLE BOY'S HANDS** cleaning the charcoal from the wall, and then it -

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE UP of **MANU'S HAND**, which is touching the real window that's looking on the magical backyard of an orphanage.

We **PULL OUT** and see Manu holding his hand on the real window while looking at the backyard, and then when the camera stops (at the doorstep of the room).

He looks at Soleil with such love and gratitude in his eyes; She's looking at him too, but with serene eyes, not knowing what's making him emotional, but wanting to be there for him.

As the camera **PULLS OUT** we also see that the whole room has changed! Besides added windows, the room is filled with tables and chairs, art supplies, and instruments, and it is now painted in peach-orange color, which has been illuminated by the light coming from the windows.

Soleil breaks the silence again, and looks around as she speaks -

SOLEIL

We changed this room a bit... I thought an unused, dusty storage room would not be so fitting for a child. So I told the nuns that I want to help them organize it and make a room where children could feel useful and creative. I call it "An Artist's Room" -- and I told the children that everyone who comes out of it becomes one! But don't tell them I lied...

She smiles for the first time, though still very shy.

Manu looks at her with a soft smile and teary eyes, lowers his neck towards Soleil and tells her almost in a whisper -

MANU

I won't...

CUT TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE / HALLWAY, MANU'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

27

They come out of the storage room and head toward the end of the hallway. They stand in front of the last room.

SOLEIL

Well, all the other rooms have stayed the same. Every child shares the room with another. This is the only room that stayed untouched because no one lived there for years.

(beat)

They lost the number of it...

Manu interrupts her, while looking almost through the door -

MANU

Room number eight.

He then crouches and turns towards her - Points out the little, engraved, laying eight (infinity sign) on the lowered part of the door frame.

Soleil crouches as well and looks at the number, then looks to the left, as she processes the information, then looks at Manu, puzzled.

MANU

(whispering)

Put your ear against the door.

Soleil thinks over, but decides to do it; She puts her ear and hand against the door.

Manu does the same, then closes his eyes.

MANU (CONT'D)

Close your eyes now.

Soleil looks down and to the side, then at him, but decides to trust him and closes her eyes.

CAMERA looks at Soleil and Manu, (standing in the same position / mirroring each other - Closed eyes, one hand on the door, turned towards each other) from the distance (the beginning of the hallway) and it PUSHES IN very, very slowly.

MANU (CONT'D)

What do you hear?

We hear everything Soleil describes -

SOLEIL

I hear the south wind blowing.

MANU

They say it brings change. It is the movement of the Spirit - The revival.

SOLEIL

With the south wind sometimes comes the rain.

Manu opens his eyes to see her -

MANU

Yes... Sometimes it does.

Soleil opens her eyes, looking at Manu. He closed his eyes, right before she opened hers.

MANU (CONT'D)

But we shouldn't forget what comes after it.

She listens and looks at him with such care and interest.

Camera is by now way closer to their faces.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE / MANU'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

28

Everything Manu's describing -

His incantational storytelling skills help us to experience life inside his dream-like, vivid world.

We see light bursting through clouds.

Camera PULLS OUT and we go through the windows of Manu's room. We see only his hands/feet doing what he describes -

MANU (CONT'D)

I see the light - bursting through the clouds. The sound of "Happy Days Are Here Again" by Ben Selvin, comes from a gramophone. I hear someone collecting their paintbrushes.

(MORE)

MANU (CONT'D)
They put the little red-framed-
picture down on the night table...

MANU (CONT'D)
... While making their bed for the
last time, they knock down a framed
portrait painting above their bed,
with a small picture that was
tucked behind the frame...

The picture and the painting fall on the bed; the Bed covers
cover half of their faces, so we can't see them completely.

CUT TO:

INT. ORPHANAGE / HALLWAY, MANU'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

29

We hear a wind howling.

MANU (CONT'D)
It's the portrait of a young man
they never met and a small picture
of a red-haired lady.

We hear and see the door moving a bit and the wind is
getting stronger.

Soleil's eyes are glued to Manu.

MANU (CONT'D)
Finally - they take off their worn-
out shoes and decide to walk out of
the room barefoot, living
everything...

Manu suddenly opens his eyes, after he says -

MANU (CONT'D)
... behind.

(The camera is as close as it can get, their eyes fixed on
each other.)

At that moment we hear the wind opening the window inside
the room, and suddenly the door opens as well.

The two of them sit at the threshold looking into each
other's eyes surprised, while the wind moves the window, and
and the curtains -

Camera PUSHES IN between their heads to reveal the room
exactly as Manu described it.

INT. MANU'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

30

Soleil goes inside and looks at the gramophone - there is Ben Selvin's vinyl cover beside it; His torn-out shoes are under the bed and the painting, with the photograph attached to it resting on the wall next to his bed.

She is in complete shock, but seems to hide it pretty well, due to her calm personality.

After looking at the painting of a man and a photograph of a woman, she turns towards Manu, and we see the resemblance between them.

Manu senses what Soleil wants to ask something, so he changes topics, because he doesn't want to burden her -

MANU

This room has always had a problem with the draft... The windows would open all the time.

(he smiles politely, but awkwardly)

He looks at Soleil and sighs; Then takes his mother's photograph and shows it to her.

MANU

She died giving birth to me. This is the only thing I have from her. Well, this -- and ...

He takes out the perfume, orange **AMULET NECKLACE** in the shape of the heart, which hangs around his neck, and is hidden behind his jacket and red scarf.

MANU (CONT'D)

(re: necklace)

..."The Heart of the Setting Sun".
-- One day I will give it to the love of my life.

Soleil guessing he already has one, lowers her head, but with a smile, understandingly.

MANU (CONT'D)

I left the photograph here because I wanted something to bring me back...

He puts the photograph in his pocket.

MANU (CONT'D)
 (re: portrait)
 And he never wanted to see me -- He
 never wanted to have children...
 I painted him from the stories I
 heard about him.

Soleil is on the brink of crying, but still manages to smile
 with watery eyes and mechanical face.

SOLEIL
 (whispers)
 You did a good job.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE / BACKYARD / PARTERRE GARDEN - AFTERNOON 31

Soleil and Manu walk out of the orphanage, and into the
 beautiful, serene backyard, surrounded by woods. It is
 filled with flowers, trees, and benches; There is also a
 little fountain in the middle of the modest perterre.

They start walking in the garden -

MANU
 I was the lucky one... Had no one
 to force me into anything...
 Nothing was ever expected to become
 of me. (he laughs)

Soleil looks at him worriedly.

MANU (CONT'D)
 And so I thought - "I could easily
 become a scapegrace, and no one
 would care..."

She stairs at him inquisitively -

MANU (CONT'D)
 (turns to Soleil)
 But I didn't. One paintbrush and a
 sheet of paper saved my life!

They stop by the bench -

Manu lays under it and shows Soleil to do the same, by
 tapping the grass and looking to the side.

She declines politely with the motion of her hands.

MANU
This isn't a bed... There is
nothing scary under it...

MANU (CONT'D)
(whispers loudly)
Except for me!

She smiles bashfully.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE / BACKYARD, BENCH - MOMENTS LATER 32

We see their eyes in the gap between the benches.

Soleil is looking surprised and impressed by what she sees,
like she's entered another world.

Manu is laying next to her with one paintbrush in his mouth:

MANU
I used to hide here and paint out
what was missing...

We are now looking at the bench (their POV): The bottom of
the bench is painted with clouds. A couple of seconds pass
and we see an **ALIGNMENT** of the real and painted clouds.

Manu takes one brush from his mouth and PUTS BACK the other
one in. And starts painting the bird that just went by.

MANU
See?... This bird is going to live
forever now.

Takes Soleil's hand and puts a brush in and paints with her
little flying bird.

Soleil is in shock; Doesn't look away, doesn't move - Can
hardly breath.

MANU (CONT'D)
I think we finished this one?

He looks at her.

She nods, then looks down and wriggles out under the bench.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE / BACKYARD, FOUNTAIN - LATE AFTERNOON 33

We are close on the BOTTOM OF THE FOUNTAIN - Water drops fall, creating peaceful atmosphere.

Camera BOOMS UP and through the water droplets we see Soleil and Manu back. They sit by the water fountain.

Camera does an ARC shot.

SOLEIL

Why did you come here?

MANU

I've got nowhere else to go, so I have to make it my shelter, again... If they want me back! -- Which I am not entirely sure they do...

(beat)

I came to visit a place that I used to call home, for many years -- But, I got so much more than I hoped for...

Soleil starts assuming he's talking about her - She looks again to the side like she always does when she gets nervous, but quickly changes the subject -

SOLEIL

A... A shelter?

MANU (CONT'D)

Well -- I know how to paint people, not give them pain.

We hear a civil defense **SIREN** going off (indicating what Manu meant when he said 'shelter'.)

They both get up promptly -

MANU

I will help you get home.

SOLEIL

No, no - that's all right.

She looks to the side, a bit frightened.

MANU

Please let me help you get safe home...

Soleil, more frightened about what people would say, rather than possibly losing her life, interrupts him -

SOLEIL

My husband... He's at war... And,
and... I'm afraid villagers would
start talking if they saw me
with...

Manu starts looking around as if his thinking about what to do, then stops and looks at her with understanding -

MANU

All right then - You should go
home.

Soleil nods with her head.

SOLEIL

Goodbye...
(turns around)

MANU

Good? - Bye...

Soleil starts walking fast towards the woods, leaving Manu alone.

Camera is STATIC - He looks left and right, then looks at Soleil's direction; Leaves the scene-

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS / VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

34

We see Soleil, from a high hill inside the woods, coming out of the woods and into the village; There are soldiers, helping and guiding the villagers, who are rushing to their homes.

Camera PULLS OUT to reveal Manu out of breath, leaning against the tree and looking to see if Soleil got home safely.

Manu takes out his binoculars, and through them we see Soleil approaching her stone fence, entering her garden, and closing the gate; She's walks towards her home, and finally enters it.

Manu is relieved - She's safe, and he also knows where she lives! He relieves a deep sigh.

The street lights go out.

FADE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - MORNING

35

Soleil is walking towards the village market starting to be filled with the villagers; She's making room in her woven basket, while walking.

She stops!

