

Jealousy

A film by Philippe Garrel

With Louis Garrel, Anna Mouglalis, Rebecca Convent

Script by

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The idea that underpins this film is that my son Louis plays his grandfather at 30—the same age as Louis today—even though it is set in the present day. It tells of my father's love affair with a woman—and by admiring her I unwittingly made my exemplary mother jealous—when I was a child being raised by my mother (in the film, I am a little girl). Those are the historical origins of this contemporary film—my son playing my father when he was thirty.

Philippe Garrel

For my father

Louis wakes in the bedroom he shares with Clotilde.
Clotilde isn't asleep. With tired eyes, she sits on the edge
of the bed, a film script in one hand.

LOUIS

Can't sleep?

Clotilde shakes her head.

LOUIS

You didn't come to bed?
You got no sleep at all?

Louis glances at the script. Clotilde has torn out all the
pages, leaving only the front and back cover and title page.
The script is empty.

LOUIS

You've ripped it all out.

Clotilde nods.

She seems a bit funny and remains silent. Very sad.

Louis takes her in his arms, lays her down and starts making
love to her.

Fade to black.

Charlotte, Louis and Clotilde's 7-year-old daughter, is woken by voices in the apartment. She listens.
In another room, her mother and father are talking.

When she hears her mother crying, Charlotte gets up and heads down the hallway. She reaches the door of the room where the voices are coming from and peers through the keyhole. Her parents stand facing each other.
Clotilde is indeed in tears. Louis has pulled his coat on.

Through her tears, Charlotte's mother asks, *Why? Why?*
Louis replies, *I can't take you with me, Clotilde.*
Clotilde asks again, *Why?*

When her father glances toward the door, Charlotte scurries back to bed.
From her room, she hears her father leave the apartment.

Fade to black.

Opening titles.

Fade up.

Louis has picked Charlotte up from school and prepares a snack for her while waiting for Clotilde to get home.

Clotilde enters. Charlotte jumps into her mother's arms.

Clotilde and Louis cheek-kiss.

LOUIS

How'd it go?

CLOTILDE

Same as it always goes in an office.

Louis looks down.

Of course, it was a dumb question but what could he say?

CLOTILDE

Did you bring me any... *(Charlotte's listening)*

LOUIS

The rehearsals are unpaid... for the time being. *(He could be lying)*

CLOTILDE

Do you remember, not so long ago, we were sure we'd earn a living doing what we love?

Louis has no answer.

CLOTILDE

You, at least, kept at it.

LOUIS

C'mon -

CLOTILDE

Yes, really.

Louis knows that it's just another of the many ways she finds to criticize him for leaving her to raise and provide for their daughter almost alone.

LOUIS

Yes, but... It's tough, isn't it?

CLOTILDE

I know, but in the meantime...

Charlotte isn't fooled, despite the precautions employed by her parents.

CHARLOTTE

Don't shout. When you shout, it gives me a headache.

In the street.
Louis is with another woman. Claudia.
Louis and Claudia walk arm in arm.

Louis, who wants to chill out before going home, says sweetly:

LOUIS

You want to go straight home?

CLAUDIA

No. I like walking with you.

Louis slips his hand around her waist and they walk on.

A little later.
They have stopped halfway across a bridge. It's a cold night
and Louis has draped his jacket (or coat) around Claudia's
shoulders.

They are face to face, very close. Two lovers who most likely
have just kissed.

Claudia says:

CLAUDIA

Whatever happens... Even if we separate one
day... I won't ever cross this bridge without
thinking of you.

LOUIS

Me neither. Without thinking of us.

CLAUDIA

Yes.

It was so powerful when you kissed me for the
first time.

LOUIS

I wanted to take you in my arms so bad... I was
trembling. That never happened to me before.
Never like that.

They tenderly kiss. Claudia shivers.

CLAUDIA

I'm cold.

LOUIS

Come on...

Louis puts his arm around her shoulders and leads her away.

LOUIS

Let's go home.

In the stairwell of their apartment building.

LOUIS

Beat ya!

Louis races up the stairs, leaving Claudia puffing behind him.

CLAUDIA

It's not fair! Those long legs of yours!

Louis is first into the apartment (bending to pick up the mail under the door).

Claudia arrives and jostles past him. Runs into the bedroom, throws herself fully dressed onto the bed and pulls the comforter over herself.

CLAUDIA

Beat ya to bed!

Louis throws himself on top of her.

LOUIS

Nasty girl! With your shoes on!

They laugh and roll on the bed.

At Clotilde's.

Charlotte stands motionless by the front door.

CLOTILDE

What are you doing standing there by the door?

CHARLOTTE

Waiting for dad.

Claudia meets Louis at the stage door after rehearsal.
He's with Pascal.

CLAUDIA

How was it?

PASCAL

He was great with Lucie.

CLAUDIA

Lucie?

LOUIS

The actress who plays my sister.

CLAUDIA

You never mentioned her. Lucky, she's playing
your sister.

