

Portrait of a Young Girl in Fire

A film by Céline Sciamma

Shooting Script (10/10/18)

Unofficial English Translation

Translated by Mlleclaudine, Ladyonfire28 & Vittoria

Edited by Morningmightcomebyaccident & Tonovember

Dear Portrait Nation,

This is an English translation of Céline Sciamma's screenplay for *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu* that was recently published by Plain Archive. There are a number of typos in the screenplay. Those that appear to be on Plain Archive's part, such as misattribution of dialogue to the incorrect character, have been corrected. The typos that seem to have been Sciamma's (though really, there is no way to know for sure) have been preserved.

We have also preserved most of the punctuation as it appears in the Plain Archive screenplay. The result is what Grey only half-jokingly refers to as Sciamma's tone sociopathy: in many instances where you would expect a question mark, for example, she simply uses a period.

This translation attempts to reflect Sciamma's style of writing and doesn't alter that for the sake of clarity. There are sentence fragments and also what appear to be camera directions that may be her personal shorthand cues to convey the visual or emotional gist of the scene.

There are many places where the dialogue here deviates from the official English subtitles seen in the film. For the most part, these are due to translation choices that attempt to convey what's actually on the page: unlike the subtitles, we weren't constrained by having to compromise about what would be readable on screen within the time allotted by the rhythms of the scenes.

This document was a true labor of love; we ask only that you do not attempt to pass off the work as your own or sell it for profit. If an official English translation ever becomes available for sale by Céline Sciamma and Lilies Films, please support it to the best of your abilities.

We'd like to express our eternal gratitude to Plain Archive and Lilies Films' dedication, and most of all, to Céline Sciamma for creating this exquisite masterpiece. We hope you enjoy!

- Dina, Aimée, Grey & Nov

Credits

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And several kind souls who wish to remain anonymous

1. STUDIO PARIS-INT-DAY

A blank page. A feminine hand draws a black line, the first stroke of a drawing. Another blank page. And a new female hand, which starts a new line. This action is repeated several times, coinciding with the credits.

WOMAN'S VOICE

First my contours. My silhouette.

The silhouette takes shape as we move from frame to frame and the sketch of the figure comes to life under the strokes of a pencil.

A large room pierced with skylights. An artist's studio. It's Paris in 1780. Eight young girls between 13 and 18 years old are sitting on stools that are nearly obscured by the fullness of their dresses. They are bent over their drawing boards, which serve them as support. The faces of the young girls are focused. Their eyes oscillate between their drawing and the horizon.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Don't go too fast. Take the time to look at me. Put down your pencils.

The students do so. Their scrutinizing gazes.

We discover the face of the woman posing. It's Marianne. Her eyes are as brown as her hair. She is about forty years old. She is sitting on a small platform, upright, not moving.

MARIANNE

Look at the position of my arms. My hands.

The arms are crossed at the level of her hips. Her right hand rests on her left wrist and she is gripping it lightly. The other hand stands out against the fabric of her deep blue dress. Suddenly the hand tightens and clutches the fabric, as if in a spasm. The gaze starts to waver, disturbed. Marianne stares intensely at something in front of her.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Who put that painting there.

With this flat-voiced question we discover the wall facing her. It is traversed by a wooden shelf, on which some paintings and engravings are displayed for educational purposes. In the middle is the troublesome painting, much less academic: a female figure in the center of a plein-air setting at night.

A student raises her hand and speaks.

STUDENT

I got it from the shed. I shouldn't have?

MARIANNE

No.

The student looks down, suddenly guilty. Marianne is moved by her reaction and softens.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

But it doesn't matter.

STUDENT

Did you paint it?

MARIANNE

Yes.

All the girls turn as one toward the painting.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

A long time ago.

Marianne again looks at the painting, which comes into focus as we slowly approach it. It is a woman, from behind, at night. An edging of light becomes brighter at the feet of the silhouette. It is a flame. The bottom of the figure's dress is on fire and pierces the darkness of the canvas with an orange glow. Marianne stares at the painting as though she were seeing a ghost.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Turn it over.

The student stands up and grabs the painting which she turns over against the wall, revealing a handwritten inscription on the back of the canvas:

Portrait de la jeune fille en feu

2. BOAT/ BEACH-EXT-SUNSET

A wintry sea, gloomy and rough. A light boat pitches and rolls with the waves. Water enters the hull, soaking the shoes of an oarsman hard at work. The cargo at his feet - a slim, square crate made of white wood - knocks cyclically against the left and then the right side of the boat, thanks to its regular oscillations. A female hand tries to stabilize the box. It is Marianne's, the only passenger. She is not yet 30 years old. She sits facing the rowers, whose faces stand out against the ocean horizon. Marianne turns toward the coast. The setting sun highlights the rugged landscape.

A stronger wave throws the skiff off balance and Marianne clings to the hull. She turns toward the sailor.

She then sees the wooden box floating in the water and drifting away. Marianne casts a panicked glance at the helmsman.

THE HELMSMAN

Is it valuable?

She looks at the unmoving helmsman and then at the rapidly drifting crate. All at once she jumps into the water. Her dress is a bulky, air-filled train.

She swims toward the floating crate. She reaches it and clings to it for a second, just long enough to catch her breath.

3. BEACH-EXT-END OF DAY

The boat lies at anchor in the distance. Marianne is on the beach. The crate is embedded in the sand, where the boatman threw it. He sets off toward the boat which is anchored not far away. Marianne shouts so that he can hear her. He also responds by shouting.

MARIANNE

Where am I supposed to go?

THE BOATMAN

You take the path that goes up. And then you go straight ahead toward the trees.

Marianne gathers together an impressive number of bags, which she wears in a bundle slung across her shoulder. She grabs the crate and carries it on her back.

THE BOATMAN (CONT'D)

When do we come back for you?

MARIANNE

In eight days.

3 BIS. ESCARPMENT PATH-EXT-END OF DAY

Marianne, weighted down with the box, climbs a steep and rocky path. It's grueling. Night falls as she makes headway. Her soaked shoes regularly slip on the damp rock. The path is nearly vertical.

3 TER. CLIFF SUMMIT-EXT-DUSK

Marianne reaches the top of the path. She looks down at the foot of the cliff, the vertical drop is impressive.

3 QUART. JUNIPER PATH-EXT-DUSK

Marianne leaves the moor.

4A. MANOR-EXT/INT-NIGHT

A manor house at night. Marianne approaches it.

The door of the manor opens on a young woman of 18 years. The astonishment on her face as she discovers Marianne's soaked silhouette on the threshold. She shivers as she introduces herself.

MARIANNE

Good evening, I'm Marianne.

The young woman is taken aback by this damp introduction.

SOPHIE

Sophie.

4B. CORRIDOR-INT-NIGHT

Marianne's soaked dress beads with water as she walks over the pavers of the long stone corridor. The faint glow of the candles allows only a few glimpses of the place.

5. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Sophie shows Marianne into a vast room, with an impressively high ceiling and large windows that let in the moonlight.

A large central fireplace dominates the space. Throughout the room are forms, covered with white sheets.

As if the place were dormant.

SOPHIE

It was a reception hall I think.
I've always known it to be empty.

MARIANNE

Have you been here for a long time?

SOPHIE

Three years.

Marianne looks around, satisfied. Sophie lights the fire.

MARIANNE

Do you like it here?

SOPHIE

Yes. I'll let you get dry.

Sophie leaves the room.

Marianne starts to undress quickly, relieved to take off the soaked dress.

(...)

She uses a mostly burned stick to light a terracotta pipe held between her lips. She blows out the smoke, as if it were her first exhalation in a long time.

She smokes naked, while her clothes are hung around the fireplace.

(...)

Marianne puts on a smock to cover herself. A work garment, it is stained with paint.

She unrolls a leather case in which tools are stored.

She places the mysterious wooden box on the floor and one by one removes the nails that seal it, gradually revealing its contents: nothing, just whiteness. Marianne grabs a large white square on a frame. Blank canvases. She runs her hand over the canvas, which is wet from its plunge into the water. She places them one by one in front of the fire. To dry them.

(...)

Near the fireplace in the depths of the room, the shadow of the flames animates the blank canvases, like screens.

6A. CORRIDOR-INT-NIGHT

Dark night. Marianne walks down the corridor, candle in hand. She wears her coat over her smock.

6B. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

She enters the kitchen. She looks in the pantry. There are vegetables, she takes some carrots. And then she finds a cheese. She sits at the wooden table and starts to eat, devouring a first carrot. Footsteps approach. It's Sophie who enters the room.

MARIANNE

Sorry. I helped myself. I was hungry. Do you have a glass of wine?

Sophie grabs a bottle and pours a glass for Marianne. She pours herself one too and sits down in front of her.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

May I be curious?

Sophie doesn't answer, uneasy. Marianne goes ahead anyway.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

What is your young mistress like?

SOPHIE

I'm not sure. I don't know her very well.

MARIANNE

But you've been here for 3 years.

SOPHIE

She's only been here for a few weeks.

MARIANNE

Where was she?

SOPHIE

With the Benedictines.

MARIANNE

She left holy orders?

SOPHIE

They brought her out of the convent. Because her sister died.

MARIANNE

Was she the one who was supposed to get married?

Sophie nods.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Did illness take her?

SOPHIE
No.

A beat. Sophie won't say anything more about it.

Marianne holds out her glass. Sophie fills it.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Do you think you're going to manage
it?

MARIANNE
Manage what?

SOPHIE
To paint her.

MARIANNE
Why do you ask?

SOPHIE
There was one who came before you.
He didn't succeed.

MARIANNE
What happened?

Sophie shrugs her shoulders in ignorance.

SOPHIE
I don't know.

7. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

The studio in the half-light: the fire on the hearth is down to embers. Marianne, candle in hand, wanders around the room, which looks ghostly with all these white sheets. The wind is blowing hard outside and the windows are rattling.

She lifts one of the white sheets. There is a clavecin underneath. Dusty. She moves slowly, the floor creaking under her feet. She lifts another white sheet uncovering a marble-topped sideboard.

A third sheet reveals her own silhouette, which surprises her. It's a large mirror.

Only one sheet remains covering an object leaning on the opposite wall.

She removes the sheet. It's an easel. On which is deposited a canvas that has been turned to face backward.

A beat.

She places the candle on the ground and grasps the canvas with both hands to turn it over.

The canvas is dark. The candle on the ground illuminates the left corner. It is painted. Marianne bends down to pick up the candle.

A violent bang and the wind rushes into her smock. Marianne turns around: the door has blown open in a gust of wind. She goes to close it. Marianne turns back toward the painting. She slowly approaches the easel where the frame rests. The contours of the painting become clearer. A seated woman, her hands crossed on her knees. A light background. Marianne gets closer, noting the green color and the details of the dress, which envelops the shoulders and ends up revealing a pearly throat. She approaches to finally discover the face, she makes out the crown of blond hair that frames it. She suppresses a cry.