In the center of the market is a large fountain. She bends to the right to see better -

Manu is pretending to be a mentally handicapped man, in need of help; He's walking with two different pairs of socks, and his pants are rolled up. The villagers are looking at him with abhorrence. He looks around, then starts to walk funny.

Villagers are walking around him as if he's infectious. At this point, people are either stopping and looking at him, or gossiping. He's the center of attention!

Soleil doesn't move one inch. Her jaw is slightly down.

He takes off his shoes and looks inside, as if he's trying to find something; Shakes it off;

We see the close up on his feet - His sock is torn right on his toe.

Manu grabs his head full of hair and starts walking around frantically -

MANU

My sock!

He proceeds to walk with only his socks and starts to cry to some old lady, kneeling down. She brushes him off, and takes her child with her, they rush off.

He goes to another person -

MANU (CONT'D)

(cries)

My sock is torn!!! What am I going to do?? What am I... What am I...

The other person moves away as well.

MANU (V.O.)

No one wants to help me, God!!
Maam, can you sow my socks, please?
Anyone, please! Help a poor man...

He saw Soleil in the distance - Their eyes meet, and he smiles. Soleil smiles back at him, but with tilted eyebrows; She covers her mouth with her hand.

We now see Manu in the distance, and hear him like a voice over.

While he continues to clown around, we see and hear two of Soleil's neighbors; They're standing very close to her.

Soleil hears everything they say, and her smile disappears like the Sun behind the clouds -

NEIGHBOR NO. 2

God is always on the side of half-witted! While our perfectly healthy sons go to war, this lucky bastard is free to wander around!

NEIGHBOR NO. 3

I wonder from which asylum he escaped from?

They walk away from her, hand in hand. Soleil looks away in pain, closing her eyes.

Manu falls on the street grabbing one of their ankles and asking them again to sew his sock; Taking his sock off and showing it to their faces.

One **HOSIER** stops and forcefully throws socks at him -

HOSIER

Here you go! Now, go on...Go! Leave us alone!

The camera is behind Soleil's back. There is no one on the street except Manu and Soleil. She's still barely moving, looking straight at Manu.

He picks himself up, shakes off the dust from his clothes, and catches Soleil's look. Her face is a vision of glumness - He makes a sad face, then turns it into a smile, with the motion of his fingers.

MANU

(noiselessly)
Now you try.
(points at her)

She showers him with a wide grin.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE / BACKYARD, GARDEN - DAY

36

Soleil once again sees Manu. He's now playing pantomimes with **ORPHANS**. They all sit in half circle, and he stands in front of them - pantomiming.

A **FIVE YEAR-OLD COLORED CHILD**, sees Soleil and stands up in excitement; Goes to her running and hugs her.

CHILD

Ms! You've come at the right time.
Manu is showing us a new game! Can
you come and guess what he is?

Soleil strokes his chick and nods her head with a sweet smile on her face.

They walk holding each others hands and sit inside the circle with other children.

Manu stands right in front of Soleil, and other children - Thinking about how to pantomime his chosen word.

He's fidgeting; Moving his hands like wings - Starts to accelerate.

Some children are talking amongst themselves.

CHILD NO. 1

A bird! Is it a bird?!

He shows a NO sign with his fingers, and frowns.

He then shows a blossoming flower, then points at himself, and starts flying around.

CHILD NO. 2

It's a butterfly!

Manu goes to him all excited and then when he gets to him he suddenly shows exasperated grimace and a sign with his finger showing NO.

Children giggle.

He falls on the ground exhausted, but happy - Looks at Soleil who is smiling at him as well.

All of a sudden we hear a soft, quite voice -

COLORED CHILD

Love.

Manu slowly turns towards the child, his face turns more serious.

Soleil looks down at him as well in surprise and the child giggles looking at her.

Manu is now face to face with a giggling child, and looks at him authoritatively, then slowly turns it into a smile -

MANU

It is love.

- Kisses the child quickly on the cheek and lifts him up; They walk away from Soleil; Other children follow them.

MANU (CONT'D)

I'm sorry guys! But only the winner gets a kiss!

(beat)

Oh c'mon - Don't fight! We're gonna play tomorrow again! Let's see if I can guess!

MANU (CONT'D)

When did you learn how to read minds, young man?

COLORED CHILD

I know what love is!

MANU

Ohhh... Is that so?

Soleil is still sitting on the grass, all confused, but very happy. She's smiling while looking at Manu playing with the children.

Manu puts the boy on the ground and the children wander off to play together;

CHILD NO. 2

It was the bird!

CHILD NO. 3 (O.S.)

No it wasn't!

CHILD NO. 2 (O.S.)

Yes it was!

CHILD NO. 4 (O.S.)

I am sure it was butterfly!

CHILD NO. 2 (O.S.)

Manu! Manu! Come over here!

MANU

I'm going!

He looks at Soleil, panting; With a wide smile on his face -
He bows down, like at the end of the play. Her sincere laugh
echoes in Manu's mind and heart.

FADE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET / STONE HOUSE - WEE HOURS

37

It is very dark, the sun hasn't risen just yet.

We see breathtaking French landscape.

Camera BOOMS DOWN to reveal an empty village street, where
Soleil lives.

CUT TO:

Camera is focused on the lower part of the metal gate. It
squeaks and moves like ebb and flow;

It follows the petals and dust wind blows into the house
from the kitchen to the other room (bedroom);

In the bed is Soleil's still sleeping; She's seraphic.

Someone's back goes really close to the camera, making the
scene black.

We hear Soleil sigh.

MANU (V.O.)

Shh...

FADE TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

38

Manu is wearing a white half-buttoned cotton shirt, and
high-waisted pants with suspenders attached to them; He
carries an easel on his back, tied with his red scarf.

Soleil is in her night gown, barefeet.

He is carrying her in his arms, and running through the
woods. They go uphill and then turn.

SOLEIL

What are you doing?! -- How did you
know where I live?...

Manu looks behind. Then they go uphill.

MANU

I have something to show you,
Soleil...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER SHORE - DAWN

39

The sun is lighting up the sky, and it glimmers on water.

Alluring, empty, wooden boat is waiting at the shore of the river.

MANU

There is a secret place no one
knows about. I go there to paint,
and collect my thoughts --
Sometimes they go on their own,
but... -- You'll never see a more
beautiful sight in your life!

He goes inside the boat and turns to look again at - Soleil,
covering herself with her shawl; She grips it hard.

MANU (CONT'D)

As soon as you ask -- I turn the
boat around...

She looks one more time behind her, at the village.

Everything is quite and serene, and it seems like the nature
is waiting for her response.

She gives Manu her hands, he takes them and helps her get
inside the rocking boat, barefooted.

FADE TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAWN

40

Manu paddles, while Soleil looks around and watches how to
colors in the sky change.

SOLEIL

I feel like we are walking into it
the Sun.

We see the beautiful green scenery all around them.

Manu stops paddling for a second, looks at Soleil with a
gentle smile -

MANU

We are.

We see a beautiful close up of a Sun at dawn.
 Then PULL OUT, to see Manu; He's looking behind him.
 Soleil observes how the wind plays with his hair.
 She then looks to the side, embarrassed by her own thoughts.
 Manu looks at her -

MANU
 You're thinking about something?

Soleil shakes her head (nothing), then looks back into the water, where she sees the reflection of a bridge -

MANU
 Soleil, we didn't come here to think. Leave the thoughts alone!
 (in all seriousness)

She laughs it off.

They go right under the same bridge she was only looking from her window.

MANU
 Look up!
 (he stops)

Soleil looks up at the - curved, awe-inspiring bridge with mouth open wide and child-like eyes full of wonder -

Camera is on the bridge - it PULLS OUT fast.

SOLEIL
 I've never been this close to the bridge.

Soleil's POV - We are under the bridge, passing by -

MANU
 I've always been fascinated by them. They are the true masters of transition -- Or they make us be!
 (beat)
 See -- They teach us that no matter how far the journey may take us, we will always get to the other side -
 - reinvented.

Manu looks at her lovingly.

Soleil smiles at him, and looks to the right - Leaning over the boat, touching the water.

Camera PULLS OUT to reveal them going under the high, imposing railway viaduct, from the distance.

The sunrise in spring compares to nothing she ever saw.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS, HILLTOP FOREST - MORNING

41

Camera is TRUCKING to the right. It reveals the field covered in all kinds of wildflowers. All the way to the right is Soleil standing on the top of the hill and looking at the distance; Her mouth is covered with both of her hands; Manu comes in the frame.

CUT TO:

There is a crooked tree in the middle of the frame, and Soleil's holding onto it; There is nothing but water and greenery below them; She turns around -

SOLEIL

It is magnificent! I lived all my life dreaming of what lies beyond the bridge...

She notices something with a peripheral view, and looks down to see;

Camera slowly BOOMS DOWN to reveal what she's looking at - A small red pillow and patent leather (lacquered), **PURPLE SHOES**, resting on top of it.

Soleil looks up at Manu -

SOLEIL

What is this?

Manu takes them gently and taps the pillow to show Soleil where she can sit.

She looks at him, pondering. He shows her to sit there, again, but this time with his head and eyes.

She finally does.

He takes her feet and as he's about to put the shoes on, she stops him with her hands.

SOLEIL

Where are my shoes?

MANU

Well, maybe once they were shoes.
But just like people they changed
over time -- Everything has its
expiration date.

(beat)

- I thought - How can we use them?
I turned to the Mouse and asked him
if he wants me to make a bed out of
them for him. Do you know what the
little fault-finding thing said?

Soleil shakes her head slowly looking straight into Manu's
eyes, almost like a child being punished - Her chin is
tucked.

MANU

"You try sleeping in a bed with
holes."

He continues to put the shoes on and laughs.

MANU (CONT'D)

Can you imagine?

Soleil gently runs her fingers over the new patent leather
shoes and smiles while looking at them, but loses the smile
in the twinkling of an eye -

SOLEIL

I can't take them.

Manu looks at her almost disappointedly -

MANU

You need them, Soleil.

(beat)

Just say it's a gift from the nuns
- A kind gesture for taking such
good care of the children - In the
orphanage! - In time of war!!

He grabs her red shawl and puts it over her, so she won't
feel cold.