PASCAL

That doesn't stop feelings.

CLAUDIA

True.

What's she like?

LOUIS

Ordinary.

PASCAL

Ordinary? Sublime. A body...

LOUIS

The body doesn't count. It's the face.

PASCAL

Her eyes.

LOUIS

Why does everybody begin with the eyes? For me,
you see, it's the shape of her face, then her
cheekbones.

PASCAL

You're right, the nose. Have you seen her nose?

CLAUDIA

Very funny.

PASCAL

I don't think beauty's funny.
It could make me cry.

LOUIS

Beauty isn't what attracts women. You know
that.

PASCAL

I know. Luckily (*for me*).

LOUIS

Competition is what attracts them.

CLAUDIA

Absolutely. You're so right.

Beat.

PASCAL

(*hands Louis a bunch of keys*)

Here, the keys. Keep an eye on the oil gauge.
See you.

LOUIS

See you.

CLAUDIA

Bye.

Pascal walks away.

A car on a road in the Paris region. Louis drives, Claudia is at his side.

The car heads down a country road.

Louis and Claudia are in each other's arms on a riverbank, in the grass under some trees.

Louis has taken Charlotte to a puppet theater.
He muses about what it would be like if he were still with
Clotilde.
He's scared his daughter will miss him being around, in the
same way he missed his father.

During the show, Louis leans over to Charlotte.

LOUIS

You okay, possum?

CHARLOTTE

I'm a little bit scared.

LOUIS

Snuggle up close to me.

Charlotte huddles against her father.

LOUIS

Better?

CHARLOTTE

Lots.

Claudia has an elderly friend who lives in an apartment in the suburbs piled high with books. Louis makes friends with him, but it's Claudia's interaction with the old man with a limp that is particularly touching. Their friendship is almost platonic love, and Louis isn't jealous of that love. On the contrary, it makes him want to be alive (and with Claudia, who has such a spontaneous approach to life and other people when they interest her).

(Back to camera, André stands at his desk, leaning on a cane. From across the room, near the bookshelves, Louis sits looking at him. Claudia stands, also looking at Antoine. He takes a book from his desk. His leg is clearly giving him pain.)

ANDRÉ

(to Claudia)

Here. I've always been scared I wouldn't give you this book before I check out. Essential reading.

CLAUDIA

If you tell me one more time you're about to "check out," I'll kill you myself.

Antoine hands her the book.

ANDRÉ

Sweetheart, you have no idea how happy you'd make me.

CLAUDIA

Stop, it's not funny!

ANDRÉ

(to Louis)

That never made her laugh.

(to both of them)

Seneca. As old as me.

"The wise man lives as much as he can, not as much as he must."

And...

"The best thing about life is that it forces nobody to endure it."

To think I nearly died twice already!

CLAUDIA

What?

ANDRÉ

My heart by-passes.

Two great missed opportunities to check out.

Claudia sits down in dismay.

CLAUDIA

Did we come here to listen to your morbid
chattering?

ANDRÉ

Ah! Young Claudia awakes.

He sits down in a chair.

ANDRÉ

So Seneca, with a bit of luck, if you haven't
changed too much, we should be able to share
that.

CLAUDIA

Like Mayakovsky?

ANTOINE

They're light years apart but, yes, like
Mayakovsky.

CLAUDIA

Yes! That would be great!
I'd love for us to do that.

Louis gazes at Claudia, admiring her energy and enthusiasm.

CLAUDIA

You'll have to do something
like your portrait of Desnos.
Completely subjective.

ANDRÉ

Calm down, kid!

CLAUDIA

I am calm. I am calm.
When do we start?

ANDRÉ

I'll start, okay?
And I'll tell you.
(to Louis)
She tires me out!

Louis and Claudia. A halo of light surrounds them and their
movements when they're together (for him, sleeping on the bed

while she cooks nearby, or practicing his lines in the mirror when he shaves while she reads—all shared activities that give their love a calm and playful aspect).

LOUIS

*(while shaving in front of the mirror,
mumbles at top speed)*

I always remember my debt to you, the Empire /
And without boring you by making you repeat it
/ Your kindness, ma'am, can calmly rely on my
loyalty / All these sighs and lingering laments
/ Have led everybody who heard them to believe
/ That henceforth I dare share it with you here
/ In my name you worked only for yourself...
Worked only for yourself. In my name you worked
only for yourself.

CLAUDIA

(in bed, reading)
Not so loud!

LOUIS

I can't go any lower. The volume's right down.

Angle on Claudia.

LOUIS

Do you want me to go outside?

CLAUDIA

No, I like it when you're here.

LOUIS

(turns back to the mirror, out loud)
So many honors, they said, and deference / Are
these such meager rewards for those good deeds?

Claudia laughs. He turns to her. They gaze at each other.

They are in love and happy. Mutually grateful for the happiness they bring each other.

During a rehearsal, Louis waits in one corner of the stage, with Lucie.

Louis sees his little sister, Esther, timidly appear behind the set flats, guided by an assistant.