The oval of the face is empty, like a featureless mask. In this place the canvas is blank.

8. CORRIDOR/STUDIO-INT-DAY

The green dress from the painting, which is advancing at a great pace along the corridor of the manor. The dull sound of heels on stone. The dress is still without a face or even a body. It is only a garment held at arm's length. Sophie is carrying it to the studio.

9. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The studio bathed in the light of a winter sun. Marianne examines the green dress, feeling the material. She lets the light play over it to study its reflections.

MARIANNE

She has blonde hair, doesn't she?

SOPHIE

Yes. There aren't a lot of choices. There's just this one in truth. She doesn't have any dresses yet. She's still wearing her convent clothes.

MARIANNE

This one will do very well.

Sophie delicately places the dress on the bench awaiting the model.

10. OFFICE-INT-DAY

A ceremonial painting, that of a very beautiful young woman. She has blue eyes. The lip is curled. Curly hair. A mixture of innocence and intensity.

THE COUNTESS (OFF)

Do you recognize this painting?

We discover a woman in her fifties, standing below the frame. It's the same woman, much older. She is enthroned beneath her face as a young girl. Still beautiful. She has a strong Italian accent.

MARIANNE

It's a painting by my father.

THE COUNTESS

He was just starting out. It was in Milan, before my marriage.

The countess helps herself to a glass of wine that she brings to her lips.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

The man who is interested in my daughter is Milanese. We are going there. If he likes the portrait.

MARIANNE

You'll be leaving.

COUNTESS

I like your confidence. But it's complicated. She exhausted an artist before you. With a simple idea, in truth: she refused to pose. He never saw her face.

MARIANNE

Why does she refuse to be painted?

THE COUNTESS

Because she refuses this marriage.

A beat.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

You're going to paint her without her knowing it.

(MORE)

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

She thinks you're a walking companion here for a few days. She's delighted. Since she's been here I haven't allowed her to go out.

MARIANNE

Why?

THE COUNTESS

Because I wasn't strict enough with her sister.

Emotion overwhelms the Countess. She recovers after a long moment.

MARIANNE

She thinks I'm here to watch her.

THE COUNTESS

And you'll look at her. Do you feel you'll be able to do the painting in this way?

MARIANNE

I won't disappoint you.

The Countess stands up, bringing her face closer to the one in the painting.

Marianne stares at the painting of the young Countess, painted by her father.

THE COUNTESS

This painting arrived here before me. When I first entered this room, I found myself confronted with my image, hanging on the wall. It was very strange.

The Countess is pensive. She turns to Marianne and gives her a hint of a smile.

11. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The studio in broad daylight. Marianne carries the easel and places it at the back of the room. She arranges her pigments, her containers, on a small table near the window. Finally she draws a curtain that hides this part of the room from view. The working area is behind the scenes. The only sign of it that remains is the bench that stands facing the curtain. Marianne dips a large brush in an ochre liquid. She brushes the canvas evenly with it to prepare the background.

There is a knock on the door. It's Sophie.

SOPHIE

She's there. She's waiting for you
so she can go out.

Marianne signals to Sophie to come in and close the door. She speaks in a low voice, in a confiding tone.

MARIANNE

Tell me. What happened to your
mistress. How did she die?

SOPHIE

We were walking on the cliff path.
She was behind me and she
disappeared. I saw her shattered
body at the bottom of the cliff.

MARIANNE

You didn't see her fall.

SOPHIE

No. But I think she jumped.

MARIANNE

Why do you think so?

SOPHIE

Because she didn't scream.

12A. CORRIDOR/EXT-DAY

Marianne leaves the studio. No one in the hallway. Finally she sees a woman's figure standing at the far end, in front of the door that leads outside. She approaches her, curious to finally discover the mysterious face. She calls attention to herself by greeting her.

MARIANNE

Hello.

The figure answers her from a distance. It is her voice that she will hear first.

HÉLOÏSE

Hello.

As she approaches she sees that the figure is wearing a cape, a hood hiding her face.

Marianne is very close now but the figure turns and opens the heavy front door.

She steps out into the light and Marianne follows in her wake. In front of her, the caped figure moves forward without turning around.

12B. JUNIPER PATH-EXT-DAY

As she moves away from the mansion, Héloïse's pace accelerates. Her arms swing alongside her body. Powerful hands. The hood slips down, under the force of the wind, unveiling her neck and a golden chignon.

12C. CLIFF-EXT-DAY

On impulse Héloïse starts running as hard as she can. Marianne is caught off guard and observes that straight ahead is the abrupt drop of the cliff. She starts to run in turn, trying to catch up with her. But the young woman runs faster and faster, letting loose her stride on the rocky plateau. Marianne panics and enters into the most vigorous of races to try to reach her.

She gains ground without being able to catch her, even though her arms are pumping. The precipice approaches dangerously and the pace does not abate. The young woman stops suddenly and turns around in the same movement, revealing her face. Her eyes are shining and her mouth is panting, thanks to the mad rush. She says between two deep breaths.

HÉLOÏSE

I've dreamt of doing that for
years.

Marianne is bent in half. She is struggling to catch her breath. But still she manages to be ironic.

MARIANNE

Dying?

HÉLOÏSE

Running.

She looks at her. Quickly. The eyes are blue. The nose is rounded. The jaw square, sculpted. The lower lip is full. But again the face disappears as the young woman turns. When someone is so beautiful, such evasions have a powerfully dramatic impact.

13. CLIFF PATH-EXT-DAY

The nape of Héloïse's neck as she moves forward with an alert step.

The path that borders the cliff runs along a magnificent panorama. The coast is wild, roughened by the assailing waves. Autumnal nature scatters bursts of color across the aridity of the stone. Héloïse's gaze oscillates between the path and the scenery. Revealing and eclipsing her profile scrutinized by Marianne. She stops, facing the horizon. Steadying her profile. But she does not offer her gaze. The strong wind ends up loosening her chignon, revealing her blonde hair.

(...)

Héloïse is back on the path and Marianne continues to follow in her wake. Blonde hair flutters in the wind. Héloïse turns toward Marianne, her hair obscuring half of her face. We catch a glimpse of the blue eye.

(...)

The two women observe the panoramic view. The haughty profile stands out perfectly against the horizon. The curve of the nose. The prominent cheekbone accentuated by the taut jawline.

14A. CORRIDOR-INT-END OF DAY

The two women walk down the corridor of the manor. Héloïse remains in front. Marianne doesn't take her eyes off whatever she can glimpse: her ear and the curve of her cheek. A delicate blonde curl.

MARIANNE (OFF)

As much as possible, you must render the entire ear and study its cartilages well, even if you have to paint hair over it. What determines its shapes must be of a warm and transparent color, except for the hole in the middle which is always robust. Its skin tone, even in light, must generally give way to the light of the cheek, which is more prominent.

Marianne is interrupted in her anatomical observation by the gaze of Héloïse who has stopped and turned toward her.

HÉLOÏSE

Did you come with a book?

MARIANNE

Yes.

She finally captures Héloïse's gaze.

HÉLOÏSE

Would you mind lending it to me?

MARIANNE

I'll go get it.

Marianne heads toward the studio, alarmed when she realizes that Héloïse is following in her footsteps.

14B. STUDIO-INT-END OF DAY

Marianne opens the door of the studio. The curtain that conceals the easel is in place. She enters and grabs a parcel from her nightstand. She hands it to Héloïse, who remains on the threshold.

HÉLOÏSE

It's odd that you're sleeping here.

The remark sounds interrogative but Marianne doesn't respond. Héloïse turns on her heel and resumes her walk down the corridor. Marianne watches her until she disappears.

15. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

The studio is immersed in the darkness of night except for a luminous area where all the candles have been marshaled. Marianne sits on the floor, surrounded by flames as if for a ritual. She is actually trying to see a bit more clearly as she makes a few charcoal sketches. Around her are a dozen or so sheets of paper: fragments of Héloïse. Her profile. Her ear nestled in a curl of her hair. Details that become clearer from sheet to sheet.

16. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The studio in the light of a turbulent early-morning sky. Rain beats against the windows and the window panes are rattling with the force of the wind. Marianne is behind the curtain.

Marianne draws with charcoal and applies a wash to the proportions of Héloïse's silhouette, then her face.

Marianne prepares her colors on a glass plate. She pours red pigment onto the plate. She pours linseed oil into the crater in the center of the pigment and mixes vigorously, crushing. The oil paint gains its shiny consistency and deep color.

A knock on the door. Marianne emerges from behind the curtain and finds Sophie on the threshold.

SOPHIE
She's waiting for you.

MARIANNE
With this storm?

SOPHIE
She still wants to go out.

17. SEASIDE-EXT-DAY

A path at the edge of the cliff. Héloïse and Marianne move forward, their faces protected by scarves that expose only their eyes. The wind rushes through fabric and hair. Their steps are deliberate, spirited. Marianne sees nothing of Héloïse's face, except her eyes. They are crossed by emotions that she can only guess at. Concern, indifference, determination. Her collection of glances grows little by little.

They go down a steep path. They cling to the vegetation to steady themselves. They reach a beach. Wide wet sand banks strewn with dark stones. It's low tide.

At last Héloïse stops and sits down on the sand. Marianne sits as well, at her side. Marianne intently eyes her profile, finally still and close by. It is obstructed by the scarf that hides a large part of her face. Finally, Héloïse lowers it, revealing herself. Marianne also lowers hers as if by mutual agreement.

HÉLOÏSE
I'd like to go swimming.

MARIANNE
When the sea is calmer.

HÉLOÏSE
Yes. How long are you staying?

MARIANNE
Six days.

A beat. Héloïse pulls the scarf back up over her face.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Do you know how to swim?

Héloïse uncovers her mouth again.

HÉLOÏSE

I don't know.

MARIANNE

It's too dangerous if you don't know how to swim.

Héloïse turns toward her, gazes at her at last.

HÉLOÏSE

I meant: I don't know if I can swim.

Héloïse places her hand on the sand to lean on it. Marianne takes the opportunity to observe the attachment of her wrist. The width of her fingers. She notices that the index finger is damaged. A scar that makes the nail misshapen.

(...)

Marianne sits on a rock, overlooking the beach. The sea is higher now. She watches Héloïse's tiny figure walking on the beach on the horizon. She has taken out a small notebook and a short stylus. She discreetly draws her model's hands, her damaged finger. She regularly raises her eyes toward Héloïse, so as not to be surprised by her return.

18. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

Sophie's hands place two plates on a tray. As well as heavy cutlery. A carafe of wine. Marianne watches her. The painter is disgruntled.

SOPHIE

How was your day.

MARIANNE

Difficult. She always keeps in front of me. She goes alone to walk on the beach.

Sophie picks up the tray and leaves the room though not without a look of moral support for Marianne. Marianne remains alone in the kitchen as she hears her walking away to set the table for dinner. Marianne helps herself to a glass of beer which she drinks thirstily. Sophie returns and resumes the conversation as if she hadn't been away.