He does it ever so gently. Then lifts up her loose hair.

They are very close to each other.

Soleil can't move at all.

He grabs her by the hand, they run off to the meadow -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEADOW - MORNING

42

Manu throws himself on the meadow carpet full of flowers. He rests his head on his hands. Soleil follows him, and they both lie on the beautiful green grass full of light purple flowers. Manu has his eyes closed, while Soleil looks up at the sky, surprised by her own nonchalant behavior.

MANU

This used to be my hiding place.
(beat)

MANU (CONT'D)

I would come here as often as I could, as a little boy, and dream about the world out there...

(beat)

You would think that a place as serene as this one could only bring you peace -- But let me tell you the quiet only provokes one's mind... (laughs) It can't be bad, it only brings change!

SOLEIL

Only?

(laughs in disbelief)

MANU

Yes! When you think about it... Everything brings change -- The seasons, the weather, the smile on a stranger's face, the way you respond to things, the way you choose to live, every day... Change is all around, in every breath we take, in every move we make... It's part of the growth of the spirit. We won't get anywhere without it.

She looks in front of her and contemplates about what Manu said.

He stands up to set up his field easel; Soleil looks up at him, and looks up to him.

MANU (CONT'D)

Ughh... Time truly flies, doesn't it? I haven't painted in a while.

(MORE)

MANU (CONT'D)

You wouldn't want me to get all
rusty-dusty, do you?...

(beat)

I'll just paint over here, and you
can enjoy the nature of this place
while I do it. It will be over in
no time...

We see a magical scenery, nature behind Manu is in bloom.
This is what Soleil is looking at.

She smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLTOP FOREST - SUNRISE

43

Soleil is looking at one point, and doesn't move, doesn't
breathe;

We PULL OUT to reveal - Manu, engrossed in painting Soleil.

MANU

(stops to look at her)

You can breathe...

(whispers) - And move.

But don't go too far
away from me. (smiles)

Soleil exhales and smiles.

MANU

You know... I've never seen anyone
with children, who are not even
hers, love them as much as you do.

Soleil slowly looks down -

SOLEIL

I can't have my own children... I
live off the mercy of my husband...
We couldn't agree on the adoption.
My husband... If we were to have a
child, everyone in the village
would know...

We are close on **MANU'S PAINTING** - Soleil's sad face.

Manu puts down the paintbrush and interrupts her, almost
losing his temper -

MANU

Soleil... Why do you care so much about what other people think? - People who don't even bother to get to know your kind nature.

Soleil is confounded.

MANU (CONT'D)

I'm sorry... I didn't mean to startle you... I can't seem to look at you waste your life this way...

She now looks at him with wander in her eyes; Her feelings are all mixed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLTOP FOREST - SUNSET

44

The majestic sunrise makes us believe they're in heaven -

Camera PULLS OUT slowly; Manu and Soleil are sited under the tree looking over inconceivably beautiful river, at the set of sun.

MANU

Your parents must love you so much.

Soleil looks at him, wondering why he said that.

MANU (CONT'D)

They gave you a beautiful, fitting name.

Soleil looks at the distance.

SOLEIL

I often wonder do I know what love is -- It is strange. You can share someone's eyes but look at life dissimilarly...

(continues after a slight pause)

I am different from them, but I still ended up living the same way... as they did.

MANU

Ended up? Soleil, the end is always correlated with the beginning.

She stars examining his uncommon views on life internally.

MANU (CONT'D)

Let me show you something...

Manu takes out of his pocket a drawing of a man on the flying trapeze.

MANU (CONT'D)

He has been doing this ever since he was a child -- This was his last attempt. When he lost his legs, he thought he lost it all.

(beat)

But then he found the love of his life, all dressed in white, listening carefully if each pulse matches up with a heartbeat pumping blood into the arteries.

(whispers)

They lived happily ever after.

We see a black and white photo of the trapeze man and a nurse, laughing in a hospital.

Manu looks at Soleil with a smile -

MANU (CONT'D)

It is never to late -- Until it is.

He touches her hand haphazardly while giving her other pastel drawings he made of different kinds of people he met along his enthralling life; Then goes to his easel -

Moon-eyed Soleil flinches, and is incapacitated by her heart strings.

MANU (CONT'D)

I have just one more thing to finish, and we are done for the day!

He smiles and puts another blank piece of paper and starts a new painting.

Soleil picks a drawing of an older curvaceous lady dressed in almost nothing, standing on a horse. She looks at Manu, with a "what is this" face and a smile.

MANU

Oh that? That is just my love from past life...

Soleil dies out of laughter, but covers her face with a drawing.

Camera PULLS OUT and into the clouds (aerial POV), and it dissolves into white. We hear them talk more and more quietly until it completely disappears.

MANU (CONT'D)

What are you laughing at? -- We had a wonderful, exuberant affair! Oh yes... Until her horse decided to eat my shoe! Then I said to myself - Manu, it is time to get over her... Don't you laugh at me!

Soleil is all smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS / ORPAHANGE - AFTERNOON

45

Manu and Soleil walk together along the forest path; Soleil heads back into the village. They are smiling and talking about something; Manu successfully makes Soleil laugh.

They stop in front of an orphanage. Beautiful side trees are making them feel secluded and safe from the 'talking mouths' out there.

MANU

I brought your clothes. You can change at the orphanage before you go back -- I wanted to paint you in your sleeping clothes, so you can always remember your dreams.

He goes out to hand her the clothes; She takes them.

There is a painting of her on top of them. She loses her smile abruptly.

We see the painting of her with such sadness in her eyes.

She looks up at Manu, with a half smile -

SOLEIL

You are very talented. Thank you.

Manu smiles, but then remembers -

MANU

Oh! I almost forgot!

He starts looking through his artworks, and finds what his looking for.

MANU (CONT'D)

There it is! I painted another one.
I did it in the other half of the
day...

Soleil looks at it - She never saw herself smiling as she did in the other painting.

We now see two drawings side to side, and her hands holding each. The camera is shutting above Soleil's head.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - TWO DRAWINGS

We PUSH IN on the drawings. The first drawing DISSOLVES into a real scene; The other one is still frozen.

In the first drawing, we see Soleil sitting and looking down (Every time she mentions her husband a scene is cut) -

SOLEIL

My husband... It's not what my
husband... It's my husband's
idea... My husband... My husband...
I wouldn't want my husband... Not
my husband...

MANU

What do you want?

Manu breaks Soleil's worrying symphony, with one question - She's left speechless, but still manages to answer -

SOLEIL

I am not sure.

As she says that, the picture freezes and turns back into Manu's first drawing (the scene becomes illustrated again) - Soleil's miserable face is perfectly portrayed in it.

The other drawing comes alive, their voices sounds like they're from the dream, echoing -

Soleil shows Manu his drawings and laughs out. Manu is making her laugh effortlessly -

While we see them laughing out loud in slow motion, we hear a wind howling - It dissolves into Manu's voice; It echoes:

MANU (O.S.)

It is never too late until it is...
It is never too late until it is...
(resonating) Are you laughing at
me?!

(MORE)

MANU (CONT'D)

You're laughing while I'm sharing
an intimate moment of how my shoes
became a patchwork canvas, and
you're laughing at me?...

FADE TO:

EXT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

46

Soleil shares her love for everything 'sweet'. She's being lively while talking about her passion; Something she was never able to do before -

SOLEIL

There are different ways that you
can make them... You dip every
little piece of lemon zest in
caramel, and you let it dry, but...

The sound of her voice dissolves into the howling wind again, and the scene freezes when she smiles with closed eyes and head up, and turns into the lifeless drawing of her again -

Camera is now pointed at Soleil, who looks at the first drawing again, and then she pauses on the second one.

Finally realizing what Manu captured in both of his drawings, she raises her head and with fearsome eyes looks at Manu -

SOLEIL

Is this also me?

Manu looks at her with a half smiles, and a lowered head -

MANU

It can be...

FADE TO:

EXT. STONE HOUSE / PARTERRE GARDEN - DAY

47

Willow tree in Soleil's garden is being slightly moved by the day's breeze.

Camera is focused on its leaves - It is TRUCKING LEFT to reveal Soleil and Irene sitting below it, drinking tea.

Irene hides behind the book she's holding upside down; Her eyes are glued to Soleil, who's crocheting, and smiling.

The cat is having difficulty throwing up hairball. The mouse gets concerned.

We see Irene's eyes behind the book. She puts the book down slowly, to see if meticulous Soleil would notice -

Nothing! - Soleil is reminiscing about the precious time spent with Manu; She doesn't hear or see anything, but memories;

The mouse is now holding onto the back of the cat. He is trying to help him throw up, by giving him the Heimlich Maneuver, but since he's so much smaller than it, he ends up flying up and down, while the cat 'cough-gag-retchs'.

Soleil is still in her own little world, lost in her thoughts.

Irene closes the book acceleratngly and puts it down so hard that the water in the tea moves and the spoon falls from the saucer onto the table.

COUGH!

The cat finally throws out the ball of fur. The mouse is heavy breathing and standing on his feet - looking at Soleil. Then at Irene.

Soleil stops crocheting and looks at Irene only with her eyes, doesn't raise her head.

Irene doesn't say anything, just looks at her.

Soleil is looking at her and then at the mouse, not knowing what had happened. Then turns her head down, and her eyes follow shortly as well - looks down and start crocheting again.

Irene starts talking out of the blue, with an excitement in her voice -

IRENE

Oh, is there anything more
beautiful than the smile of a woman
in love?!

Looking at Soleil and drinking tea.

Soleil stops smiling and looks at Irene skittishly, who is drinking her tea and looking down at the book, with her eyebrows up. Then locks eyes with the mouse who is petting the cat, without looking at it.

MOUSE
There, there...

Turns around to see the cat licking her genital area.

Mouse turns around to look at it -

MOUSE (CONT'D)
Ew...

Soleil looks at Irene again, defending herself, whispering but shouting as well through that whisper.

She's trying to believe her lie while saying -

SOLEIL
Irene, I... I'm not in love!
(looking around)

Irene is bending towards the table worried -

IRENE
You're not?

Soleil calms down just a bit, looks to the left and shakes her head -

IRENE
Did you already tell him?