LOUIS

Come on.

ESTHER

No, I can't.

LOUIS

My sister!

(beat)

Cut out your shy act, come on.

ESTHER

Stop it, it's not my shy act.

LOUIS

This is Lucie, an extraordinary actress.

LUCIE

(glows)

Hello.

LOUIS

Esther, my little sister.

ESTHER

(laughs)

Hi.

Esther awkwardly holds out her hand, but Lucie leans forward and cheek-kisses her. Esther goes bright red.

Louis calls to the director.

LOUIS

Jean, come over here and meet my little sister.

DIRECTOR

Hello, how are you? Right... Louis, we're ready to go again.

LOUIS

Okay, I'll be right there.

DIRECTOR

You're overplaying the drama in the final scene. You're the actor, you know how the play ends, but your character has no idea.

Try to make it lighter.

But not too much. It's all in the rhythm.

You just need to up the tempo on the last lines.

Not too fast, just a little faster.

LOUIS

Sure, you're right.

I'll try that.

A party at Louis's place.
Claudia isn't there. Louis is on the phone.
He checks out a girl at the party. She's around 20. A guy
comes over. He's clearly a very close friend—she hugs him and
rests her head on his chest. (She is seated and he kneels in
front of her. He's the same age as her.)

GIRL

You don't come over, I never see you...
You know how much I love you and that I can't
live without you.
Why are you acting like this?

GUY

I don't see anyone.
I don't go out.
I prefer to be unattached.
That way I'm never disappointed.

GIRL

But I need you.
I need to see you
and you totally turn your back on us.

GUY

(holds her closer)
I know...

Louis watches the scene while on the phone to his sister.

LOUIS

Hold on, I just saw myself when I was younger.
It was me exactly.
Sis, can you hear me?
Shit, we got cut off.

Claudia is having dinner with a girlfriend in a student-style restaurant.

GIRLFRIEND

So I said to him, "Let me think about it. I'll call you in two years. Honest."

She laughs at her own putdown and is disconcerted when Claudia doesn't react.

GIRLFRIEND

Are you okay?

CLAUDIA

Yes, no... I was just thinking... Sorry.

She gets up and, to the amazement of her friend, rushes out of the restaurant.

Several shots of Claudia running down streets, out of breath, panicky.

She enters the building where she lives with Louis.

Races up the stairs.

Before she even reaches the front door, she repeatedly calls his name.

No answer.

Claudia opens the door.

Louis is lying on the bed, reading.

Claudia throws herself on top of him.

CLAUDIA

You're here! You're here!

LOUIS

Where did you expect me to be? What's up?

CLAUDIA

I was scared. I was so scared, you have no idea. I thought you'd gone.

LOUIS

Why? Where?

CLAUDIA

I don't know. I was just scared.

LOUIS

Where would I go?

Fade to black.

Louis and Claudia head home after an audition she had for a part (he waited for her in a café—it didn't work out).

Claudia seems radiant.

LOUIS

How did it go?

CLAUDIA

Great. He was really nice. I think we made a real connection.

LOUIS

So?

CLAUDIA

No, not for this part. He's looking for someone younger. But he has another project and he wants to see me again.

She kisses Louis tenderly on the lips.

CLAUDIA

Thank you so much for setting it up, darling.

Louis returns her kiss in kind.

LOUIS

If he wants to see you again, it's a good sign.

CLAUDIA

You know, Louis, I don't want to get my hopes up. I haven't been in anything in six years. He saw me because of you.

I sense it. I'm not crazy.

So, you know, all the blah-blah...

They're stringing me along.

Later, at home.

Claudia removes her coat. Louis moves in and kisses her neck.

CLAUDIA

(purrs)

I'm not letting it get me down, but I need comforting.

LOUIS

I know you can make it.
(beat)
Oh, sorry, I have to go.

He heads for the door.

LOUIS

You know I have to be in my dressing room
before 6:30 the night of a show or else
I'm terrible.

He kisses her and closes the door behind him.

Every evening, Claudia is alone while Louis is on
stage.

And Claudia's hunger for men is insatiable, even when she's in
love.

(Alone in the apartment, Claudia picks up a book, sits, flicks
through it, puts it down, gets up...
She goes to the mirror and gazes at herself. Bites her lip.
Pulls on her coat.
Goes back to the mirror.
She tosses back her hair and exits.)

Night, in a bar.

A young mixed-race guy, a regular apparently, talks animatedly to the bartender (or to a couple of friends), while glancing more and more insistently out of the corner of his eye...

At the other end of the bar, Claudia sits on a bar stool and sips her mojito.

She glances at the young man, too.

Eventually, their eyes meet.

Later.

Claudia returns from leaving her jacket at the coat check. The young man is nowhere to be seen by the bar.

Claudia goes back to her stool.

Barely has she sat down than the young man pops up next to her. (Claudia gives a little shudder).

YOUNG MAN

(softly)

May I?