SOPHIE

Have you started to paint her.

MARIANNE

Not yet.

Sophie fills a soup tureen from the pot simmering over the fire.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
I haven't even seen her smile.

SOPHIE
Have you tried being funny?

The retort makes Marianne smile and changes her mood. She looks at Sophie with camaraderie as she leaves to serve the ladies.

19. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Marianne starts on the face straight away. In the first layer, the contours that structure the visage. We watch the face appear, up to the nose.

20. BEACH-EXT-DAY

A sunny winter day. The light on the beach is blinding. The sand is ochre, warmed. Héloïse unfolds a cloth that she lays on the sand. It is embroidered with blue patterns on its upper half. Marianne traces the embroidery with her finger, like a labyrinth, until the pattern stops abruptly and becomes a long blue thread. As though it were awaiting a needle.

MARIANNE
It's unfinished.

HÉLOÏSE
It's my sister who was embroidering it.

Héloïse sits on the cloth. Marianne joins her. They are sitting side by side. For the first time. Marianne does not take her eyes off Héloïse, studying her features as much as possible.

MARIANNE
Do you think she wanted to die?

HÉLOÏSE
You're the first person not to be afraid to ask that question.

MARIANNE
After you I imagine.

HÉLOÏSE

Not out loud. But yes. Especially since in her last letter she apologized. For no reason.

MARIANNE

What do you think she was apologizing for.

HÉLOÏSE

For leaving me her fate.

MARIANNE

You speak about this fate as if it were dreadful.

A beat. Héloïse looks intently into Marianne's eyes.

HÉLOÏSE

What do you know about my future marriage?

MARIANNE

I know that you're supposed to marry a Milanese. That's all.

HÉLOÏSE

That's all I know too. You understand why this worries me.

MARIANNE

When you put it like that, yes.

HÉLOÏSE

But I put it the way it is.

Marianne ventures another question, having the leisure to observe her face and get to know her thoughts, her voice.

MARIANNE

Would you have preferred to stay at the convent?

HÉLOÏSE

It's a life that has its advantages. There's a library. You can sing, listen to music. And it's a sweet feeling to experience, equality.

MARIANNE

I found the convent perfectly unjust. Fortunately I left it after my first Communion.

(MORE)

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I spent my time there being
punished for drawing in the margins
of my notebooks.

HÉLOÏSE

You draw?

Marianne takes a moment before answering, aware that she has
just given herself away.

MARIANNE

Yes. A little.

HÉLOÏSE

And you, when will you get married?

MARIANNE

I don't know if I'm going to get
married.

HÉLOÏSE

You don't have to.

MARIANNE

I'm going to take over from my
father. He has a business.

HÉLOÏSE

You're free?

MARIANNE

Yes.

Héloïse offers her gaze to Marianne. Openly. But the wind
rises again.

It makes the long blue thread of the unfinished embroidery
dance.

It also makes Héloïse's hair dance, concealing her face.
Marianne, with a gentle motion, brushes back the disorderly
locks. Héloïse looks at her and smiles, for the first time.
This smile makes her heart beat faster.

She doesn't know why.

20 BIS. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Marianne paints the eyes. The gaze appears.

21. OFFICE-INT-END OF DAY

The countess' office. Marianne sits in a comfortable armchair facing her. The countess serves her a glass of strong alcohol, with amber reflections.

THE COUNTESS

How are you spending your days?

MARIANNE

We get home late and I don't have much light to work with.

THE COUNTESS

I'll keep her with me tomorrow afternoon. That way you'll be free to make progress.

MARIANNE

I was actually thinking that you might allow her to go out on her own.

The countess helps herself to another drink and refills Marianne's glass.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You don't have anything to worry about. She's not sad. She's angry.

THE COUNTESS

You think I don't know her anger.
La conosco molto bene.
(I know it very well.)

MARIANNE

Si anch'io la conosco.
(Yes I know it too.)

The countess' face lights up.

THE COUNTESS

Dove l'hai imparato l'italiano?
(Where did you learn Italian?)

MARIANNE

A Milano.
(In Milan.)

The countess comes to life, friendly.

THE COUNTESS

Conosci Milano ! Non vedo l'ora di tornarci.

(MORE)

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

Non ci sono stata da vent'anni.
Glielo devi dire. Come è bella
Milano. La vita sarà sicuramente
migliore.

(You know Milan! I can't wait to
get back there. I haven't been
there in 20 years. You have to tell
her. How beautiful Milan is. How
much better life will be there.)

MARIANNE

She doesn't talk to me much.

THE COUNTESS

I'm not marrying her to a
neighboring small landowner. Some
of them have offered. I'm trying to
take her somewhere else. At least
there she'll be less bored.

MARIANNE

And you as well.

THE COUNTESS

Certo, perché no.
(And why not.)

She smiles.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

I'll be leaving for the coast in
two days at the same time as you.
If you don't have to go back to
Paris, there is a friend who would
like her portrait painted. I can
make sure you get the job.

MARIANNE

I'd like that very much. Thank you.

THE COUNTESS

Il lavoro sarà difficile. Perché è
bruttissima. Ma veramente.
(It'll be a difficult job. Because
she's incredibly ugly.)

The countess' laugh is genuine and contagious.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

You've made me laugh. That hasn't
happened to me in a long time.

MARIANNE

I haven't done anything.

THE COUNTESS

You're here. It takes two to be funny.

22. STUDIO-INT-EVENING

Marianne is sitting behind her easel. The rain beats against the windows of the studio and the light suggests a menacing sky. On the canvas, the face is almost finished. The throat is painted. The green color is spread over Marianne's palette. Facing her, the setting for the model and the model's absence. Only the green dress languishes on the bench.

Marianne sees herself sitting idly, in the mirror hanging on the wall opposite her.

She gets up and walks toward the mirror.

She takes it down from the wall.

She is going to place it on the other side of the room, at the foot of the easel.

She undresses quickly and puts on the green dress.

She looks at herself in the mirror and suppresses a laugh as she sees herself costumed in this sophisticated dress.

She resumes her seriousness and sits down on the bench, the mirror reflecting her image. She plays with the fabric of the dress, working the folds like structural lines. She assumes a number of postures while scrutinizing her reflection which defines the possible framing of the eventual painting. She tries out several hand positions, crossing them, uncrossing them. Finally she straightens her torso and freezes in place. She strikes a pose. At length.

There's a knock at the door.

MARIANNE

Yes?

A voice answers her through the door. It's Héloïse.

Marianne gets up hastily. She quickly draws the curtain and hides behind it. She starts to take off the dress. She hears the door open and Héloïse's footsteps in the room.

At last she manages to remove the heavy dress and then she puts on hers in the same movement.

We no longer hear Héloïse's footsteps as she has stopped in the middle of the room. Marianne turns toward the sheet through which we see Héloïse as if in a shadow puppet show. She is sitting on the bench. Marianne comes out from behind the curtain and finds her: with her hands folded on her knees. Her corseted bust. The very image she had hoped for, like prey to be captured for the canvas. But Héloïse is looking toward the window. Marianne calls out to make Héloïse turn to face her.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Héloïse.

Héloïse looks at her and suddenly appears in what could be her pose. Marianne stares at her, fascinated. There. Now. The pose is exactly right.

A long beat.

Héloïse breaks the spell by standing up. She wanders around the room, looks at Marianne's book that's lying on her bed.

HÉLOÏSE

Do you have any tobacco?

MARIANNE

Yes.

Marianne goes behind the curtain where her pipe and tobacco pouch are. Marianne emerges from behind the curtain and observes that Héloïse is casually sitting on her bed.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Don't you want to go out.

Héloïse doesn't seem to want to move. She looks around, curious.

HÉLOÏSE

We can stay here for a while.

Marianne is torn between her unease at what the curtain hides, and the opportunity that this moment of intimacy affords.

MARIANNE

Yes.

Marianne lights a candle in the fireplace, which she uses to set the tobacco glowing.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Your mother has agreed to let you go out alone tomorrow.

She joins Héloïse, handing Héloïse the pipe.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
You'll be free.

HÉLOÏSE
Being free is being alone?

MARIANNE
Don't you think so?

Héloïse draws on the pipe. Smoke comes out of her mouth as she says:

HÉLOÏSE
I'll tell you tomorrow.

She draws on the pipe again.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
I'm going to go to Mass.

MARIANNE
Do you want to take Communion.

HÉLOÏSE
I want to hear music.

MARIANNE
The organ is beautiful but it's the music of the dead.

HÉLOÏSE
It's the only kind I know.

MARIANNE
You've never heard an orchestra?

HÉLOÏSE
No. You have?

MARIANNE
I go to the symphony as often as possible.

HÉLOÏSE
Tell me about it.

MARIANNE
It's not easy to describe music.

Marianne gets up and walks toward one of the pieces of sheet-covered furniture. She places her hand on the sheet and as her fingers sink into the fabric, a note sounds.

It's the clavecin under the sheet. She slides both her hands under the sheet that covers the instrument. She picks out the notes by ear. Strange vision of a woman playing a ghostly keyboard.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I'm trying to remember the first notes.

Marianne removes the sheet from the clavecin.

HÉLOÏSE

What is it?

MARIANNE

It's a piece that I love.

HÉLOÏSE

Is it cheerful?

MARIANNE

No it's not cheerful. But it's lively. It tells the story of a rising thunderstorm, and the insects that sense it and become restless. And then the storm bursts with lightning and wind.

Marianne concentrates and figures out the simplified version of the first recognizable chords of the Presto from Vivaldi's Summer. She struggles to come up with the rest, which is much more melodically difficult. She gives up.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I have it in my head but I can't get it right.

HÉLOÏSE

Play the beginning again.

The chords resonate from the ghostly clavecin. Héloïse moves closer and watches her play. She lifts the sheet, uncovering her hands. She observes the chords.

MARIANNE

You'll hear the rest. Milan is a city of music.

HÉLOÏSE

Evviva Milano.
(Long live Milan.)

MARIANNE

I'm just saying that there will be good things.

HÉLOÏSE

What you're saying is that from time to time I'll be consoled.

Marianne replays the chords in an increasingly slow loop that runs over into the next scene.

23. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Marianne is at work behind her easel.

For the first time, her gaze oscillates between the canvas and what's beyond it. She paints what's in front of her.

There is a body in the dress. It's Sophie who's posing. Intimidated but upright, focused.

The painting has come a long way. Héloïse's face is finished. Now it's a matter of painting the dress. Marianne makes headway with the green, the more or less deep blacks of the folds.

24. KITCHEN-INT-DAY

Marianne's right hand is covered in paint. In the silence of the kitchen, she helps herself to a glass of beer that she drinks with her hand that seems to be gloved with color.

The palette of her hand has touches of yellow and blue, but green predominates over all the other colors. A voice behind her back.

HÉLOÏSE

Good evening Marianne.