Soleil leans back a little -

SOLEIL
Tell who?

IRENE
Your husband?! Who else? -- Did you tell him you're not in love with him?!

Soleil opens her mouth, but is left speechless. A few seconds later -

SOLEIL
(whispers)
My husband?

Irene looks at her (but she's looking at the camera really) forming a slow, but steady smile; Picks up a book again, still turned upside down, and pretends to read it.

Soleil looks at the mouse, puts her hand down, he climbs up her skirt and stands on her lap.

She looks at him as if she's waiting for a pep talk. He raises his hands in the air. She then puts on the little red crochet sweater, she made for him.

He expresses tenderness through his reassuring smile.

FADE TO:

48

INT. STONE HOUSE, ENTRANCE AREA / VILLAGE STREET - SUNDOWN

Soleil is cleaning the table from lunch. She hears some knocking on the door.

She goes to the door, with the tablecloth in her hands.

Opens the door, and steps on her threshold.

Camera is TRUCKING to the right - There is no one in near sight, except the villagers which are on the street. One of them greets her, and she smiles back and waves.

Something surprises her, and she flinches and slowly looks down, without moving her body; She even keeps her smile, which is now more robotic.

She then looks down, and we see curled up Manu pulling her by the skirt, like a child in need of help.

He waves and smiles, with raised eyebrows; We can see that he's a little bit embarrassed -

MANU
(sotto voce)
Hello...

Soleil is in complete shock; Looks at the village street, then at him again, afraid that someone would see them -

SOLEIL
What are you doing here?

MANU
Who? (looks to the side) Me? Just taking a little break...

Soleil raises her eyebrows in shock, and looks at the villagers.

SOLEIL
Please go...

MANU

TSS... (draws in saliva) I can't --
I ran from a little inconvenience!

FADE TO:

EXT. ORPHANAGE / STORAGE ROOM, ARTIST'S ROOM - SUNDOWN 49

We are CLOSE ON an antique **SHADOW PUPPET THEATRE**. Paper doll children walk singing and dancing behind the musician leading them. They are in a circus now, watching circus performers.

MANU (O.S.)

They didn't know anything about the trumpeter, except that he looked and sounded cheerful!

We see Manu sitting behind the doll theatre in a dimly lit room holding paper dolls.

MANU

He promised to offer them a place to sleep and a big feast --
Something they could only dream of!
-- They only needed to follow him into the woods and watch the glorious circus performers in front of their very - own - eyes!

As Manu goes to tell the rest of the story, his eyes become watery, and he even lets out a tear, but they can't hear the sadness in his voice -

At that moment - Camera is behind his back, and we see him sitting, low-spirited in the dark while he acts for the intrigued children, who are all eyes and ears; A faint light coming from the doll theatre illuminates their naive, but attentive faces -

MANU (CONT'D)

-- It almost sounded too good to be true, but not having anything in their lives, but themselves, they thought they wouldn't be able to lose much! They wandered off with him, with no worry on their impressionable little minds.

Children's POV - Still close on a theatre -

Camera PULLS OUT, and the soft whitish color created by the candlelight, changes into bright red, and we see the backs of the children - They "OH" and "AW";

Manu acts out the rusty voice of a amicable, but insincere ringmaster -

MANU

"*This night will change the course of your life!*" -- The children didn't know what they got into following the stranger!

(beat)

- But in a blink of an eye, they found themselves trapped inside the cage on a circus podium...

BAM!

Someone barges into the orphanage and the children scream -

Everyone is on the ground! The sound of the soldier's inaudible, intimidating voices echo inside the orphanage.

Manu calms the children, by hugging them tightly -

MANU

Shh, shh, shh, shh, shh...

He raises his body and looks through the window - He notices two more soldiers going towards the orphanage; Comes back down, and the colored child looks up at him fearfully -

MANU

(re: colored child)

It will all be alright! Promise me you'll think about how are we going to save the children from the circus!

(he smiles)

The little child nods with his head, still frightened, but brave.

MANU

I will be back...

They blow out all the candles.

BACK TO:

50

EXT. STONE HOUSE, ENTRANCE AREA / VILLAGE STREET - SAME TIME

MANU (CONT'D)

- The last place a madman should be seen is with children!... So...

Soleil looks at him with compassion and care, she's empathizing with him.

Soleil's **NEIGHBOR** who makes every encounter nerve-racking, has a suspicious look on her face, while looking at Soleil, but decides to greet her insincerely

Soleil looks up at her and immediately spreads out the **TABLECLOTH** to hide Manu.

NEIGHBOR NO. 6
(high pitched voice,
insincere)
Soleeeeil... You're always doing
something around the house!
(whispers) I always say you are the
best housewife in our village.
(shakes her head
nervously, in rabbit
speed)

Soleil smiles uncomfortably.

Manu laughs behind the tablecloth, covering his mouth.

Soleil gives an even more robotic smile.

Neighbor stretches HER neck and looks to the side -

NEIGHBOR
Is there someone behind you?

Soleil gets anxious, but as always quickly comes up with an idea.

She shakes the tablecloth only once, and Manu shows there is no one behind her - It looks like a magic trick - Manu uses that time to get quickly inside the house. (The door was partially opened.)

SOLEIL
(calmly, with the same
smile on her face)
I should go inside.

Neighbor doesn't get what she wants and looks at her with frowning face and rolling eyes.

Goes away acting like she's unbothered.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN - EVENING

51

Manu and Soleil both stand in the middle of her kitchen, facing each other, waiting to hear the silence on the street.

She closes the curtains of her home. And lights one lonely red candle that was resting on the table -

MANU

Phew... That was close!
(laughs)

Soleil turns around to look at him -

SOLEIL

You have to go as soon as the village falls asleep... And this... It can not happen again.

MANU

You are silly! This can never happen again. No moment in time can!

Soleil sits on her chair at the table and sighs, and puts her head on the palm, worried -

Manu sits at the table across from her, and finally makes a serious face -

MANU

You're right... I'm sorry I invaded your space. I didn't want to meet you this way again -- I... I just had nowhere to go.

Soleil looks up at him, surprised.

SOLEIL

Again?

We hear someone knocking on the door very aggressively.

They both turn around and look at the door. Soleil looks at the candlelight and her curtains - There is a shadow of **TWO SOLDIERS / OFFICERS** on it.

Soleil shows Manu where to hide.

SOLEIL

(whispering)
The pantry room!

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE, ENTRANCE AREA / KITCHEN - EVENING 52

Soleil opens the door and we see two almost identical officers standing in front of her: self-confident, arrogant and snobbish.

OFFICER NO. 1

Good evening Ms! We are on the duty to find a lost, mentally unstable, and perhaps dangerous unknown man. He was found wandering around our village and disturbing people a couple of days ago. Have you seen anyone with that description lately?

Soleil glances to the right and shakes her head slowly.

OFFICER NO. 1 walks inside the house; The other one follows behind - He brushes up Soleil's shoulder, cleans his teeth with his tongue, and makes a sound while doing it. Looks around.

Soleil is motionless.

Manu is watching it all in the **MIRROR** from the crack on the door of the pantry room. The pantry room is way too small for him; He is squished inside.

OFFICER NO. 2

You should learn to lock your door Ms.

OFFICER NO. 2 caresses Soleil's cheek slowly.

Camera is close on the motion of his **FINGERS** and Soleil disgusted face. The sound of it is also amplified.

OFFICER NO. 2 (CONT'D)

(whispers behind her ear)

You never know who might come in... (laughs maliciously and comes close to her) - Unless you intentionally leave it open...

BAM!

We hear a loud noise - **A GLASS BRAKE** - Something is broken in the other room (Soleil's bedroom)!

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

53

They come rushing in, only to see a half-opened door of the pantry room, a shattered jar, and strawberry jam on the floor.

They open the door wide and the Mouse is sitting inside; His face is smeared with jam and he has his finger up in the air; He's right about to lick the jam off of it, when he sees them and pauses looking at them with open mouth, then decides to do it -

The OFFICER NO.2 gets agitated, and decides to step on him, but Soleil interferes.

She picks up the broom and pretends to chase the mouse, and he goes along with it.

SOLEIL

Shoo, shoo!

The mouse runs between the officers and frightens them, making them move away from her bedroom. He practically chases them out.

SOLEIL

We have problems with rodents here.

Soleil stays in her bedroom, acts like she's cleaning the floor with a broom, while they go.

OFFICER NO. 2

(angry, shouts)

Maybe you should leave traps behind!

SOLEIL

Thank you for the concern.

Soleil leans against the wall and drops to the floor, sitting and holding her head in palm again.

She suddenly sees someone under her bed, and tilts her head to the side to see who it is.

It's Manu! He wobbles around and puts his index finger on his mouth, then shows her the door.

She closes her mouth with both of her hands, and turns around.

We see two pairs of black boots still in the house standing / pausing, then walking out of the house.

Mouse finally closes the door behind them.

Manu relaxes a bit with closed eyes, then looks to the side again to see Soleil.

She still has her hands on her mouth, but starts laughing, and covering her whole face.

Camera is now shooting from the ceiling - Weird angle. It is close on MANU'S HANDS - He puts them down so that the Mouse can climb up. Soleil pets him;

Camera now PULLS OUT and we see her whole bedroom, with her writing table, the window, the train going by in the distance, the jam and the shattered glass still lie on the floor and them sitting on the floor all together.

Manu's worried about Soleil; We hear them talking quietly -

MANU
(re: Soleil)
Are you fine?

Soleil nods with a reassuring smile on her face -

MANU
I'm sorry...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

54

MANU
I brought you something...

Manu puts the bundle stick on the wooden kitchen table.

Soleil is taken aback.

MANU
Open it!

Soleil unties the scarf, and Manu takes it and puts it around his neck - It's his red scarf. He used it to wrap presents.

She opens it and we see -

The book - Full of hand-written recipes: Danish Butter Cookies, Persephone's Mirror Glaze Cake, Blue Pea with Lotus Paste Jelly Mooncake, Mizuyokan with Chrysanthemum, etc.

She looks at Manu with a smile and sad eyebrows -

SOLEIL

These are the recipes from all
around the world!

MANU

The perks of living on the streets
of Paris as starving artist.