Just as softly, Claudia looks him in the eye and says:

CLAUDIA

Please do.

Don't ask me my name or if I come here often.

That's so cheesy

and it would bring me crashing down to the ground.

YOUNG MAN

(without taking his eyes off her)

I'm not asking you that.

CLAUDIA

(likewise)

I like secrets. Hidden words and... I want a smoke. How about you?

They get up and head outside.

Claudia takes her smokes from her purse. The young man takes her lighter and lights her cigarette.

Claudia leans against the wall of the bar.
Silence.

The young man moves in, as if about to kiss her. But no, he brushes his fingers over Claudia's hand, takes the cigarette from her and pulls hard on it.

YOUNG MAN

I haven't smoked in ages.

Claudia isn't following. Her mind is elsewhere (hidden words).

CLAUDIA

(sensual)

Me neither.

At 3 in the morning, Claudia slips out of an apartment building and heads home.

In the apartment, Louis is sitting in the main room when he hears Claudia yelling behind the screen that separates the living and kitchen areas.

CLAUDIA

Fuck, fuck... FUCK!

Louis rushes over and finds Claudia on the verge of tears, clutching her forehead.

CLAUDIA

I hit my head on that damn cabinet again. I can't take any more of this.

She pushes past Louis and heads out.

LOUIS

What are you doing? Where are you going?

CLAUDIA

(races downstairs)

I don't know. Nowhere. Somewhere.

Louis follows.

LOUIS

I'll come with you.

CLAUDIA

(spins around)

It's not funny. Honestly, it doesn't make me laugh one bit.

In the street, Claudia walks fast. Louis tags along.

LOUIS

(begins to worry)

I wasn't laughing but... If you go somewhere, where will I go?

CLAUDIA

(softens slightly, but continues to flee)

I don't know. Anywhere you want but if you go back to that dump, count me out.

When she eventually stops, Louis persuades her to sit next to him on a bench.

CLAUDIA

(weeps)

I swear that place will be the death of us.

LOUIS

Not if we love each other.

CLAUDIA

(mimics him)

Not if we love each other.

Love doesn't just happen, in a void. You have
to be somewhere and there, I'm...

Seeing Louis's reaction, she wavers.

LOUIS

You're sick of living with me?
You'd tell me if you didn't want to live with
me, wouldn't you?

Claudia waits for Louis and Charlotte at a street corner. Louis arrives with Charlotte, who stares at Claudia with a cute, wide-eyed gaze. Claudia is wearing a hat that Charlotte takes a real liking to.

CLAUDIA

(to Charlotte, as if talking to a grown-up)
Hi.

CHARLOTTE

Your hat's beautiful.

Charlotte reaches out toward the hat.

CLAUDIA

You like it?
Let's see how it looks on you.

Beaming, Charlotte tries the hat on.

CLAUDIA

It really suits you. You look so pretty.
C'mon, look...

Claudia turns Charlotte toward a store window, so she can see her reflection. Charlotte strikes poses in the glass.

CLAUDIA

We'll leave it there then. It seems very happy.

They walk away.

Later.

They pass a stand where a guy is selling huge lollipops. Charlotte takes hold of one.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy, can I have one?

LOUIS

No, we have to stop spending money all the time. We just had some cake.

Louis walks on.

Charlotte puts the lollipop back. Claudia quickly swipes one

and slips it in her pocket.
Charlotte can't believe her eyes. She puts her hand to her mouth and glances around to check no one noticed. Claudia motions to her that it's their secret.

CLAUDIA

(whispers)

Yes, shhh, shhh!

Later.

Charlotte sucks on her lollipop.

LOUIS

You took it anyway?

CHARLOTTE

U-huh.

LOUIS

(to Claudia)

You didn't steal it, did you?

CHARLOTTE

Er...

CLAUDIA

I didn't steal it, I took it.

Charlotte giggles.

LOUIS

(half-amused but acting the stern father)

No way!

Charlotte, don't ever become like Claudia!
Claudia sets a very, very bad role-model, you know.

CHARLOTTE

U-huh.

She laughs, glances at Claudia and gives her a wink.

Louis takes Charlotte home.

Still wearing Claudia's hat, Charlotte enters her mother's apartment.

Clotilde welcomes Charlotte home after her day with her father. She hunkers down to remove her daughter's hat and coat. When she reaches for the hat:

CLOTILDE

Whose hat is this?

Charlotte grabs it back.

CHARLOTTE

It's mine!

Later.

Clotilde cooks dinner.

Charlotte sits at the table with her homework in front of her.

CLAUDIA

How was your day with your father?

CHARLOTTE

(mumbles)

Fine.

CLOTILDE

You went for a walk?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

CLOTILDE

Where did you go?

CHARLOTTE

I don't remember.

CLOTILDE

Did you meet daddy's girlfriend?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

Charlotte puts her nose back in her books.

CLOTILDE

Well? Was she nice?

Charlotte suddenly bursts into life.

CHARLOTTE

She's so cool!
Can you guess what we ate?