Marianne sets the glass on the edge of the window. She slowly takes off her paint-stained smock and rolls it into a ball. She sees her hand covered in paint and freezes, anxious. She turns toward Héloïse and hides her hand behind her back.

MARIANNE

How was Mass.

Héloïse approaches. She pours herself a drink. Her face is relaxed. She is smiling.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You look happy.

Marianne hides her hand behind her back to conceal it from Héloïse's gaze.

HÉLOÏSE

I sang a lot.

Marianne walks in front of her and switches her hand from her back to her belly. She reaches the door that leads to the hallway.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Are you leaving me already?

Marianne turns only her head to answer her.

MARIANNE

Yes.

As she is about to leave Héloïse calls out to her again.

HÉLOÏSE

Will you go out with me tomorrow?

MARIANNE

Yes.

HÉLOÏSE

I felt in solitude the freedom you spoke of. But I also felt that I missed you.

This sentence goes straight to Marianne's heart but Héloïse doesn't see it, since she has her back to her. Marianne leaves the room.

25. STUDIO-INT-END OF DAY

Marianne puts the finishing touches on the background.

She cleans her hand with a rag soaked in turpentine.

The finished painting, on the easel.

26. COUNTESS' OFFICE-INT-NIGHT

Marianne has a bottle of wine and two glasses in her hand. Thus laden, she knocks as best she can at the office door. She finds the Countess bent over an accounting register that she is reviewing. Unmoving. Focused. She wears a monocle.

MARIANNE

Sta lavorando?
(Are you working?)

The countess suddenly comes alive, enthusiastic.

THE COUNTESS

Come here, come here. Sono felice di vederla. Venga un po' con me a parlare italiano.
(I'm happy to see you. Come and speak a little Italian with me.)

The countess takes off her monocle. Marianne puts the glasses on the table and starts to fill them.

MARIANNE

Il ritratto è finito.
(The portrait is finished.)

THE COUNTESS

Benissimo.
(Perfect.)

The countess congratulates her with a look before bringing the glass to her lips. She is pensive for a few moments.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

Saremo a Milano in primavera.
(We'll be in Milan by spring.)

Marianne smiles, touched by the countess' emotion as she thinks of once again experiencing the Italian spring.

MARIANNE

What will you do first over there.

THE COUNTESS

La festa.
(The celebration.)

The countess smiles, but it's not a joke.

MARIANNE

Vorrei chiederle un favore.
(I have something to ask you.)

THE COUNTESS

Mi dica cara.
(Tell me my dear.)

MARIANNE

I would like to tell her myself.
The truth.

27. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Marianne guzzles the last of the wine straight from the bottle to knock herself out. She is drunk. Sitting on her bed. In front of her, the painting turned toward the wall. The one without a face. She gets up and overcomes her dizziness. She turns the painting over and examines it by candlelight.

It is a very different version from hers. The interpretation of the dress, its very color. The painter had chosen a completely different position for the hands.

Marianne sweeps the light along the length of the figure. When it reaches the portrait's heart, the volatile components of the paint attract the flame and suddenly ignite. Marianne steps back and watches Héloïse's heart burning. The initially localized flame spreads to the face and increases in intensity. Marianne observes the phenomenon as an eye-catching spectacle. At last she shakes off her mesmerized state and runs toward the window. She opens it wide. Rain pours outside.

Marianne tries to grab hold of the frame which is burning more and more strongly. She finally succeeds and throws it out the window.

28. CORRIDOR/PLATEAU-INT-DAY

The synchronous steps of Héloïse and Marianne in the stone corridor. They advance side by side. Héloïse takes Marianne's arm.

29. BEACH-EXT-DAY

The two women are on the beach. Both are lying on the half-embroidered white cloth. It's high tide and the sound of the waves is powerful. Héloïse is reading her book. Marianne observes her, her focused face with its lion's wrinkle. She hesitates and then takes the plunge, gently.

MARIANNE

Héloïse. I have to tell you something.

Héloïse looks up, curious.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I'm a painter. I came here to paint you.

Héloïse is suddenly bitter.

HÉLOÏSE

Now I know why you were singing the praises of exile to me. You felt guilty.

MARIANNE

I was telling you what I think.

Silence. Héloïse looks straight ahead. And says in a flat voice:

HÉLOÏSE

Are you leaving?

MARIANNE

With your mother.

HÉLOÏSE

Then today I'm going swimming.

Héloïse gets up on a direct impulse. She approaches the water with a determined step, removing her clothes a few meters from the shore. Her feet are licked by the waves and the cold is biting. She stops. Finally she launches herself into the waves. Marianne observes the swimmer.

Héloïse comes out of the water. Blue with cold. She gets dressed, shivering. Wraps herself in her coat and sits down in the sand. She doesn't look at Marianne. Silence.

Marianne breaks it.

MARIANNE

So, can you swim?

HÉLOÏSE

I still don't know if I know how.
Did you see me?

MARIANNE

You know how to float.

They laugh, relax, look at each other. Héloïse's teeth are chattering, her whole body trembles. The violent numbness of the cold blossoms.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Let's go back.

Héloïse tries to speak, but her body is gripped with spasms and can't emit any sound. She shakes her head.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You're going to get sick.

Marianne moves closer and, with the flat of her hand, rubs Héloïse's back to warm her up. They are close. Héloïse fixes Marianne with a sharp, intense gaze. She still can't talk. Thanks to the returning warmth, she finally manages to say:

HÉLOÏSE

So that's what that was, all your
staring.

30. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Marianne draws the curtain that hides the studio area of the room. Héloïse discovers the decor, the backstage area of what she had already seen. She takes a few steps toward the easel and finally faces the canvas.

Marianne joins her behind the easel. She observes her portrait in silence. It is faithful to the model and to convention, well executed, sober. Long seconds go by and Marianne looks at Héloïse looking at the painting, trying to interpret her reactions. The painter feels impatience mingled with concern.

MARIANNE

You're not saying anything.

A beat. Marianne anxiously waits for Héloïse to speak.

HÉLOÏSE

That's me.

MARIANNE

Yes.

HÉLOÏSE

That's how you see me.

A beat. Marianne is surprised by Héloïse's remark.

MARIANNE

It's not just about me.

HÉLOÏSE

What do you mean it's not just
about you.

MARIANNE

There are rules, conventions.
Ideas.

HÉLOÏSE

You mean there's no life.

Marianne says nothing, largely taken aback by the critical turn of the reaction.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
No presence.

MARIANNE
Your presence is made up of
fleeting states, of momentary
aspects. It may also lack veracity.

HÉLOÏSE
Not everything is fleeting. Some
feelings are deep.

Marianne says nothing.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
That it's not close to me is
something I can understand. But
that it's not close to you, that's
sad.

MARIANNE
What do you know about it. If it's
close to me. I didn't know you were
an art critic.

HÉLOÏSE
I didn't know you were a painter.

The silence between them is unhappy. They are wounded.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
I'm going to get my mother.

Héloïse exits the room leaving Marianne facing the canvas. Héloïse is so stiff. With a roundness of her features that she does not have in life. A convention of softness, without character. On impulse, Marianne grabs a rag. She dips it into the glass of turpentine, soaking it. And then she swipes it over the canvas, disfiguring Héloïse. The paints merge on the canvas.

31. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The disfigured painting. In lieu of a face, a violent gradation of pink, of mangled flesh.

The countess' face, closed and hard. She stares at the painting, silent.

Héloïse casts a stunned glance at Marianne.

MARIANNE

It wasn't good enough. I'll start over again.

The countess gives her a cold look.

THE COUNTESS

Stai scherzando.
(You must be kidding me.)

MARIANNE

Non era all'altezza. Non ti sarebbe piaciuto.
(No. I apologize. It wasn't satisfactory. You wouldn't have been pleased.)

THE COUNTESS

Then you're incompetent and you can leave.

HÉLOÏSE

She's going to stay.

The countess turns toward her daughter.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

I'll pose for her.

Her mother looks at her as if to estimate her level of involvement in this proposal.

THE COUNTESS

Really?

HÉLOÏSE

Yes.

THE COUNTESS

Why?

Héloïse takes a long time to answer. She's trying to figure out what to say.

HÉLOÏSE

What difference does it make to you.

A beat. The Countess is thinking.

THE COUNTESS

Nothing.

She turns to Marianne and speaks to her with authority.

THE COUNTESS (CONT'D)

I am leaving for 5 days. When I come back, the painting is finished and it's up to me to decide. Not you. Understood?

MARIANNE

Yes.

The Countess turns to her daughter.

THE COUNTESS

Say goodbye to me like you did when you were little.

Héloïse puts her hands together on her lips and places a kiss on them. She makes the kiss fly through the air, mimicking a butterfly with her hands. And places it on both of her mother's cheeks.

~~32. CORRIDOR-INT-DAY~~

33. STUDIO-INT-DAY

A blank canvas. Marianne's face appears behind the canvas.

The model's space, empty. Héloïse enters it, as though on a stage, wearing the dress for the painting. She sits down on the stool.

She poses as she did for the painting. It's she who imitates it.

Marianne crosses the room and returns with a chair. She places it close to Héloïse.

MARIANNE

Lean on it here.

Héloïse places her arm on the back of the chair.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Not like that.

Marianne gently grasps her wrist, as if it were a very precious and fragile object. She pulls it toward her, encouraging Héloïse to rotate it slightly. It's like a dance movement between them.

Marianne takes her other hand and places it on the backrest as well. Héloïse is in profile.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Are you comfortable. Do you think this is a position you can hold?

HÉLOÏSE

Yes.

Marianne returns behind the easel. In front of her Héloïse's figure, in profile.

MARIANNE

Look at me.

Héloïse turns her face toward Marianne and looks her straight in the eyes.

It's staggering and Marianne averts her eyes.

She manages to look at her again. She examines her, as if she were dazed.

She makes the first line in charcoal, with a sharp motion.

The figure takes shape.

(...)

Marianne approaches Héloïse and wraps her in a grey cloth. Only her head is exposed.

HÉLOÏSE

How long does it take to do the face?

MARIANNE

It takes 3 sessions of 2 hours maximum.

Marianne addresses the first layer. The contours that structure the face.

Marianne stops for a while. She approaches Héloïse, examines her face.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

It's the forehead that determines the play of light. The dominant light is at the top of the forehead. It breaks off a little and comes to rest close to the eyebrow, which gives way to the tone of the temple, where your blue vein is. The light then fades until it reaches your cheek.

(MORE)

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Then above the upper lip, in the corner of the lower lip, and on the top of the chin.

She outlines the path of the light, in the air, with her fingers.

Marianne starts to paint the face. Her gaze oscillating, scrutinizing.

She is lost in the intensity and the focus of work. At first, she doesn't see Héloïse's sadness, despite its growing with each return to her.

She ends up crying.

34. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Marianne is lying in bed but is not asleep. She's in pain. She changes position and lies on her stomach. She sighs. Her hand squeezes the pillow.

Before her eyes is her first portrait of Héloïse that she disfigured. In the half-light the vision is frightening. Marianne turns over on her back, she's sweating, she places her hands on her belly.