She then looks for other presents - There are many
different, spectacular Springerle molds, wooden engraved
rolling pin, and different kinds of metal cookies cutters.

SOLEIL

These are beautiful!

Looks at them fascinatedly.

MANU

Should we try them?

Soleil is all smiles.

- Insert music -

Everything is in FAST-MOTION -

Manu lights up the candles in wine bottles and puts them
everywhere in the kitchen.

Soleil is preparing everything for the making of cookies and
cakes. He brings her everything she asks before she does.

He's listening and tossing her all the supplies (and
clowning around, to make her happy).

CUT TO:

Soleil is bringing foreign recipes alive with her culinary
gifts:

She dusts the kitchen table with flower and rolls the dough,
then presses molds into the it.

DISSOLVE TO:

She boils the water and puts dried butterfly blue pea
flowers. The water turns into indigo blue.

She passionately explains the process to Manu, who is
smitten by her;

He looks at her lovingly, resting his head on his palm; When
she notices him, he sits up and acts all normal.

She stops talking and we see a bewildered look on her face;

DISSOLVE TO:

He starts making sketches of her there, while she decorates the cake with the glaze.

DISSOLVE TO:

Manu stands up and goes to smell the cookies, but the cream ends up on his nose. He is now trying to lick the cream with his tongue.

(He's constantly trying to make her laugh, and it's working.)

He frowns while looking at his index finger as if he's thinking about quantum physics;

Wipes the cream from his nose with it looks at the finger again, and puts it on Soleil's nose, still with a frown face
- They both start laughing...

DISSOLVE TO:

- Back to NORMAL SPEED -

Camera is shooting from a ceiling - It is TRUCKING to the left; The immaculate table is filled with detailed cookies and other dainties, made by Soleil.

- Music gradually quiets down -

They are both seated at the table.

The CAMERA stops, when Soleil puts the last detail -

Red rose on top of the Persephone's Glaze Cake.

The kitchen counter and sink are filled with kitchen supplies and pans, behind them.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP - BLOOMING FLOWER INSIDE A TEA

55

Blooming tea ball floats inside the boiling water.

Camera slowly PULLS OUT - We see a TIME-LAPSE of a blooming flower inside a glass teapot, situated in the middle of the table.

Manu is sitting on the left side of the table, and Soleil is on the right - Across from each other.

Soleil gently pushes the plate with butter cookies to Manu with a kind smile.

MANU

Oh... I, I can't eat those...

Soleil loses the smile instantly.

MANU (CONT'D)

These deserve to be in Louvre, not
in my stomach!

Soleil looks down and grabs her neck with one hand. She is not used to compliments.

MANU (CONT'D)

Oh, I know now...

(beat)

You are one of those people who can
turn sand dust into gold?

The flower in the teapot behind them is still opening.

Soleil smiles, but shakes her head left and right, and pauses -

MANU (CONT'D)

You are an artist of life, Soleil.
You are just disguising it well! To
make something out of nothing, and
find the beauty in everyday life -
It's the greatest gift one can be
given!

(beat)

The flower is almost in full bloom -

MANU (CONT'D)

Many turn the world upside-down to
find what you have, not knowing
it's already inside of them - To
have a love for life as it is --
Simple, in all its complexity -- is
to have it all!

Soleil is enchanted by Manu's perception of life; And frankly, she has never heard anyone talk so eloquently, and with such expression.

He takes one cookie, and observes it; holds it in his hand.

MANU (CONT'D)

What does your husband think about
your obsession?

(MORE)

MANU (CONT'D)
(laughs)

Soleil looks down at her lap, and starts collecting cookie crumbs -

Manu finally tries it: Takes a small bite, while holding the other hand under his chin, so that he doesn't make a mess -

MANU (CONT'D)

Mmm...

She notices his cautiousness and good propriety; She forgets he asked he something -

SOLEIL

I... I'm not sure... I think he likes them - Considering he eats them before he even looks.

Manu stops eating -

MANU

Soleil -- I think you should be more like the Sunlight...

(beat)

Passing through filthy places, without becoming tainted.

Soleil is taken by surprise, she looks at him, then glances at her husbands old wardrobe resting on a chair behind Manu; Stands up from the table -

SOLEIL

It is getting late...

She then turns to go to her bedroom.

MANU

Thank you!... For everything.

Soleil stops and turns to look at him, but can't; She's holding onto the oval doorway, and smiles while nodding her head;

She continues to walk towards her bedroom and disappears into the dinginess of her bedroom.

Manu lets out a long, deep breath.

Mousy Soleil emerges from the darkness of her room; She's almost glued to the stone doorway walls, hiding like a little child -

SOLEIL
Manu... Thank you.

He raises his face as long as a fiddle and smiles at her.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - DOORWAY - NIGHT

56

We are CLOSE ON -

The lantern (with a lit candle inside of it), attached to a wooden, crooked branch, hanging on the wall, next to her bed, slightly moves left and right - indicating that someone moved it and lit up the room a short time ago...

We see the reflection of Soleil laying in bed on the glass part of the lantern.

Camera slowly PULLS OUT of the bedroom. On the way we see -

Soleil, who is, indeed, fast asleep; She looks like an angel with her folding (prayer) hands.

A plethora of books, stacked on top of each other, serve as a night table - A cup of tea is resting on a vintage embroidered coaster, and a glass vase full of wildflowers (those found in the field on the top of the hill) on it.

As we PULL BACK more, we see -

Manu, sitting on a chair by the doorway (the part of the house separating the kitchen and the bedroom); His back is turned to us.

Soleil's vintage radio also peeks behind the left side of the wall.

He's sketching Soleil while she's asleep, then stops to really look at her.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

57

Manu moves the curtain, and looks at the moonlit street; There is only one house left with the light on. He moves to the side, so no one can see him. The light goes off.

He goes to Soleil, covers her with her red scarf, opens the lantern and blows the candle.

It's complete dark.

FADE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

58

Soleil wakes up and looks at her red shawl on top of her, she's surprised; Looks in the direction of the kitchen, while she covers herself with the shawl.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN MORNING

59

Enters the kitchen - She's wonder-struck.

It is spotless! Everything is cleaned and in place. (Manu did it, when she fell asleep.)

There is something on the table.

She goes to see what it is -

Drawings of her, done in charcoal, piled up.

She strokes them ever so gently and moves them a bit, over the table (not showing everything) - doesn't pick them up yet.

CRACK!

- At that moment, a strong south wind opens the door wide.

The drawings fly everywhere around her.

She hurriedly collects scattered drawings on the floor, kneeling down. She's almost crumpling them, in fear of them flying out of the house.

We finally see all of them clearly - There is her: when she was sleeping, when she was baking and laughing, at the orphanage with children, on the boat, etc. - As Manu saw her; She was happy in all of them. It almost seems like a dream to her.

But there is something DIFFERENT from the reality - She's wearing his mother's heart necklace in ALL of them.

She stands up leisurely, holding onto the table, (Camera BOOMS UP with her) and we see - A petite stumpwork embroidery 'petal bag' resting on the end of it.

We see her delicate, yet skillful hands carefully opening the bag.

She sighs and covers her mouth.

She takes it out of the bag slowly, but steadily, and we see
- Manu's heart amulet NECKLACE !

NOCK! NOCK!

She turns to the side and looks who's knocking on the door.

It's Irene - She's holding onto the door jabs, out of
breath. Can't seem to form a full sentence without taking a
pause.

IRENE

The war... The war, (shakes her
head with closed eyes) It's over...
They are coming back home,
Soleil... Georges should be home...
tomorrow.

Camera FAST PUSHES INTO Soleil's worried face. She's lost
for words; Holds the drawings and the necklace even tighter.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

60

Soleil gathers her hair and puts a vintage hair pin/ornament
in it; Adjusts her clothes; Puts her old shoes on.

She then reaches her hand under the bed and takes out the
purple shoes Manu got her - Goes to put the them in the
pantry room. Kneels down.

There we see Mouse following Soleil's every move; She puts
the shoes in the dark corner of the pantry - They almost
disappear in the ill-lit space.

After she associates the act of hiding the shoes and the act
of hiding her love for Manu, she looks at the mouse as if
she's searching for an answer.

He holds his petite hands together, and looks at her with
sad eyes and lowered ears, like he wants to tell her
something, but can't. She is looking at him as well, waiting
for him to say something, then looks away, and gets back up.

CUT TO:

We see the radio standing on the left side of the room, the
wall next to the kitchen - Soleil's approaching it. She
turns the radio on -

ORSON WELLES (V.O.)

" You are listening to a presentation of Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air in an original dramatization of "The War of the Worlds" by H. G. Wells...."

Her window is opened, and it moves; Papers and letters fly over her writing table - Showing us the play of a south wind. A group of clouds enter Soleil's bedroom. -

ORSON WELLES (CONT'D)

" The performance will continue after a brief intermission."

Soleil stands in the middle of her bedroom, hopeless, looking into the distance (her head is in the clouds - literally and figuratively).

She's on auto-pilot, holding onto the coal iron box, preparing mentally for the tedious housewife obligation - In this case ironing.

While she's listening to the screeches on the radio -

White-colored clouds become more and more transparent, as they approach her; Some stop right above her head, and some find themselves floating around the room behind her.

She first puts Georges **WHITE CLEAN CLOTHES** on a smooth surface.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)

" I have been hiding in this empty house near Grover's Mill -- a small island of daylight cut off by the black smoke from the rest of the world..."

(Soleil steps into Professor's shoes and everything he says connects with her own life.)

- As she breaks the **CHARCOAL** into small pieces above George's clean, white clothes, and puts them inside the iron box with finely chopped pieces of wood, we see superimposed in a giant cloud above her what she's day-dreaming of -

She's sitting at her writing table and looking through her window, at a beautiful nature village picturesque scenery.

She looks down to see two of her neighbors - They're looking at her back and gossiping; There appears to be another neighbor and her mother as well - More of them are piling up in a double exposure.

They are pointing fingers, and talking all together at once; It seems like they are getting closer and closer to her. She closes her windows, and turns away from them, holding them with her whole body, looking frightened, while the faces behind her disappear.