CLOTILDE

No.

CHARLOTTE

A communal sandwich!
No, Comm-U-nal.
You fill the bread with ham, cheese and salad
to make a big, crunchy sandwich, and bite into
it, then daddy takes a bite, then Claudia, then
me again...
That's a communal sandwich. It's yummy! See?

Clotilde plates up the food.

CLOTILDE

I see.

CHARLOTTE

And we... No, that's a secret.

CLOTILDE

Okay.

Clotilde puts Charlotte's plate down in front of her.

Later.

They've both nearly finished eating.

CHARLOTTE

(as if about to ask something confidential)
Mommy?

CLOTILDE

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

Are you still in love with daddy?

CLOTILDE

Absolutely not!

CHARLOTTE

(slaps her head)

Of course! Silly me! He's in love with someone else.

It's lucky you don't have someone else.

CLOTILDE

What makes you say that?

Beat.

Clotilde chews her food. Charlotte's mind is racing.

CHARLOTTE

Was it you or daddy who fell out of love first?

CLOTILDE

Charlotte, we're not going over all that again.
I've told you a hundred times!

CHARLOTTE

I've forgotten!

Every time, for some reason, I forget.

CLOTILDE

Tough luck. I'm sick of telling you.

Later.

Charlotte is in bed.

Clotilde tucks her in, holding the comforter high and letting it float down on Charlotte's little body. Charlotte seems to enjoy their little ritual.

Clotilde kisses her on the forehead and straightens up.

CHARLOTTE

Mommy, one day, will you have a communal sandwich with me?

CLOTILDE

If you want, darling.
Sweet dreams.

She switches off the light.

Clotilde is a picture of motherly devotion. We see her watching over her sleeping child. We see her nodding off while she is darning clothes.

At the theatre, after a performance, Lucie pokes her head around the door of the men's dressing room.

LUCIE

See you, girls!

LOUIS

Wait for me. I'll be right with you.

They leave together.

LUCIE

You'll be with me? I'd no idea. Good news.

LOUIS

I meant, I'll leave with you.

LUCIE

Ah.

LOUIS

But I can kiss you if you want.

LUCIE

I'd like that, yes.

Louis kisses her. They walk on.

LUCIE

Another. I hardly felt it.

LOUIS

Sure, it was a sneaky one. I can't -

Lucie presses her lips to his. Puts her arms around his neck. Pulls him in for a long kiss.

Night. Louis and Claudia.
Under the sheets, in a tight embrace.
Familiar affection. Louis occasionally caresses Claudia's
head, as he might stroke a cat or dog's head, reflexively.
Then:

LOUIS

I know who I am. I've known for a long time.
It's a stroke of luck... A pain, too.
But that's also why I know that I love you,
that it's you, and that I love you for who you
are, for what you think...
I categorically love you.

CLAUDIA

More. Caress me.

She rolls onto her tummy so he can caress her head and hair.
Louis does so for a moment, then lies on top of her, raises
her hair and kisses the nape of her neck.

Later. After making love.
Naked—coming back from the bathroom perhaps—Louis presses
against Claudia again.
She wraps her arms around him.

CLAUDIA

I never thought I could love like this.

Louis has accompanied Claudia to her dance class.
He watches her at the bar then in the center of the room.
Avid. Loving. No desire—almost.
They exit.

On the sidewalk.

LOUIS

It's weird. When you were dancing earlier, I've
no idea why, but it's as if you were explaining
all the reasons I have to love you.

Claudia looks at him. She knows now that, whatever happens,
this is the man who will love her most.
But she shrugs.

CLAUDIA

There are no reasons. You know that.

LOUIS

That's just it. With you, I don't know.

Louis is away for a few days for a read-through.

Without him.

Claudia is at a party or in a bar with a girlfriend.

CLAUDIA

That one's hot.

JULIE

Looks like he'd be pretty good in bed.

Julie laughs, as if she'd said it just to outdo Claudia or to act like a guy.

CLAUDIA

I'll check and get back to you.

JULIE

You're not checking anything! You're in a relationship!

CLAUDIA

But not in jail.

She moves in on the guy, dances with him (party) or makes conversation (bar).

Julie watches in dismay.

Louis is back. Reunited with Claudia. He kisses her.

LOUIS

It feels great to be back.
After a few days without you, I feel so lost.

CLAUDIA

(laughs)
I like that.

LOUIS

Seriously.
It must be my unconscious that is plugged into
you.

Later. Night.
They walk along the Seine.
Eventually, they stop and lean on a wall.

LOUIS

If either of us is unfaithful one day,
would you rather we said or not?

CLAUDIA

Er...

LOUIS

I couldn't bear it, so I'd rather know.

CLAUDIA

Jeez, you're complicated!

LOUIS

Why? You wouldn't need to know?

CLAUDIA

I just need you to love me.
Love me and love me, and let's be happy
together.

LOUIS

Do you think we're happy now?