(...)

Marianne wraps a white cloth around her sex. A red spot appears immediately and grows as she wraps her hips with the cloth.

As you would swaddle a child.

35. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

Marianne enters the kitchen, pale. Sophie is there, feeding the fire in the fireplace. She observes Marianne sitting painfully on the bench.

SOPHIE

You don't look well.

MARIANNE

It's my belly.

SOPHIE

Sit down.

Marianne sits down in pain.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

We'll make it pass.

Sophie takes a cloth and places it on the table in front of Marianne. She begins to rummage through tins and shakes them to hear what's inside. At last she opens one and dumps its contents into a saucepan. They are cherry stones. She heats them up. She removes the stones from the fire and pours them onto the white cloth that she knots together. She hands the cloth to Marianne.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

The heat will do you good. The stones hold onto it for a long time.

Marianne places the improvised hot water bottle on her stomach. Quickly the heat radiates through her lower belly. Soothes her.

MARIANNE

Thank you.

SOPHIE

Usually I have one ready but I haven't had my monthlies.

MARIANNE

How many times?

SOPHIE

Three times.

Silence after this bit of information that conceals another within it.

MARIANNE

Is this the first time it's happened to you.

SOPHIE

Yes.

A beat.

MARIANNE

Do you want a child?

SOPHIE

No. I was waiting for Madame to leave so I could take care of it.

36. BEACH-EXT-DAY

The beach at low tide. The tiny figures of the three women.

Héloïse and Marianne are a hundred meters apart. Sophie runs as hard as she can from one to the other, along the straight line they form.

Héloïse collects Sophie and pushes her to turn around quickly, toward Marianne. Encouraging her with her voice. After several trips back and forth, Sophie is out of breath.

She stops when she comes back to them. Bent in half. Breathless.

SOPHIE

I can't anymore.

(...)

Sophie jumps in place. She strikes the sand hard with her feet. The jumps are meant to be violent shocks. She stops, exhausted. Héloïse joins her.

She takes her hands. Sophie is bewildered by this familiar gesture, as if it were forbidden. Héloïse starts to jump facing her, holding her hands. Dragging her into a new series of jumps.

(...)

Sophie examines a rock with white patches on it. These are oysters. She takes a knife from her belt and opens an oyster on the rock. She lifts the rock to her face and sucks the oyster from the rock.

She kneels down and detaches a shell from the rock. She opens it in her hands and hands it to Héloïse who eats it.

37. PLAIN-EXT-DAY

The three women have gone back to the plateau and criss-cross a plain where evergreen vegetation flourishes. They stare at the ground, looking for something.

Finally Sophie finds what they were looking for. It's a wild plant, Rue. She cuts an armful of it.

38. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

The plant immersed in boiling liquid.

The same liquid poured into a bowl. Marianne stands facing the hearth where the decoction of the plant is boiling. She crosses the kitchen, the steaming bowl in her hands.

Héloïse is at the table and eats an apple while reading a book. Next to her, high up, Sophie's feet dangle in the air like those of a hanged man.

Sophie lands on the floor. She had been hanging at arm's length from the kitchen beam. She's panting, as though after great exertion. Marianne hands her the bowl. Sophie drinks the infusion and places the bowl on the table.

MARIANNE

Would you like some more?

SOPHIE

Let's wait and see.

She raises her arms in the air while Héloïse clasps her by the waist to boost her toward the beam. Sophie is hanging up there again, involved in her abortifacient gymnastics. Marianne sits at the table next to Héloïse who is immersed in her reading. Marianne takes out her pipe and starts smoking. Héloïse takes it from her hands and smokes in turn. A beat. Héloïse peers at Marianne as if preparing to ask a question. She indicates Sophie with a nod of her head.

HÉLOÏSE

Did that happen to you.

MARIANNE

Yes.

Contrary to expectation Héloïse's face lights up suddenly.

HÉLOÏSE

You've known love.

MARIANNE

Yes.

HÉLOÏSE

What is it like.

Marianne laughs, astonished. Then she gropes for words, disturbed by Héloïse's intense gaze immersed in hers.

MARIANNE

It's difficult to say.

HÉLOÏSE

I mean. How does it feel.

The gaze is ever closer. Ever more piercing. That's what it feels like. The thump of a falling body. Sophie is on the floor. Unmoving. Marianne and Héloïse rush to her aid. Sophie is still, her face hidden by her hands.

Héloïse removes her hands from her face revealing her features, a rictus of pain, her mouth open as if to scream. But she is speechless as if shocked by the violence of a long spasm.

MARIANNE

Breathe. You're allowed to scream.

Sophie is still shaking with spasms, silent.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Scream Sophie, SCREAM.

Héloïse starts to scream with all her might. When she falls silent, another scream continues, Sophie's. A long cry of pain from the depths of her lungs.

39. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

The studio is plunged into darkness. Armed with a candle, Marianne lights the way for Héloïse who carries Sophie in her arms. She gently lays her down on the bed. Sophie is sweating. She is in pain.

Marianne stokes the fire in the fireplace. She lights a candle that she places next to the bed, revealing the sleeping face of Héloïse who has dozed off beside Sophie. Marianne approaches and looks at her. Her beautiful face made new when surrendered to sleep.

Marianne takes up several candles and lights them. She places them all on the nightstand to illuminate Héloïse's face.

Marianne grabs her sketchbook and starts drawing Héloïse as she sleeps. She is very close to the model. The feverishness in the execution of this clandestine portrait contrasts with the peaceful face of the sleeping model. The regular breath through parted lips. The attitudes of childhood that you reunite with in sleep.

Glances back and forth between the drawing and the model.

Marianne freezes. Héloïse has opened her eyes. And discovered her at work.

On tenterhooks, Marianne doesn't move. Héloïse says nothing, but her gaze suddenly softens and her body relaxes.

She strikes a pose, voluntarily. Marianne resumes her work, unsettled by the sudden generosity of the model. Who offers herself for the first time.

40. STUDIO-INT-DAY (FORMERLY 42 NOW 40)

The stiffness of Héloïse's pose, upright on the platform, contrasts with the languid image that preceded it.

The face is finished and yet Marianne examines her work perplexed.

MARIANNE

I can't make you smile. I feel that I manage it but it's like it disappears.

Héloïse ventures a forced smile.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

No, don't force your mouth. We'll make your eyes smile.

HÉLOÏSE

How?

MARIANNE

When the eye is angry, the entire pupil can be seen. When the eye smiles, the pupil is cut off by the lower eyelid that overlies it.

Héloïse's eye indeed softens while it becomes less round with the influence of the painter's explanation. A few seconds. It regains its roundness.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

You're back.

HÉLOÏSE

Anger always wins in the end.

MARIANNE

With you for sure.

Héloïse's clenched fist rests on her cheek, at the corner of her lips.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you.

HÉLOÏSE

You haven't hurt me.

MARIANNE

Yes, I have. I see it. When you're emotional you do this with your hand.

Marianne suits action to word and puts her clenched fist against her own face. Héloïse experiences her own attitude, mirrored.

HÉLOÏSE

Really?

MARIANNE

Yes.

Héloïse lowers her gaze and touches her forehead.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And when you're embarrassed you look down, like this. And you touch your forehead.

Héloïse stops her gesture and looks up, darkly.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

And when you're annoyed you don't blink.

HÉLOÏSE

You know everything.

MARIANNE

Forgive me. I would hate to be in your place.

HÉLOÏSE

We're in the same place.

It's Marianne's turn to be intimidated by Héloïse's gaze and assertive authority.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Exactly the same place.

Silence from Marianne.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Come here.

The sound of Marianne's footsteps approaching. Héloïse waits for her in the [camera's] frame.

Finally Marianne joins her.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Sit down.

Marianne sits next to Héloïse.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Take a look.

With a glance, Héloïse indicates the easel. Marianne's empty space. Facing her.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

If you look at me, who am I looking at?

Héloïse stares directly at Marianne, who evades her gaze. Marianne nervously bites her lips.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

When you don't know what to say you bite your lips.

Marianne stops biting herself, as soon as Héloïse points it out. Héloïse leans her face toward her.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

When you're afraid you clench your fists.

Marianne remains silent with her mouth parted.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

When you're upset you breathe through your mouth.

Her turmoil thus exposed renders Marianne silent. The distance between them seems to shrink even while they remain still. Marianne gets up.

We don't leave Héloïse's gaze as we hear Marianne return to her place behind the easel. For the first time, we see things from her point of view and the shift is a revelation. It is she who is watching. And from here Marianne looks fragile and feverish.

41. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

The kitchen is steamy, Marianne fills Sophie's glass with wine, Héloïse smokes the pipe. She has a deck of cards in her hands that she gauges with a focused eye despite her state of intoxication. They play a form of Spit, a game of speed.

Héloïse plays a card and it opens the floodgates. Each lays down cards, draws some more, readjusts her game until all possible plays are exhausted. They laugh, talk loudly, quarrel, cheat.

When Marianne's and Héloïse's eyes meet, they are burning.

The three women play several intense rounds. They take turns winning with childlike excitement.

42. STUDIO-INT-DAY (FORMERLY 40 NOW 42)

Silence in the studio. Héloïse poses resolutely. Only her face protrudes from the grey fabric. Contrast with the previous image.

MARIANNE

Can you remove the fabric?

After a beat, Héloïse ends up dropping the fabric, like a curtain opening onto a stage. Her body. Her throat is covered by a shawl.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

That too.

A shadow crosses Héloïse's face. She takes off the shawl, revealing her cleavage.

HÉLOÏSE

You don't lose sight of my future husband.

Marianne is embarrassed by Héloïse's remark.

Marianne concentrates on Héloïse's throat.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Do you paint nudes too?

MARIANNE

Women, yes.

HÉLOÏSE

Why not men?

MARIANNE

I don't have the right.

HÉLOÏSE

Why.

MARIANNE
Because I'm a woman.

We observe the progress of Marianne's work, as she refines the last details of Héloïse's face. We hear their conversation off-screen, while we watch the throat come to life under the brushstrokes.

HÉLOÏSE (OFF)
Is it a question of modesty?

MARIANNE(OFF)
Mostly it's a way to prevent us from doing great painting. Without any notion of male anatomy the full scope of the major subjects eludes us.

HÉLOÏSE(OFF)
How do you do it?

MARIANNE(OFF)
I do it in secret. It's tolerated.

We leave the painting to return to the pose.

HÉLOÏSE
What do you say to your models to distract them?

MARIANNE
Are you bored?

HÉLOÏSE
I'm interested in you.

MARIANNE
You have a remarkable complexion today and you look very elegant. You pose beautifully.

A beat. Marianne stops painting and looks at Héloïse.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
You're pretty.

Héloïse blushes, flustered.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
That's what I tell them.

The pink of the cheeks is added in small strokes to Héloïse's portrait.

43. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

A bouquet in a vase at the center of the heavy wooden table in the kitchen. A feminine hand adjusts a petal, unfolding one of the flowers. It's Sophie. She takes note of the result before resuming her work. She is embroidering. Her interpretation of the bouquet is taking shape.

Under Marianne's gaze, the two women are absorbed in their respective activities. Héloïse is preparing cèpes. The flesh of the mushroom sliced with dexterity. A clove of garlic crushed with the flat of a knife. Parsley, chopped. Duck fat tossed into a frying pan.

The ingredients mingle in the promising sound of hot fat.

Marianne serves three glasses of wine, which she places on the table. She takes her pipe and lights it. Héloïse automatically reaches out her arm to take the pipe. She takes a puff from it.

A moment suspended in time.

They look at each other as if the same idea had taken hold of all three of them.

That this feels like the ritual of everyday life.

(...)

The remains of the meal. The three women are still seated at the table. Héloïse is bent over her book. She is reading aloud. Sophie listens to her passionately. Marianne observes Héloïse's mobile face as she reads.

She sets the tone, animated.

HÉLOÏSE

After having begun by striking the strings of his lyre he sang thusly.
 «O deities of this shadowy underworld, to which all mortals must descend, I have come here to seek my wife; a viper, that she had trod on with her foot, injected her with its venom and caused her to perish in the prime of life. I wanted to be able to endure my misfortune and I tried, I will not deny it; Love has triumphed.

(MORE)

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

By these places full of horror, by this immense Chaos, by these vast and silent realms, I implore you, renew the life-thread of Eurydice, too soon ended. All things are due to you; and though we may tarry on earth a short while, sooner or later we must hasten to the same abode. This is where we all strive to reach; this is our final resting place; it is you who will reign the longest over the human race. She too, when, ripe for the grave, she shall have lived the days of her justly allotted years, also shall be yours to rule. If the fates deny me this favor for my wife, I am resolved not to retrace my steps; rejoice to see us both succumb.»

SOPHIE

He is convincing.

HÉLOÏSE

Very.

SOPHIE

My God, I hope they'll say yes.

Héloïse takes a sip of wine and resumes reading.

HÉLOÏSE

So for the first time tears were said to wet the cheeks of Eumenides, overcome by these tones; neither the royal queen, nor the god who rules the underworld could resist such a prayer; so they called to Eurydice; she was yet there, among the newly arrived shades; she moves toward them with steps still halting from her wound. Orpheus secures their promise that she be returned to him, on condition that he not cast his eyes behind him, until he has left; else, the favor would be lost. They take, in the midst of a profound silence, a steep, dark path, shrouded in thick fog.

(MORE)

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

They were not far from reaching the surface of the earth, they were nearly to the boundary, when, fearing that Eurydice might escape him and impatient to see her, her loving husband turns his gaze on her and immediately she is drawn back; she reaches out her arms, she seeks his embrace and wants to embrace him herself; the unfortunate one grasps only the impalpable air. On dying for a second time, she could not say a word of censure for her husband; what could she bemoan about being loved?

SOPHIE

But it's horrible.

Sophie is literally living the downfall in the story.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Poor thing. Why did he turn around? He was told not to turn around. He turned around at the last moment. For no reason.

MARIANNE

There are reasons.

SOPHIE

Do you think so? Go on, read it again?

HÉLOÏSE

«They were not far from reaching the surface of the earth, they were nearly to the boundary, when, fearing that Eurydice might escape him and impatient to see her, her loving husband turns his gaze on her...»

SOPHIE

But no. He can't look at her because he's afraid of losing her. That doesn't make sense, those were precisely the instructions he was given.

HÉLOÏSE

He's madly in love. He doesn't resist.

MARIANNE

I think that Sophie's not wrong.
It's not that he is unable to
resist. And the grounds aren't
serious. Maybe if he turns around,
it's because he's making a choice.

SOPHIE

What choice.

MARIANNE

He chooses the memory of Eurydice.
That's why he turns around.

Héloïse looks at her, waiting.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

He doesn't make the lover's choice.
He makes the poet's choice.

HÉLOÏSE

«She bids him a final farewell,
which already can barely reach his
ears and she falls back into the
abyss from which she had emerged.»

The last sentence resounds in silence. Héloïse is lost in her
thoughts. Suddenly her eyes light up.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Maybe she was the one who said to
him: turn around.

44A. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT[SIC]

The three women are walking over the moor at night. The moon
is full and illuminates the path. They enter a wooded area.
Sophie stops, looks around her, as though she were searching
for which way to go. She decides on an option and resumes the
path she had been following.

She turns back toward Héloïse and Marianne who are following
her closely.

SOPHIE

You have to look for light.

HÉLOÏSE

Do you go there often?

SOPHIE

Yes. On the sly.

She smiles at her. They are still walking in total darkness.

44B. FOREST-EXT-NIGHT

Finally a glimmer in the distance. They move closer and the light grows stronger. It is that of a fire.

We hear the murmur of voices reverberating in the silence of the night. The fire is broad and high. Dozens of figures are silhouetted around it. They are women. Standing, sitting, they drink, talk, laugh.

Sophie searches among the faces. She stops at a woman in her fifties who is sitting by the fire talking with a little girl. Sophie walks toward her. Marianne watches as she converses with the woman.

Héloïse observes this assembly, amazed. She moves closer to the fire and walks around it, scrutinizing the faces and attitudes of the twenty or so women who are gathered there. There are children, teenage girls, adults.

Sophie finds Marianne again.

SOPHIE

She says that I'm still pregnant.
And to come and see her in two
days.

MARIANNE

I'll go with you.

Sophie brandishes a bottle of alcohol as if to salute that last sentence. She takes a swig from the bottle before handing it to Marianne.

A melody approaches, carried by several voices. Figures appear. They are singers. There are four of them. The voices of others rise to complete and enrich the slightly dissonant note which ends up stopping on a perfect chord that increases in power. They start clapping their hands, and the song suddenly jumps to 150bpm, in a polyrhythm that continues to build in complexity. The women clapping their hands whisper scansions that contribute to the tempo.

Marianne watches Héloïse who is clapping her hands, fascinated. She starts to dance, strangely.

The choir becomes shot-reverse shot. Héloïse moves toward Marianne, that is, toward the fire. Close. She ends up walking around it, and so does Marianne. They move toward each other in an arc of a circle.

Héloïse leaves the fire and enters the horizon revealing that the bottom of her dress is on fire. She moves forward, calm. She stops and turns back toward Marianne as the flame grows.

Suddenly she falls backward, under the weight of two women who immediately trample on the dress to put out the fire.

Marianne joins her and offers her hand to help her stand up.

Héloïse grabs her forearm and gets back on her feet. They are face to face thanks to this movement, still clinging to one another. Their mouths are so close together.

45. COASTAL PATH-EXT-END OF DAY

Marianne and Héloïse walk along a steep path. Their faces are hidden by cloths that protect them from the sea spray. Thanks to the uneven terrain, the two women touch each other, help each other, join hands, and hold each other by the waist. They look for each other and find each other. They end up in a cove, enclosed. An intimate beach. If the scarves that cover their faces reveal only their eyes, those eyes say a great deal. They are vibrant. We sense the open panting mouths with the movement of the fabric that conforms to their lips with each breath.

Héloïse takes hold of the scarf that hinders her and lowers it, revealing her mouth. A beat.

Marianne slides her scarf down, as if in answer.

She approaches Héloïse. Kisses her. The kiss is intense. When Marianne moves away, full of emotion, she notices that Héloïse has dropped her face. Her mouth is trembling.

With a delicate gesture, Marianne tips up her face with her hand. There is turmoil and anxiety in her eyes.

Suddenly, Héloïse flees. And leaves her there.

46A. MANOR-EXT-DUSK

Marianne, worried, enters the manor.

46B. CORRIDOR-INT-NIGHT

Marianne walks down the hall to the kitchen from which she can hear the sounds of activity.

46C. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

Through the doorway, Sophie's silhouette can be seen bustling around the fire. Marianne's gaze falls on the table where the cutlery is set for three. But Héloïse is not there. Marianne sits down, silent. Sophie places a soup tureen on the table. She grabs Marianne's plate and pours several ladlesful of soup into it.

MARIANNE

We're not waiting for Héloïse?

SOPHIE

She's not feeling well. She doesn't want dinner.

Marianne doesn't answer, she tries to contain her disappointment and mounting sadness.

47A. CORRIDOR/STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Marianne walks down the hallway to her room. She hears footsteps behind her. She turns around and finds herself facing Héloïse, wearing a white dress that we have not seen on her before. She is pale, sad. As Marianne approaches, Héloïse stretches out a hand toward her and disappears as if a shadow had just erased her.

It was a vision.

Marianne is unsettled as she resumes her path and pushes open the door of the studio.

47B. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

She finds Héloïse, sitting by the fireplace, in her dark dress. The flames make the shadows dance on her face. Marianne approaches slowly, as she would an animal that mustn't be frightened.

MARIANNE

I thought that you got scared.

HÉLOÏSE

You were right.

Héloïse stands up. The two women clasp each other in a tender embrace that does not seem to end. They speak without looking at one other.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

I'm afraid I might faint.

They don't move, in each other's arms.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Do you think all lovers feel like
they're inventing something?

Marianne is paralyzed. Speechless. Héloïse brings her lips
close to her ear.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

I know the gestures. I imagined
everything while waiting for you.

MARIANNE

You dreamt of me.

HÉLOÏSE

No, I thought of you.

Her lips leave the ear into which they were whispering, kiss
the neck and then the cheek in the path that leads to
Marianne's mouth. Their cautious gestures become powerful
caresses.

Marianne finally closes her eyes.

47 BIS. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Day has entered the room. Both women are sleeping. Naked.

There's a knock at the door. Marianne sits up.

Héloïse gets out of bed and walks toward the other end of the
room. She draws the curtain and hides behind it.

MARIANNE

Come in.

Sophie is on the threshold. She is wrapped up to go out.

SOPHIE

Don't you want to come with me
anymore.

MARIANNE

Of course I do.

48. HOUSE-EXT/INT-DAY

A modest stone house nestled in the heart of a winter
vegetable garden.

Marianne, Héloïse and Sophie knock on the door of the house. A little girl opens the door. She is one of the little girls who was dancing at the fête.

49. HOUSE-INT-DAY

The house is a single room structured in two spaces around a fireplace. A large common bed where two young children are sleeping. And the kitchen. They are welcomed by the woman who was talking with Sophie at the fête. She places both hands on Sophie's belly, which she palpates in a technical and medical gesture.

Sophie casts an anxious look at her companions.

THE WOMAN

It's going to be okay. Lie down.

Sophie walks toward the large bed in the room where the two sleeping children are already lying.

Marianne and Héloïse observe one of the women who is making a paste.

The mixture is brought by the little girl to the old woman now seated on a stool, at the foot of the bed where Sophie is lying. There is also a syringe and a knitting needle.