- Soleil burns crumpled pieces of paper and puts them inside the iron, with everything else. We see it closely now, there is only one part of the paper that is not burned down yet, and it says - Love, Sole (the one which was intended for her husband). It burns down completely with the rest. She closes the iron lid and starts ironing the clothes without looking down at them.

She's now too far away from the present moment. Still stands calmly, her eyes lost in the distance, while a great flame of fire is being formed right next to her. She waits while the iron heats up.

PROFESSOR V.O. (CONT'D)

" All that happened before the arrival of these monstrous creatures in the world, now seems part of another life... a life that has no continuity with the present, furtive existence... "

Still superimposed above Soleil, who is now ironing the clothes without looking down at them; She's completely immersed in her reminiscence session --

Manu looks at Soleil in love while she shows him the **restored pantry room** in the orphanage. The children come inside the pantry room and rush towards Soleil, they hug her; **DISSOLVES INTO - the top of the hill** - Soleil's hair flies everywhere due to the strong wind - Manu moves it from her face and starts to braid it. She sits paralyzed; **DISSOLVES INTO - the background in the orphanage** - Soleil pantomimes for the children; She shows a sad face, then turns it into a smile with her fingers; Manu points at her (You?), Soleil shakes her head and laughs.

- Surprised to hear the exact description of her - She looks down at her black, charcoal hands, and her old, tattered shoes;

PROFESSOR V.O. (CONT'D)

" I look down at my blackened hands, my torn shoes, my tattered clothes, and I...

Another superimposed, above Soleil, who is trying hard not to cry after going through a rollercoaster of emotions; -- Soleil is trying to help Georges get dressed; He gets angry and walks out of the house, getting dressed on the way.

PROFESSOR V.O. (CONT'D)

"... try to connect them with a professor who lives at Princeton..."

Soleil walks out and goes after him; She stands in the middle of the street looking right, where Georges went but turns to the left, and looks at the woods. Takes out a monocular, and sees an orange splash of light which dissolves into Manu smiling and waiving at her; She smiles and waves as well, but the smile slowly turns into a crying face;

PROFESSOR V.O. (CONT'D)

"... and who on the night of October 30th, glimpsed through his telescope an orange splash of light on a distant planet... "

A superimposed dissolves into a plain rain cloud;

She looks down and finally sees - The charcoal is all rubbed into the clothes. They are ruined!

As she's holding, and looking at destroyed clothes, she starts to cry; Her whole bedroom is filled with rainy clouds;

PROFESSOR V.O. (CONT'D)

"... My wife, my colleagues, my students, my books, my observatory, my... my world... where are they? Did they ever exist? Am I Richard Pierson? What day is it? Do days exist without calendars? Does time pass when there are no human hands left to wind the clocks?... "

As Professor mentions "My wife...", she turns around to look at the lonely photo on the wall;

Camera CRASH ZOOMS on it, and we see Georges sitting on a chair, and she's standing next to him with a robotic smile;

The black and white photo becomes real - Someone hands Soleil her wall clock, and she looks at the camera while winding back the clock; Everything except her is in fast motion - When Georges stands still and stops moving, she hands over the watch and stands next to him in the same position -

They are standing side by side, like matches in a box. They look like they were forced to be there, dressed in their wedding apparel.

We see the photographer's hands showing them what to do - Georges throws himself on a chair, and sits carelessly; Photographer shows him to put his legs together and sit up; He does it unwillingly; He then tells Soleil to put her hand on his shoulder; Discontented, but does as was told; Their faces are emotionless; He shows Soleil to smile, and she does.

FLASH! The picture is taken, and the white flash **DISSOLVES** into -

Teary-eyed Soleil, with mind like a tree in a storm, goes back to her radio and hastily changes the radio station.

We hear The Ink Spots:

*" Into each life, some rain must
fall, But too much is falling in
mine, Into each heart, some tears
must fall, But someday the sun will
shine... Some folks can lose the
blues in their hearts, But when I
think of you, another shower
starts, Into each life, Some rain
must fall, But too much is falling
in mine..."*

CUT TO:

I/E. STONE HOUSE / THE VILLAGE STREET - MORNING

61

- The music continues -

Soleil is standing on the threshold of her home, leaning against the door frame, hopelessly looking into the distance. She suddenly lifts her head up, as if she saw something.

Soldiers are coming back home, into their wife's arms;
 Mothers and fathers waiting for them to come back from war
 as well; They are all crying, hugging and kissing, and going
 back home. There is no sight of Georges...

DISSOLVE TO:

I/E. STONE HOUSE / THE VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

62

- The music slowly fades away -

Soleil hasn't moved all day; Day has turned into night;

The street is empty. She turns around and is about to close
 the door behind her - Someone clears HIS throat.

Soleil, still inside. Looks up, and finally opens her eyes a
 bit -

SOLEIL
 (whispers)
 Manu!

She smiles right after she says his name; Turns around
 quickly and finds herself in shock. There is someone else at
 her door.

Starting from black boots to the peaked hat - Camera TILTS
 UP and reveals a **MILITARY OFFICER**.

He greets Soleil by putting his head down once; He looks up
 at her, his words are mere formalities.

MILITARY OFFICER
 The commandant has entrusted me to
 express his deep regret that your
 husband, Georges, lost his life
 fighting honorably for his country
 and people. His body could not be
 found on the battlefield, and he is
 presumed to be dead. The commandant
 extends his deepest sympathy to
 you.

Soleil slides down by her door frame;

We see officer's boots walking away from Soleil's house.

CUT TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

63

Soleil takes her lantern with a lit candle inside; She lifts her pillow and takes Manu's drawings of her. She heads outside -

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE HOUSE / GARDEN

64

She starts digging with her hands; On her knees, sobbing; Wipes her tears and face with muddy hands.

She physically berries the painted memories, but mentally - she berries the hope that she will be able to love and live with Manu one day.

MANU (V.O.)

Making a commitment to live as a fish on dry land is like giving slow and painful death, disguised as life, the right to lead you wherever you go...

She has a nervous breakdown. Stops halfway through. Breathes heavily, and holds herself.

MANU - V.O. (CONT'D)

"... Soleil made that commitment when she was only a little girl; She would continue the tradition of obeying to keep everyone at peace -
- Everyone but her soul..."

Falls on the ground, hopeless.

Camera PULLS AWAY into the sky; The rain pours all over her, the drawings and the muddy ground.

MANU - V.O. (CONT'D)

"... And even though her moral compass always pointed her in the right direction, she could not stop thinking about someone who changed her life - someone who's not her husband - and someone who never will be... "

The wind and rain blow out the candle in the lantern.

FADE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - MORNING

65

Soleil stands in line at the village market. She's third in the line.

Everyone is very agitated. But she stays fairly calm, considering what she went through, emotionally.

It is her turn to buy.

She takes her time to pick.

People behind her try to rush her, by talking to the salesmen.

SALESMEN

Ms. -- Can I help you with anything today? There is a big line over here.

Soleil leans back a bit and sees the line of people watching her. A big bulky man chews straw, with crossed arms, and his quiet, little hunchbacked wife stands looking frightened; Behind him, another big-bosomed lady, with two ill-mannered children fighting, looks at Soleil, then slaps both of them; Behind her two young cheeky ladies, laughing at her.

Soleil picks one apple, but looks at the salesman.

SOLEIL

I'll just have one apples...

VILLAGER WOMAN

One apple?! We waited for her to buy one apple? -- This is outrageous!

As she's about to pick one and hand it to the salesman, she touches someone's hand, who's already on it -

Manu kindly raises his eyebrows, and lowers his head towards Soleil, as a form of inconspicuous greeting.

She moves her hand and turns toward the apples.

Manu looks at her black clothes; She's wearing her old, torn-out shoes as well.

MANU (CONT'D)

(whispers)

What happened Soleil?... You are dressed in black?...

She's still looking at apples, manifestly figuring out what to say.

VILLAGER WOMAN

Hey -- Who is this man?! He cut in line! We are already waiting for the Princess and the Pea over here!

VILLAGER MAN

It's that imbecile again!

Manu is confused by their Neanderthal behavior. Soleil squeezes her dress with her fist.

Villager man and salesman double talk, and then the villager woman comes in as well.

SALESMEN

We don't have all day here! The queue is very big -- You want ONE apple??

Overwrought Soleil is 'backed into a corner'; The crowd of villagers on her left, Manu on her right, and the salesmen in front of her - She can't find the words and looks down -

VILLAGER WOMAN

This is just unforgivable!

Manu tries to talk to Soleil, but she can't seem to move.

MANU

Soleil... Look at me!

VILLAGER MAN

Hey -- Get away from the woman! Can't you see she doesn't want to talk to you?! Get away, you scumbag!!

He tries to hit him with an apple, but misses.

Soleil finally turns to defend Manu, without giving any eye contact -

SOLEIL

No, please! He didn't do anything! -- One apple for me... That's all.

Soleil gives the money and turns towards Manu quickly -

SOLEIL

(whispers)

Meet me in the church yard.

Irritated salesman takes the money -

SALESMEN

Next!

VILLAGER WOMAN

Finally! What a day!

SALESMEN (V.O.)

I'm sorry...

(they continue to talk)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH YARD, SUNDAY MORNING - DAY

66

On the top of the church we see a cross, and then a clock.

It's 10:28am.

Camera BOOMS DOWN and we see -

Soleil and Manu sit next to each other on a little bench, looking down; Manu raises his eyes and looks in front of them -

(The church is right behind them, and the little cemetery is in front of them, symbolizing their state of mind - in the middle of living and dying.)

Two women stand together, at the cemetery. They brought flowers for someone who died. They are also dressed in black.

Manu turns towards Soleil; She looks tired and lifeless, almost unable to put her usual 'mask' -

SOLEIL

My husband died...

Manu sighs

MANU

I should've known something is not right! Why didn't you look for me, or anyone.

Soleil repeats with minimum sound in her voice, but tells it like she's shouting, with closed eyes -

SOLEIL

I am a widow!

Manu talks over her -

MANU

I thought I might have hurt you
with something I said or did... And
so I never came. I'm sorry Soleil.

We see her hands resting in her lap, gathered. One tear
falls down on one of them.

Manu lowers his neck to look at Soleil's face. He wipes her
tears away.