CLAUDIA

I think we're perfectly happy.
I think this is pretty ideal, in fact.

LOUIS

Me, too.

Louis is with Esther, his sister. In his dressing room.
(They talk about their father, who died young, aged 34. Louis was ten when it happened and Esther was no more than a baby.)

LOUIS

Do you know the law of the desert?

ESTHER

No, actually.

LOUIS

If a stranger asks for hospitality,
you have to put him up in your tent for three
days and nights.
And then, he has to leave. That's the law of
the desert.

ESTHER

Who told you that?

LOUIS

Dad.

ESTHER

Dad? When you were little?

LOUIS

Yes.

ESTHER

I don't have a single memory of dad.

LOUIS

That's normal. You were only a baby.
When dad died...

He breaks off and suddenly bursts into tears.

Outside the theatre.

Claudia waits for Sabine, who arrives with a friend. She introduces them.

The camera is too far away to pick up their conversation.

After the show, they walk side by side, with Sabine between Claudia and Henri.

HENRI

(leans toward Claudia)

Are you an actress, too?

CLAUDIA

Yes. Well, I was.

Nobody wants me anymore.

SABINE

She's a superb actress, but she can't get any work just now.

HENRI

You do something else, then?

CLAUDIA

I should but...

HENRI

If you're interested... I'll tell you about it later. What are we doing? Going for a drink?

How about I buy both of you dinner?

Claudia returns home.

LOUIS

It's really late.

CLAUDIA

Sabine bought me dinner. Know what? I think I have some good news.

LOUIS

*(delighted,
thinking she's landed a role maybe)*
Ah...

CLAUDIA

I might have found some work.

LOUIS

Who with?

CLAUDIA

No, it's not a part. Sabine told me she has an architect friend who's looking for somebody to work as an archivist in his office.

LOUIS

You're not going to quit acting, are you?

CLAUDIA

Of course not. It's just occasional work, I think. Like temping.

LOUIS

Sure. It starts out like that and -

CLAUDIA

Don't you think it's a good idea I earn a little money?
So we can move?

Louis is with Pascal and Antoine in their dressing room.

LOUIS

Can we wait a little?
I asked Claudia to pick me up.

ANTOINE

Who's that?

LOUIS

My girlfriend. She's a wonderful actress. Her only flaw is "her wings of a giant that stop her walking."

ANTOINE

She's too tall?

LOUIS

Cut it out. She hasn't worked for years.
She's too sensitive for this business.
And too intelligent.

ANTOINE

Is that all? Anyway, I guess you're right. To make it in the business, there are more useful assets.

LOUIS

Sure. That's what worries me.

PASCAL

Don't worry. She'll find something eventually.
That's when you really have to worry.

LOUIS

Maybe you're right but who cares? The important thing is that she makes it. The rest...

PASCAL

Your sense of sacrifice is a credit to you.
Even so, if she left you...

LOUIS

No sweat, that's settled. I'd shoot myself right away.

PASCAL

Great, we have our young Werther.

Fade to black.

In Louis and Claudia's apartment.

CLAUDIA

(frantic)

I can't take any more of this place. It
depresses me!

It's ugly, it's sad. There's never a single ray
of sunlight in the whole place.

I need space and light, and fun!

I don't mind being broke but I can't stand
being poor!

She weeps.

Silence.

Louis is devastated.

Then:

LOUIS

What do you expect me to do?

CLAUDIA

I don't know. Something.

In a movie theater.

Louis is alone with Charlotte.
O.S., a kiddies' movie.

Charlotte is mesmerized.

After a while, Louis's eyes drift away from the screen, as if drawn magnetically to the young woman sitting next to him. She is there with her child, too.

The woman's hand wanders toward Louis's knee, but she doesn't dare touch him.

Suddenly, Louis's hand covers hers and squeezes it.

The woman uncrosses her legs as a pretext to move surreptitiously closer.

Louis gazes at the screen, pretending to take an interest, but his hand brushes up the woman's sweater and over her breast. They sit like that for a long moment.

In the lobby after the movie, or outside, the young woman murmurs "goodbye" to Louis and Charlotte.

She smoothly slips a note into Louis's hand.

LOUIS

(the first words that come into his head)

Goodbye. Have a good evening.

He walks away with Charlotte.

In the Metro, or back in Louis's kitchen. Louis sits facing Charlotte.

He reads the note in the palm of his hand—a name and number. Thinks.

Then Louis scrunches up the note and tosses it onto the floor.

Louis finds a note from Claudia on the table.

CLAUDIA (V.O.)

Sorry about yesterday. I don't know what came over me. I don't know where I'm at right now.

Don't be mad at me. I'm a bit mixed-up, but it'll pass. You just need to be patient. Sorry, sorry and sorry again. I love you. Your
Claudia.

Lunch in the kitchen.

Louis sits next to Charlotte, facing Claudia.

Louis is cutting Charlotte's meat when:

CHARLOTTE

(to Claudia)

You know who my daddy loves most
in the whole world?