The woman takes hold of her ankles and makes her bend her knees. She lifts up her dress revealing her thighs and her sex.

Héloïse and Marianne observe from a distance. Concerned and rapt.

The woman spreads Sophie's thighs apart and introduces the abortifacient plants into her vagina. Then she picks up a container and produces smoke by fanning it with her hand. She directs the fumigation toward Sophie's sex. The scene is shrouded with this mist.

Sophie's face, frightened. She is sweating. Her breath is shallow and rapid. She is not alone in the bed. Next to her, an 18-month-old boy is asleep on his back. In the midst of the agitation, the child wakes up, opens his eyes.

Sophie turns her face toward him. The child also turns toward her, lying on his side. He gazes into her eyes. Sophie's breathing calms down.

The child comes closer and snuggles against her.

He puts his hand on her chest in a comforting gesture.

50. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Sophie is lying on the bed in the studio. Héloïse and Marianne whisper.

MARIANNE

Go to sleep. I'll watch over her.

HÉLOÏSE

I don't want to sleep.

Héloïse's eyes are shining.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

We're going to paint.

Héloïse gathers light around the bed. She takes a step back and observes her installation.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Do you have any canvas left?

Héloïse looks around for something and heads toward a stool at the other end of the room. She brings it back and places it at the foot of the bed and at Sophie's feet. She sits there.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Sophie, can I touch you?

Sophie answers without even looking at her. Dazed.

SOPHIE

Yes.

Héloïse takes hold of Sophie's ankles and pulls her legs up, as the abortionist had done. She freezes in place.

Marianne sees the image come to life. She understands. Héloïse is posing for a painting that could be entitled «the angel maker».

Marianne's gaze becomes active.

MARIANNE

Hunch over a little more.

Héloïse does so.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Put your hand under her dress.

The scene takes shape according to Marianne's direction and Héloïse's suggestions. Marianne puts the first touches of color to the painting which quickly takes shape, inspired.

51. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The midday sun. In bed, Sophie is dozing between Héloïse and Marianne who are awake. Héloïse slowly moves her arm to reach for Marianne's hand. Their hands join in an arc above Sophie's head.

The hands caress one other. When Sophie wakes up, they immediately pretend to be asleep and separate their fingers.

Sophie sits up and gets out of bed. We can hear her putting on her shoes and taking a few steps. The instant they hear the reverberation of the door closing, the two women eagerly move closer together. They kiss with a passion inflamed by delay.

52. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Héloïse is in the green dress and poses in a relaxed manner, she seems almost drowsy and her gaze is laughing.

Marianne is painting the dress which is coming along well. She is overcome by the same smile as Héloïse's. She says beseechingly.

MARIANNE

Stop.

Marianne approaches Héloïse, who has once again become serious and unmoving.

She kisses her while she is in the pose for the painting.

(...)

Reflected in the studio's mirror are both the painting and Héloïse in the flesh.

She is sitting on the bench, half-naked, her hair in a mess.

Contrast of the living image.

Héloïse, with shining eyes, examines a tin containing a dark paste.

HÉLOÏSE

I bought it from a woman at the
fête. It's a plant.

(MORE)

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

She says it's to make you fly. Have you already tried it.

MARIANNE

Never.

HÉLOÏSE

Do you want to?

MARIANNE

Now?

HÉLOÏSE

She told me that it makes time last longer.

Héloïse takes a bit of the brown paste with her fingertips.

She raises her arm revealing her armpit and the brown hairs that contrast with the blonde hair on her head. She rubs the ointment into her armpit, massaging lightly.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

Your turn.

She again takes a little paste and slides her fingers into the hollow of Marianne's armpit. She rubs in the ointment.

They exchange a long kiss.

Languor suffuses them, thanks to their caresses and the drugs. Héloïse opens her eyes. Marianne brings her face very close to hers.

MARIANNE

Your eyes...

Héloïse's pupils are dilated. The blue of her eyes has been driven out by black, Marianne's pupils are dilated as well.

53A. KITCHEN-INT-NIGHT

Marianne enters the kitchen and grabs the jug of water from which she greedily drinks. She takes the jug with her.

53B. CORRIDOR-INT-NIGHT

When she returns to the corridor, the flames of the candles that illuminate it are excessively bright. They seem to be blazing. She hears the sound of footsteps behind her.

She turns around and finds herself again facing the ghostly Héloïse in the white dress. The vision is exactly the same as the first time and the figure disappears into the shadow that falls on her sad gaze.

54. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Marianne enters the studio. She sits down next to Héloïse who is lying on her back.

MARIANNE
You need to drink.

But Héloïse, in all her delicious looking torpor, doesn't move. Marianne drinks from the jug but doesn't swallow. She keeps the water in her mouth and lets it drip like a little fountain into Héloïse's parted mouth.

The watering becomes a cool and wet kiss.

Marianne's gaze is drawn to the painting in front of her. As if a movement had caught her attention. She stares at it. The blue eyes of the portrait have dilated as well. They have turned black. Fascinated, Marianne doesn't take her eyes off the painting.

The Héloïse of the painting seems to be slowly lowering her head. Marianne awkwardly props herself up on her elbows and incredulously scrutinizes the painting watching for movement. The woman in the painting turns her head very slightly to look her straight in the eyes. The painting silently mouths something. Marianne concentrates. The painting stops moving.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
She's talking.

Héloïse, still lying down, doesn't move.

HÉLOÏSE
Who's talking.

MARIANNE
You.

HÉLOÏSE
What is she saying.

MARIANNE
I can't figure it out.

Héloïse sits up with difficulty and observes the immobile painting. Finally, she perceives a movement. The mouth comes alive.

It articulates words in a loop as if in slow motion. Héloïse concentrates.

Her lips begin to move in mirror of the painting.

Finally she stops.

HÉLOÏSE

I get it.

MARIANNE

Tell me.

Héloïse turns her face toward Marianne and mouths the words silently like the painting. Marianne reads her lips and says aloud:

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I love you.

HÉLOÏSE

I love you too.

55. STUDIO-INT-NIGHT

Hands that pour pigments into the containers, adding oil to them. It's Héloïse who is preparing the green color. She is focused, thorough.

MARIANNE

It needs a little yellow.

Héloïse adds a bit of yellow. The color is beautiful. Héloïse places the paintbrush loaded with green paint on her eye, which she highlights with paint. She smiles at Marianne, luminous.

Héloïse takes a look at the portrait. It is inhabited, true to life. There are still details of the dress to be finished.

HÉLOÏSE

This time I like it.

MARIANNE

Perhaps because I know you better.

HÉLOÏSE

Perhaps I have changed too, since then.

Marianne laughs as one would blush at a saucy suggestion.

MARIANNE

Perhaps yes.

HÉLOÏSE

You didn't destroy the last one for me. You did it for you.

MARIANNE

I would like to destroy this one too.

HÉLOÏSE

Why?

MARIANNE

Because through it I give you to another.

A beat.

HÉLOÏSE

It's terrible because now that you possess me a little you hold it against me.

MARIANNE

I don't.

HÉLOÏSE

You know you do. You are no longer on my side. You blame me for what comes next. My marriage. You are no longer supportive.

Silence from Marianne, stricken.

MARIANNE

You are right.

HÉLOÏSE

Go on. Say what's in your heart.

Marianne doesn't say anything, as if she didn't dare.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

I believed you braver.

MARIANNE

I believed you braver too.

HÉLOÏSE

Here we are. You find me docile. Worse you imagine me complicit. You imagine my pleasure.

MARIANNE
It's a way of not hoping.

HÉLOÏSE
Imagine me happy or unhappy if that
reassures you, but do not imagine
me guilty.

Héloïse walks to the door. She turns toward Marianne before
exiting.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
You would prefer that I resist.

MARIANNE
Yes.

HÉLOÏSE
Are you asking me to?

Marianne says nothing.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
Answer me.

MARIANNE
No.

Héloïse exits on this sad victory.

56. KITCHEN-INT-DAY

The bouquet in the kitchen is withered. Petals have fallen on
the wooden table. Sophie finishes her embroidery, with its
ever-vibrant bouquet. Marianne enters the kitchen.

MARIANNE
Have you seen Héloïse?

SOPHIE
No. She isn't in her room.

Marianne is about to leave the room when Sophie tells her.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
We've had some news. Madame returns
tomorrow morning.

Marianne stops in her tracks. She freezes.

MARIANNE
Very well.

SOPHIE
Will you be ready?

MARIANNE
Yes.

57A. MOOR-EXT-DAY

Marianne runs across the moor, scanning the horizon for any sign of Héloïse. There is an urgency, in which every minute that passes is lost.

57B. BEACH-EXT-DAY

Marianne runs over the beach at low tide, it's a lunar landscape populated by rocks in their varying shades of brown. Finally she sees her. Strange to see this green dress surrounded by nature. As if the painting were alive. Marianne throws herself into her arms.

MARIANNE
Forgive me. Forgive me.

Héloïse does not return the embrace, still hurt. The streaks of green paint on her face attest to her crying.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Your mother returns tomorrow.

The news affects Héloïse who finally looks at her. One sadness has taken the place of the other. They clasp each other tightly and kiss, as though saying farewell.

58. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Héloïse and Marianne enter the studio. Each takes her place without a word. Marianne behind the easel. Héloïse on the stool. She fixes her hair, which has been buffeted by the wind.

HÉLOÏSE
When do you know when it's finished?

MARIANNE
At some point you stop.

A beat. Marianne puts a few touches here and there. She clarifies a detail. She stops, observes Héloïse posing mechanically, while her gaze betrays her emotions.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Come here. With me.

Héloïse leaves the model's place and joins Marianne behind the easel. They both look at the painting.

Focused, she applies a few strokes of the paintbrush. She stops, observes. Two more strokes. A beat. She puts down the brush.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

It's finished.

Héloïse puts her arm around Marianne's shoulders. Who as though continuing the same motion passes her hand around Héloïse's waist. They say nothing, gripped by emotion.

59. STUDIO-INT-END OF DAY

The studio in the glow of the setting sun. The candles are not yet lit. The two women are naked, on the bed. Marianne is reproducing the portrait of Héloïse in pastel in the center of a small frame. Héloïse is wrapped in the whiteness of the sheet, watching her.

HÉLOÏSE

Who is it for?

MARIANNE

For me.

Héloïse watches her. The softness of the pastel gives the small portrait a serene character.

HÉLOÏSE

Now you can reproduce this image endlessly.

MARIANNE

Yes.

HÉLOÏSE

After a while it's her that you'll see when you think of me.

A beat.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)

I won't have a picture of you.

MARIANNE

Do you want a picture of me?

HÉLOÏSE

Yes.

MARIANNE

Which one.

Héloïse indicates Marianne lying naked with her head resting on her hand.

HÉLOÏSE

That one.

Marianne gets up and rummages in her bags. She returns with a small mirror, which she hands to Héloïse.

MARIANNE

Show me.