She stops him by taking his hand; She grips it hard, while
closing her eyes, and trying not to cry anymore.

She finally turns towards him, with tear falling from her
eye -

SOLEIL

It was the wind --

She looks up at the cross, then let's out a long breath, and
lowers her eyes to avoid Manu's gaze; Still holding his hand
though -

Manu looks at her with teary eyes, and locks her hand with
his other hand.

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

It was the wind. -- Everything
started with the south wind. With
the warmth of its hands, it brought
change.

(beat)

That change was you -- So yes...
You did hurt me!... You hurt me the
moment you walked into my life, as
an uninvited guest; But somehow the
moment you walked in, the doors
locked, and I couldn't find the
key...

(she can't stop crying)

I couldn't seem to picture my life
without you anymore... You started
to appear everywhere. You were in
every corner of my mind. You gave
life to objects, animals, and even
sunsets -- And the simple thought
of my love for you entangled me in
sorrow!

Soleil closes her eyes saying the last sentence, puts her
head down as well.

Manu lifts her head and finally kisses her -

DING! DONG! DING! - We hear tintinnabulation.

The married couple comes out of the church, their family is throwing white petals, and they also fall on Soleil and Manu. People are celebrating the newlywed couple, and the church bells still ring.

Soleil moves away - Everyone stops.

Two mournful ladies dressed in black, and the married couple with their family stops as well.

Everyone is looking at them, not moving, trying not to breath -

Soleil is looking into Manu's eyes -

SOLEIL
(whispers)
This can't be...

She stands up, and starts walking back and forth, Manu follows her, trying to calm her down -

Every time she says something, the ladies in black move towards her; Every time Manu talks, the couple moves towards them -

SOLEIL
I don't know what's happening to me! This... This is...

MANU
Soleil, calm down...

SOLEIL
This isn't who I am... This isn't normal behavior!

MANU
It is perfectly normal -- We love each other!

SOLEIL
No we don't! -- We can't...

MANU
Yes, we do! - Why can't you admit it to yourself? We are only happy when we're together.

SOLEIL
Manu, I am a widow -- Widows do not remarry!

Sorrowful ladies almost touch her shoulders; One is on the right, one is on the left.

MANU

Are you going to spend your whole life with a ball and chain attached to your heart? Is that all you wish out of this life?!...

Soleil listens to him while she swallow her tears-

MANU (CONT'D)

And what is normal anyway!?!...

SOLEIL

Please stop...

MANU (CONT'D)

Is it normal to spend your whole life with someone who doesn't even notice you, who is not grateful that you are living and breathing the same air?

She turns around at the camera, back towards Manu, and everyone in the background is now looking at her - Waiting to see what she'll say!

MANU

- You are also a human being - Don't you have dreams and desires?... Why do you keep running away from your *Heart's Desire*?

SOLEIL

(whispers)

Why, why, why, why?!

She turns around -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

Do you really believe I have never asked myself that?... Just because I sit in silence all day, doesn't mean my mind doesn't run free.

She let's one more tear fall down, and closes her eyes, before opening them and looking at around the camera. -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

My mind is a refugee. My heart, a vagabond, and my body -- is woman's.

(MORE)

SOLEIL (CONT'D)
 (looks at the camera)

She turns to Manu -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)
 It is what's expected of me to do.
 Obedience is my one and only dowry.
 It is how my mother lived, and her
 mother before her; Now it is my
 turn... At the cost of my health
 and happiness, I will not break my
 promise. I don't expect you to
 understand. -- I don't expect
 anything these days...

Manu looks like he's gone through war. He slowly looks down from Soleil, a tear falls down from his eye, nods his head, takes a breath through his nose, and looks at Soleil, talking with long pauses, trying to stay strong -

MANU
 I pray... that you'll remember the
 promise you made to yourself...
 before you came here... as a woman.

He turns around to walk away, but stops and turns back towards Soleil -

MANU (CONT'D)
 This tear... Didn't fall, because I
 lost you... It fell -- because you
 lost yourself...

Manu walks away - Bride and groom take him by the hand, and with the rest of the family they walk him out of the churchyard as casualty.

Soleil stands alone, and weeps.

Camera BOOMS DOWN and we see red apple in Soleil's outstretched hand.

Two grieving ladies approach her. One is on her right, and one is on her left. They walk away hand in hand, and Soleil's apple falls on the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAME / DAYS LATER

67

Rotten red apple, left where it fell. A worm comes out of it.

FADE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - DAY

68

Soleil looks at the apples.

SALESMEN
(re: Soleil)
One apple?

Soleil nods her head, embarrassed. Looks down, a little bit to the right, and glimpses at something or someone who she might've known.

She turns away, but it tickles her fancy, so she looks again imperceptibly.

Drops her woven basket on the floor - Something captures her eye, living her speechless; She walks towards it cautiously; She's gobsmacked -

SALESMEN
Hey! You forgot something! This one
- (raises his eyebrows and lifts
his hands up along with his
shoulders) -- I tell you!

Doesn't turn around and starts slowly approaching the person she noticed from afar. Stops, and starts shaking her head in disbelief -

Still not noticing her, but looking all around, like his hiding from someone - Dressed in expensive clothes from head to toe, the latest fashion, stops at Soleil and their eyes meet. It is - GEORGES!

She looks at him, starting from the bottom up.

He finally lays his eyes on her, and almost in anger looks away to the side.

SOLEIL
(whispers)
Georges?!

George, upset to see her, with a tongue in cheek, looks away from her.

SOLEIL
Where were you? They told me you
were dead...

Soleil falls on the ground, holding onto his pants, in disbelief.

CAMERA shoots from above, and it focuses on his knees and shoes.

He doesn't respond, but starts yelling-whispering at her -

GEORGES

You calm down - The people are watching!

Soleil lets go of his pants; Puts her hands on the ground - She's in shock; Her right hand covers her mouth.

RED VARNISHED HEELS enter the frame.

MISTRESS

Oh my goodness -- Georges, darling!
Don't let vagrants kneel down and ask for money. You have the means now -- Give her some change...

Soleil raises her head and sees: a blonde, blue-eyed good looking woman, holding onto Georges. She's dressed in beige and has red lipstick on.

She laughs out loud, provocatively, and looks behind Georges. He looks down at Soleil with disgust and uninterest at the same time and throws the change at her.

The frame freezes on them and the flying, shining coins. (It is shot from Soleil's POV).

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MILITARY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

69

Georges lays in the hospital bed, while his mistress bandages his head; Her upper part of the body is way too close to his head, almost touching his nose.

MANU (V.O.)

She was a combat medic at the front
- Dedicated to her work - Good at mending wounds.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRENCH WARFARE - DAY

70

Georges is sitting on the ground with other soldiers. He is in the corner. Everything is quite -

BOOM!

A cannon shell explodes way too close to their trench warfare. A lot of smoke clears out, and everyone's soul seems to have left their body.

Georges moves his hand; He's trying to grab onto something.

He leaves everyone without a single look.

MANU (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

... A cannon shell hit close to their trench warfare. Georges was the only ones who didn't die.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MILITARY HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

71

A military hospital, done like a doll house. Military patients are being treated there.

MANU (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

... During the evacuation, they decide not to appear at the infirmary, but to continue their (clears his throat) 'healing' in - the city of love.

Camera CRASH ZOOMS OUT and PANS LEFT -

We see Georges and his mistress sitting in a 1939 Delahaye 165 Cabriolet, in the middle of nowhere - There is nothing except the hospital and war ruins.

She kisses him on the cheek and they drive away leaving only the dust behind them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER - NIGHT

72

Close on Eiffel Tower's lights.

Camera PULLS OUT and we see the two of them sitting in a restaurant, toasting with champagne; She smiles thievishly while drinking and looking at Georges.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRENCH WARFARE - DAY

73

Officers look around; dead bodies are around them. One of the officers picks up his documents - a list of dead soldiers inside.

OFFICER NO.3
Did you find him?

OFFICER NO. 4
No Sir! No traces of him!

He writes George's name down.

MANU (V.O.)
(CONT'D)
... And as such, they lose track of them in the military records...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER / HOSTEL - NIGHT

74

Georges sitting in a hotel room. His mistress's calves are in front of the camera. Under pressure, he swallows his saliva. Her underwear falls on the floor.

MANU (V.O.)
(CONT'D)
... and are considered dead after fighting honorably for those waiting at home.

BACK TO:

EXT. VILLAGE MARKET - DAY

75

The scene UNFREEZES. All the change falls in front of Soleil! We hear spinning coin sound.

The mistress grips him by the biceps -

They both turn around and start walking away together hand in hand.

MISTRESS
All right, darling! Let's go now! I saw some beautiful nylon stockings on the way home -- I have to have them before they sell out everything!

The mistress flaunts and excessively moves her hands and curvaceous hips. She's wearing one of those nude-toned back seam stockings.

The sound of her voice fades away in the distance.

Camera BOOMS DOWN to reveal -

The coin is still spinning - It finally stops and falls down.

Camera PULLS OUT and we see -

Soleil still sitting in silence, flabbergasted;

- It PULLS OUT into the sky:

Aerial POV - It starts from Soleil's head, and goes into the air. We see the villagers walking slowly around her; Some people stop and stare; But no one tries to help her.

FADE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

76

Soleil is dolorous; She looks disastrous and distressed. She is laying on her bed, looking at one dot, with no hope in her eyes.

Her things are scattered around the whole room: packs of letters lying around, opened and closed books, toppled teacup etc.

We see her from the middle of the house, the opening of her bedroom.

A curly bob steps into the scene - It is Irene.

IRENE

I saw what happened at the market.

Soleil still looking at one dot, and pausing before she answers -

SOLEIL

How could you not?... Everyone did...

IRENE

Why do you care who - saw - what?...

She steps out of her usual role of joker and truly empathizes with Soleil. She thinks about every word since Soleil is emotionally detached.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Don't carry someone else's shame on your back. God knows this was the straw that broke the camel's back.
(looking to the left very angry)...

SOLEIL

It is my shame as well... No matter how much I tried -- I wasn't enough of a woman.

Irene comes back quickly into her usual character.

IRENE

You were enough for the artist!