CLAUDIA

You, sweetie!

CHARLOTTE

No, his daddy.

LOUIS

Eat up and stop talking nonsense.

CHARLOTTE

Mommy told me!

LOUIS

I already told you... One day, when I was
little, Jean-Pierre went a long, long way away,
and I missed him terribly.

But that doesn't mean I love him more than you.

(runs his hand through her hair)

Eat, precious.

Claudia shoots Louis a knowing look, as if to say, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings...*

Then, casually, Claudia mutters:

CLAUDIA

She doesn't miss a thing!

Claudia has arranged to meet Esther outside a brasserie.

Esther waits by a newsstand and doesn't spot Claudia, who is with Henri.

CLAUDIA

Hey! Over here!

Esther spins around and goes over.

CLAUDIA

This is Henri, the friend I told you about.

(to Henri)

Esther... Louis's sister.

Esther and Henri shake hands.

HENRI

A pleasure to meet you.

(gazes at Esther with kindly eyes)

How about some lunch?

Henri gallantly holds the door for them. They all enter the brasserie.

Later.

Henri is on the phone in a quiet corner near the restrooms or by the front door.

It's a business call about an architecture project, or to his wife—he lies to her, saying he has a business lunch but won't be home late...

From where Henri stands, he can see Claudia and Esther at their table.

CLAUDIA

(eyes gleaming)

What do you think of him?

ESTHER

He seems very nice.

CLAUDIA

He's a great guy, you know.
Very cultivated, but not at all flash.

ESTHER

(awkwardly)

Yes... I see.

*(takes a spoonful of chocolate mousse,
blurts out)*

Are you friends or... friends with benefits?

Claudia bursts out laughing.

CLAUDIA

What have you got into your head?

ESTHER

Nothing. You're so keen about him... I just
want to know what I'm getting into.

Louis is visiting an old friend—one of his high school teachers.

Louis's friend lives in a modest apartment that is slightly neglected, as is often the case with elderly people.

Wearing a thick woolen bathrobe, the man sits in an old armchair.

On the small table between them stand a teapot and two cups.

LOUIS'S FRIEND

Poverty is liberty for you.

You own a few books you love, good walking shoes, and a few memories already... You have nothing to lose. You have no need for anything except experience and work!

So, yes, a woman's love changes everything.

You are a nomad, a gypsy. She's sedentary—a female who needs comforting.

But that doesn't prevent her from loving you!

LOUIS

She loves me in her own way.

LOUIS'S FRIEND

No, she loves you as much as she can. Like all of us, Louis.

You'll see with age...

Yes, we all have our own stories, barriers, fears, hindrances, and limits to love.

LOUIS

Not me. I have no limits.

LOUIS'S FRIEND

Watch out, kid! Dangerous!

In silence, he shakily pours the tea, splashing it everywhere. The steaming tea trickles onto Louis's thigh, but his friend ignores it.

LOUIS

(stoically wipes his leg, mumbles)

It's no problem...

LOUIS'S FRIEND

(continues unperturbed)

You're an actor.
You can get into the skin of characters.
Perhaps, my friend, you understand fictional
characters better than the real-life characters
around you?

LOUIS

Maybe... Maybe... That figures.

LOUIS'S FRIEND

*(pushes back his chair as a signal it's
time to go)*

Mark my words, kid!

LOUIS

(stands)

Right.

He hugs his old friend and smiles.

LOUIS

I'll bear it in mind, I promise.

They part with an affectionate "See you soon, Jacques." "See
you soon, Louis."
But perhaps they'll never see each other again.

Louis leaves his friend's house.

And Claudia tells Louis that the architect has given her a small apartment. In fact, it's where she meets him. The married architect has become her lover.

On the sidewalk.

CLAUDIA

I have something to show you.
I wasn't going to show you it right away, but
what the hell.
Come on, you'll love it.
No more worries.

She hauls him toward the Metro.

Later.

They enter an apartment under renovation.

CLAUDIA

What do you think?

LOUIS

Whose place is this?

CLAUDIA

My place.

LOUIS

You're kidding?

CLAUDIA

And your place if you want.

LOUIS

I don't get it.

CLAUDIA

There's nothing to get.
Are you pleased?

LOUIS

(nervous laugh)
Where the heck did this come from?
You won the lottery?
You inherited it?

CLAUDIA

It's a gift, that's all.
I lucked out, huh?

LOUIS

The guy who gives you a gift like this must
really like you.

CLAUDIA

Most likely.

LOUIS

This is nuts.
You don't even deny it.
Do you have a lot of friends like him?
I'd rather know, you see.

CLAUDIA

You already know.
You're the same.

LOUIS

No, I'm not the same.

CLAUDIA

I hate phonies.

LOUIS

I'm not a phony!

CLAUDIA

Everybody's a phony.
It's putting on an act that is so devastating.
We're all here to live life to the full, to
experience as much as possible, not to sleep
and wait.
Waiting is death!
I want to be alive
until the day it's all over.