Héloïse holds the mirror at the level of her lower abdomen, masking her sex. She orients it until it reflects Marianne's face and torso. Marianne adjusts her position.

HÉLOÏSE

Straighten up a little.

Marianne plants her elbow on the bed and straightens her torso slightly. She notes the result in the mirror.

MARIANNE

Give me your book.

Héloïse hands her the book.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Say a number.

HÉLOÏSE

28.

Marianne opens the book and scrolls through its pages to the 28th. She grabs her colored pencils and starts drawing her self-portrait, looking at herself in the mirror that is leaning against Héloïse's belly. The portrait takes shape in the softness of pastel.

A small erotic nude. We see Marianne painting her own face. Searching in the mirror for the right expression of her gaze.

(...)

Night has fallen. The two women are lying face to face. They look at each other, in silence. There is a very thin line between languor and sleep. And their eyelids are heavy. They whisper.

HÉLOÏSE (CONT'D)
We mustn't go to sleep.

MARIANNE
No.

A beat.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Your eyes are closing.

She kisses both her eyes. Héloïse opens them and smiles at her. A beat.

In turn, Marianne's eyelids fall closed. Héloïse gives her a little slap. Marianne wakes up.

They bring their faces together and kiss each other. They stay like this, as if their kiss were frozen in sleep.

Their eyelids close. Marianne rallies and kisses Héloïse between her eyes:

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Don't go to sleep. Don't go to sleep, don't go to sleep.

HÉLOÏSE
I have a new feeling.

MARIANNE
Which one.

HÉLOÏSE
Regret.

MARIANNE
Don't regret, remember.

Marianne takes a moment and adopts a tone that encourages reciprocity, like a game.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
I'll remember the time you fell asleep in the kitchen.

HÉLOÏSE
I'll remember your glare when I beat you at cards.

MARIANNE
I'll remember the first time you laughed.

HÉLOÏSE

It took you long enough to be funny.

MARIANNE

It's true. I wasted time.

HÉLOÏSE

I wasted time, too. I'll remember the first time I wanted to kiss you.

MARIANNE

When was that.

HÉLOÏSE

You didn't see.

MARIANNE

At the fête around the fire.

HÉLOÏSE

I wanted to, yes. But that wasn't the first time.

Marianne thinks.

MARIANNE

Tell me.

Héloïse draws out the suspense. Amused.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

Tell me.

HÉLOÏSE

You tell me.

Marianne's attitude suddenly changes. Modesty.

MARIANNE

When you asked me if I had ever loved.

A beat.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I felt that the answer was yes. And that it was now.

Héloïse takes her hand. Squeezes it.

HÉLOÏSE

I remember.

(...)

Dawn.

The two women are lying on their stomachs. Their faces are hidden by their intermingled hair. Blonde and brown. Marianne awakens and straightens up, without waking Héloïse. A beat.

60A. CORRIDOR-INT-DAY

Marianne walks down the hallway.

60B. KITCHEN-INT-DAY

She enters the kitchen. A man is seated at the table. It's the boatman who brought her here. Marianne freezes as though she had seen a ghost

THE BOATMAN

Hello.

MARIANNE

Hello.

Sophie, silent, puts a plate in front of the man for him to eat.

61. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Marianne enters the studio where Héloïse is awake, in bed.

MARIANNE

They're here.

Marianne watches Héloïse get up, look around and then pick up her long-neglected corset. She puts it on. She approaches Marianne, and turns around so she can tighten the corset, then lace it up. Her figure is suddenly so upright.

62. STUDIO-INT-DAY

Marianne arranges her colors in the box. She cleans the marble-topped sideboard with turpentine. The patches of dried paint smear and spread out until they disappear from the white and veined surface that regains its coldness.

The sound of approaching footsteps reaches her from the open door. The countess enters the studio, followed by Héloïse. Her attitude is different. She has been effaced. Her face is slightly lowered.

The countess goes behind the easel and examines the painting. A long scrutinizing look, followed by the verdict:

THE COUNTESS

Very good.

She turns to Marianne and hands her an envelope.

Marianne takes the money under Héloïse's gaze.

MARIANNE

Thank you.

The countess walks toward the door. Héloïse doesn't move. Stays close to Marianne. The countess turns around.

THE COUNTESS

Come with me Héloïse.

Héloïse doesn't move.

HÉLOÏSE

I'll be right there.

THE COUNTESS

No. Now. I have a gift for you.

Héloïse resigns herself to follow her mother.

Marianne watches her leave the room.

63. STUDIO-INT-DAY

The painting. A shadow falls on it. It's the lid of the crate. The boatman seals it with four hammer blows.

The room has been restored to its anonymity.

Sophie is there and watches the boatman who grabs the crate and Marianne's things. He leaves the studio.

SOPHIE

I came to say goodbye to you here.

Marianne stands up. They are face to face.

MARIANNE

Farewell.

Sophie hugs her. Very tightly. She has tears in her voice when she says:

SOPHIE

I wanted to be able to really hug
you.

The embrace continues as sadness grows.

64. OFFICE-INT-DAY

Marianne has put on her coat, ready to leave. She knocks on the door of the Countess' office.

She enters.

Héloïse is there, with her mother finalizing the fitting of a new white dress.

MARIANNE

I'm leaving you.

THE COUNTESS

Have a good trip.

The Countess comes to say goodbye to her on the threshold, followed by Héloïse.

Suddenly, Marianne hugs the Countess. So she has an excuse to hug Héloïse with the same urgency afterward.

She holds her tightly, breathes her in one last time and tears herself from her embrace, leaving the room in the same momentum.

65. CORRIDOR-INT-DAY

Marianne goes down the long corridor that leads to the door. She moves with quick steps.

Behind her, the sound of other footsteps approaching. As she opens the door, she hears.

HÉLOÏSE

Turn around.

Marianne turns around. She sees the final image of Héloïse, which we recognize. The ghost from the corridor. The white dress, the pale complexion, the sad look and the shadow that falls on her: that of the door closing.

66. BEACH-EXT-DAY

Marianne is on the beach. The boatman loads her things and the crate into the boat. This time it's a tear streaming down her face in place of the rain. A loop has come full circle.

Marianne is in the boat, her back to the coast. The boat is under way on the waves. The crate moves as it had on her arrival, at the whim of the oscillations of the boat. Marianne does not try to stabilize it. She looks at it, doing nothing. But this time the boatman stabilizes it, by resting his leg on top of it. The crate doesn't move any more. It will not fall.

Marianne looks straight ahead, she doesn't see the coast receding behind her, holding back her emotions. She turns around and looks at it.

67. STUDIO PARIS-INT-DAY

Loud and happy conversations. The students are leaving the studio. Marianne reviews her students' work: different versions of herself.

More or less accomplished, true to life, taking liberties. Their interpretations of Marianne. Only one young student is still at work. She is retouching her drawing which is the most accomplished of the lot. She focuses on the face which is remarkably completed. Marianne examines her portrait which is imbued with great gravity.

MARIANNE

You've made me so sad.

THE STUDENT

You were.

MARIANNE

I'm not anymore.

The student exits the studio, leaving Marianne alone.

She walks toward the portrait of the young woman on fire still turned against the wall.

She picks it up and looks at it.

Marianne's voice, off-screen.

MARIANNE (OFF) (CONT'D)

I saw her again twice.

68. SALON LOUVRE-INT-DAY

The Salon, the great competitive exhibition of the year's notable paintings at the Louvre. The walls are covered with works from floor to ceiling, in a smoky salon where a hundred or so people stroll about.

Marianne makes her way through the largely male crowd. She is 35 years old. She is looking for something or someone. She glances at the booklet that lists the works and their location, to find her way. Finally she stops in front of a painting. It's a mythological scene. She examines its hanging, the works that surround it.

A voice draws her attention from this observation. It is that of an old man.

THE MAN

Are you standing guard?

MARIANNE

I'm observing the reactions.

THE MAN

Would you like mine? It's very good, this painting. He's in good form, your father.

MARIANNE

It's my painting. I submitted it under his name.

She puts her index finger to her lips, to enjoin him to secrecy.

The man examines the painting in detail. In a dark and cavernous corridor, a man and a woman in ancient costume face each other.

THE MAN

It's Orpheus in the underworld.

MARIANNE

Yes.

THE MAN

There's a tendency to represent him before he turns around. Or after, when Eurydice dies. With you, they seem to be saying goodbye.

(...)

Marianne consults the booklet that lists the exhibited works. A title catches her attention. She rushes into the tightly packed crowd, heading toward the opposite wall, as if there were an emergency.

Something suddenly catches her eye in front of her. Like a familiar face in the crowd. She continues to move forward. The crossing of visitors in front of her act like shutters that allow only glimpses of the painting in bits and pieces, and a figure reveals itself. That of a woman, blonde, dignified, who is looking at her. At her side stands a young child. It is Héloïse as wife and mother. Marianne searches the painting with eager eyes. She looks at the child. Héloïse's hand resting on her shoulder. Her face. She looks into her eyes. As though to check on how she's doing. There's a slight smile, maybe she's happy.

In her right hand is a book with a blue cover. Her index finger is slipped between two pages, as if to mark its place. 28. Héloïse's finger brushes against the secret of this page, the loving self-portrait.

Marianne scrutinizes the face again. It seems more mischievous at second glance. As though it were sharing a secret. Marianne smiles back at her.

MARIANNE (OFF)

I saw her again one last time.

69. THEATRE-INT-NIGHT

Marianne makes her way among the spectators in the balcony of an Italianate theatre. She sits and watches the house fill, with the hubbub of voices amplified by the acoustics of the theatre. She recognizes a familiar figure, which progresses along the balcony opposite. The face is hidden from view and Marianne does not take her eyes off it until it turns her way.

It is Héloïse.

She threads between the occupied armchairs, and the empty armchairs. Until she reaches the end of the balcony, like the edge of a precipice. She sits there. There is nothing between her and the stage. Her eyes are riveted on this horizon.

She doesn't look around the room as the conversations die down one after the other, as if by mutual agreement.

MARIANNE (OFF)

She didn't see me.

Silence suddenly embraces the theatre before stormy violins begin their first movement. Like a held breath rent by a famous staccato, that of the opening notes of the Presto from Vivaldi's Summer.

Héloïse initially reveals a troubled face at the first bars of this long cherished piece. We get imperceptibly closer to her face during the three minutes of the movement. This face experiences the dramaturgical unfolding of the music as she hears it, transfixed by its generous rise in power. There is everything, there is the surprise, the exaltation, the pounding of the heart, the expectation, the melancholy, the concentration, the flush that rises to the cheeks and the breath that deepens. All the attitudes of a woman we have known well and loved to watch. Whom we simply loved. But there are also things that we didn't know about her and that we are discovering. Maybe because they are new things, like that wrinkle in the corner of her eye. Maybe also because they are things that we didn't know how to see and remained to be understood. When the piece reaches its exhilarating finale, Héloïse stands up, happy, revealing the last and the most alive of all her faces.

FIN