Soleil, even though without much strength, sits up and looks up at Irene -

SOLEIL

How do you know about...

She lowers her gaze and thinks, then looks back at Irene with certainty -

SOLEIL (CONT'D)

-- I never...

IRENE

Just because I see things, doesn't mean everyone else should know about them.

Irene comes into her bedroom; She skips over Soleil's trinkets and books, trying not to step onto something. She sits on Soleil's bed next to her -

IRENE

C'mon now Child... Let's not waste such a perfect weather.

She helps her get up from the bed, and covers her with her famous red crochet shawl.

They head out of the house together -

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE HOUSE / GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

77

They sit at their usual spot.

Irene is serving Soleil tea now -

IRENE

The look on that young man's face
whenever he saw you... It was the
work of God's hands.

She continues to pour tea for the both of them.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Whoever rejects such a worldly
treasure, because of some primitive
principles -- voluntarily agrees to
be buried alive...

Irene raises her tea cup and drinks it, looking at Soleil
poignantly -

IRENE (CONT'D)

I tell you that!

Soleil looks to the left, saddened.

Irene roles her eyes, and put the cup of tea aggressively.
The tea is everywhere.

Soleil looks at Irene in shock.

Irene gets in her face, but whispers -

IRENE (CONT'D)

Soleil -- Only to the brave ones,
luck chooses to give a hand!

(beat)

Go and find him! Bring him back
home... Back to your heart. -- Love
as such... (looks up, and to the
left, like she's daydreaming, and
sights) - sincere, and pure, (
looks back at Soleil) ... Is rare
as a four-leaf clover.

Soleil listens to her with with great attention, but teary
eyes.

SOLEIL

But I don't even know where he
is...

IRENE

He is at the train station -- It
leaves at 09:30. You might have the
time - If you leave...

Looks at her wristwatch.

It is 09:10 -

IRENE (CONT'D)

Well -- Now would be the right
time!

Soleil stands up and looks around, wondering -

Irene stands up as well, proudly -

IRENE

Go! Now!! Go! (whispers and waves
at her) -- Go, go...

Irene looks up, holding her hands together and closes her
eyes, like she's praying -

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - MORNING

78

Soleil is now on the village street, looking around.

She sees a **GYPSY** grooming his **HORSE**.

Goes running to them, and sits on the horse -

GYPSIES

Hey! Hey! Stop right there!
Someone...

SOLEIL

I'll bring him back! I promise!

The camera BOOMS UP in the air, while Soleil rides away on
the horse - We see them here and there, through trees...

In the distance we see a **TRAIN** - It goes above the silky
water and the village; It lets out a long cloud of steam.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

79

Train appears out of a steam cloud -

Soleil is at the station. It is very crowded. She's looks for the number 51921 on the train coach, and finds it.

All of a sudden she remembers Manu -

FADE TO:

EXT. WOODS, TOP OF THE HILL - SUNRISE

80

Soleil sits while Manu paints her. She shows him the painting of a Chinese bride and groom -

He paints her, and sometimes looks at her, while her eyes are glued on him.

MANU

I once met a Chinese couple in Paris. They decided to get married there. They wanted me to paint them on their wedding day, on the street of Montmartre. They both wore the same bracelet, with the number 51921.

A superimposed of the number on the train station comes up next to Manu's head. Every time he says the number, it lights up.

MANU (CONT'D)

I was very curious about it -- They told me it is a declaration of ongoing devotion...

While he says the next thing, he looks at her -

MANU (CONT'D)

- Forgiveness is at the heart of it...

He then looks back at the painting of Soleil longingly, while holding his paintbrush in the air -

MANU (CONT'D)

It means - I still love you.

BACK TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

81

Shakes comes back into reality, shaken from the reminisce.

She starts looking around, hoping to find Manu.

Camera WHIP PANS everywhere she looks -

A mother is trying not to lose her children, she grabs both of them a bit harshly. The station is very crowded.

She starts heavy breathing, holding her hand on her mouth, looking around. Lowers her hand on her heart. Still heavy breathing.

She sees a man resembling Manu!

He turns around, and looks nothing like him...

The train opens, and passengers come inside. Soleil gets anxious;

The train station is slowly, but surely clearing out. And there is no one else left, except for her;

A girl stands up on her toes to kiss a boy - The steam engine starts and they must part -

The train goes away, and the girl goes home as well.

Soleil is all alone.

She lowers her head -

The soft south wind is starting to blow -

It worsens, and it becomes much stronger, making Soleil's untied hair fly again everywhere. She's trying to move it, but the wind is way to strong.

She's holding onto her red shawl as well, but one side constantly slips away, and she can't reach it -

A male hand approaches her from the back, and lifts it; helps her cover up.

She turns around, and the wind calms down a bit.

Manu is standing in front of her - They stare into each others souls -

Soleil rushes to him -

Camera PUSHES IN - She puts both of her hands on his head and kisses him, while he lifts her up into the air and turns; The wind plays with their hair, like dancing children - They stop to breathe, both holding each other's heads, their foreheads touching -

SOLEIL

I'm sorry I was late...

MANU

It is never to late - Until it is.

They close their eyes and their pineal glands start to glow red, and beat in the same rhythm.

She laughs through tears.

They kiss again, and the wind blows even harder.

She lets go of her shawl completely, and the wind lifts it up. It flies high up into the sky, and it soon covers the camera.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - THREE YEARS LATER

82

A **STRAY DOG** is chasing the cat on the village street; They step on crunchy fallen leaves -

MOUSE (V.O.)

(yells)

Hurry up! Hurry if you want to have another dish!

The cat manages to go inside, and the mouse closes the gate right in front of dog's snout.

The Mouse turns around to see if the cat is fine, while the dog barks and its saliva makes the him completely wet.

The cat is licking it's paw.

MOUSE (CONT'D)

(out of breath)

That's what I get for saving your life, huh? Alright...

Mouse nods disappointedly, but something caught his eye and tilts his head proudly and serenely; His face lights up -

A 4-year-old **CAUCASIAN CHILD**, with auburn locks walks towards the cat, and takes it in his hands gently, but can't lift him up, so the Mouse comes in to help - by holding up his rear end.

They walk towards Soleil's garden.

EXT. STONE HOUSE / GARDEN - AFTERNOON, AUTUMN

83

The child puts the cat down and runs towards the door; But the Mouse doesn't move fast enough, and the cat ends up sitting on him, licking his paw, while he gasps for air -

CAUCASIAN CHILD

Papa!

Camera is TRACKING the little boy's feet, and when he comes to the door - We see a grown man's bare feet as well. The little boy is trying to reach him.

Camera BOOMS UP -

He takes him in his arms, and we now see - Manu. He has two little boys in his arms - One resembles him, and the other is a little colored boy from the orphanage.

MANU

Are two of my favorite boys going to give me a kiss?

They kiss him both at the same time -

MANU (CONT'D)

Oh... How did I get so lucky to call you my children? Huh?

He then puts them on the ground, and gives them a butt-slap, in a playful way.

MANU (CONT'D)

Alright now! Go play together boys!

They run of to play holding each other's hands.

SOLEIL

You certainly are not the only lucky person here...

MANU

I hope so!

Manu turns to Soleil, who is preparing the table for lunch in the garden-

He calls the children -

MANU

Boys! Come over here...

They come running -

MANU (CONT'D)

Did you forget to do something today?

They look at each other. The little curly child shrugs with his shoulders -

MANU (CONT'D)

You forgot to give someone else a
kiss!

Soleil laughs, while the children stay confused -

MANU (CONT'D)

... Your sister?

Camera BOOMS DOWN and we see Soleil wearing Manu's necklace;
Two pairs of little hands and Manu's hand, with a wedding
ring on his finger are now touching Soleil's **PREGNANT BELLY**.

MANU

One - Two - Kiss!

The children kiss Soleil's belly and she pets their heads.

Manu looks at her lovingly with a wide smile, and she
caresses his soft hair; He stands up and kisses her hand -

A strong wind starts to blow, and it moves their tablecloth.
Everyone rushes in to hold it, laughing.

MANU

(re: children)

Oh no! It's the wind again!
Children -- come and help!

Camera PULLS OUT and goes up in the air;

SOLEIL (O.S.)

How do you know it's a sister?

CHILDREN (O.S.)

Papa told us!

SOLEIL (O.S.)

(re: Manu)

And who told you? -- A bird, I
presume?

MANU

Indeed! -- A white pigeon!

They all laugh out loud.

MANU

Don't laugh! He came here with a
massage!

MANU (V.O.)

Her whole life Soleil thought the change that came with the south wind was undeniably scary, and that adaptation to it was unattainable. She wasn't aware back then, that change is only one small piece of the big puzzle -- called life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STONE HOUSE / KITCHEN, 1980'S - NIGHT

84

We TIMELAPSE and see Soleil and Manu old and grey. Children turn to adults and bring their own children.

They have aged gracefully, due to their everlasting love. They look at each other with such tenderness. He kisses Soleil on forehead.

They hold each others' hands while talking to their children and grandchildren, and their children's spouses - on **CHRISTMAS EVE**. They are all together, in the coziness of their village home.

If it wasn't for their children's modern clothes, we wouldn't be able to guess what time they're living at - The stone house has stayed the same, as well as their love for one another.

Their oldest son, dressed in rich men's clothes has something to say, but waits for the perfect moment -

COLORED MAN

Dad, I thought of something on my way here... I couldn't save the children from the circus --

He takes out a shadow puppet theatre and puts it on the table -

Soleil looks at Manu surprised; Manu is surprised even more.

COLORED MAN

-- They had to save themselves, by understanding that having a little, or a lot - has nothing to do with anything money can buy.

Manu is so proud, he's trying not to burst into tears -

MANU

(whispers)

You just did!

Soleil raises her glass of mulled wine - Steam comes out of it.

SOLEIL

To the only thing that never dies -
Only reinvents itself.

Manu looks into Soleil's eyes -

MANU

To Love - True Love!

They all raise their glasses and toast.

Soleil tries to kiss Manu, but he moves away a bit -

MANU

Soleil - What will people say?

Soleil kisses him, and puts her head on his shoulder,
looking shyly at their children.

They end the night laughing, with the story sealed in their
memory forever.

FADE OUT.

THE END