Louis sits down, disheartened by her arguments.

LOUIS

I lived everything to the full with you. You're
the only woman I want to love, the only one I
want to sleep next to and make love to.
Imagining you with someone else hurts. It
really hurts.

CLAUDIA

So, stop imagining it.
Live with me when we're together and the rest
of the time, don't think about it.
For me, it doesn't change a thing.
When I'm with you, it's because I want to be.
Everything's fine.

Louis cries.

LOUIS

How can you be so hard?

CLAUDIA

I'm not being hard. I'm here with you!
You're flat broke
and I say, come and live with me.
I'm not hard.

LOUIS

How do you expect me to live with you in
another man's apartment?

CLAUDIA

He's fine with it.
He's a really nice guy, you know.

LOUIS

Ow, stop it! It hurts too much.

CLAUDIA

I didn't mean to hurt you.
I thought you'd be pleased.

In his apartment, Louis stands by the window. Alone.
He glances frequently at the alarm clock.
Waiting for Claudia.
And suffering.

In his dressing room, Louis has a nosebleed.
He has makeup on, tissues tucked in his collar.

The stage manager bangs on the door, *Louis, what's up? Move it!*

LOUIS
Coming.

The guy enters and sees Louis dabbing at his nose.

STAGE MANAGER
You're bleeding! Shit!

LOUIS
It's fine. It's finished.

STAGE MANAGER
Hurry!

He rushes out.

Louis hurriedly and clumsily touches up his makeup.
O.S., the stage manager yells, *Louis! For fuck's sake!*

Louis hurries out to make his entrance on cue.

Louis and Claudia have invited friends to the apartment for pasta, wine, conversation, music...
Around 2 in the morning, everybody decides to head home.
People pick up their coats.
Claudia is there, but inconspicuously slips out of shot.

One by one, the friends exit, leaving a huge mess in the apartment.
After escorting them out—they raucously descend the stairs after a great evening—Louis starts picking glasses off the floor, emptying ashtrays...
When there is still no sign of Claudia, he goes into their bedroom.

He finds Claudia taking clothes out of the closet and folding them into a suitcase lying open on the bed.

LOUIS

What are you doing?

CLAUDIA

Leaving.

LOUIS

You're leaving?

CLAUDIA

That's right, Louis. I'm leaving you.

LOUIS

And you tell me just like that?

CLAUDIA

How did you want me to tell you? Does it really matter (*how I tell you*)?

Louis is crushed, shaking inside.

LOUIS

Are you kidding me?

Claudia doesn't even answer. Shuts her case.
Louis grabs her wrist, holds it tight.

LOUIS

What game are you playing, Claudia?

CLAUDIA

Let go of me! That hurts!

They glare at each other.
Reluctantly, Louis lets go of her wrist.

Then:

CLAUDIA

It's over, Louis. I'm sorry... It's over.

LOUIS

(lump in his throat)
You're moving in with the guy?

CLAUDIA

*(makes an effort to ignore
his sneering "the guy")*
Yes.

Silence.
Claudia sneaks a glimpse at her watch.

LOUIS

(devastated, to himself almost)
You knew you were going to leave and you put on
an act all night?
How could you do that?

CLAUDIA

Don't make this any more difficult, Louis.
Please!

LOUIS

I'm making this difficult?

CLAUDIA

I have to go, Louis.

Louis is dazed. It's like a bolt of thunder in his chest.

CLAUDIA

I'm going.

Racked with pain, Louis hardly seems to hear.

LOUIS

(strange)

Are you sure you know what you're doing?
You won't change your mind?

CLAUDIA

What do you expect me to say to that?

Silence.

CLAUDIA

I'm going, Louis.

(grabs her case)

Give it some time. I'll call you.

She leaves the frame. Resolute, ruthless, as women so often
are when it's over, truly over.

HOLD on Louis: dazed, hit by a bolt from the blue.

Outside, a taxi is waiting.
Claudia appears.

The cabbie loads up her suitcase and starts the engine.
Claudia gets in. Before she tugs the door shut, she glances up
one last time at Louis's window.

But Louis isn't at the window.

In the closet, coat hangers dangle forlornly.

Louis slams the closet door.

The taxi disappears into the night.

Crushed, Louis sits at the kitchen table.

Suddenly, a key turns in the lock. A hallucination?

Louis pricks up his ears, holds his breath.

But the front door stays shut. Firmly shut.
A mere draft makes it rattle in its frame.
In silence, Louis's shadow appears and glides up the door.
He waits. Then leaves shot.

Louis rummages in a drawer. Takes out a gun.
Aims it at his chest.
The gun slips. The bullet misses his heart.

Louis lies in a hospital bed.
His sister is at his bedside. He's asleep, after an operation.
With an oxygen mask on his face, he breathes noisily in and
out in rhythm with the pump.

Louis opens his eyes. Looks at his sister.

ESTHER

What happened?

LOUIS

Nothing.

He gazes profoundly at her, wide-eyed.
Then goes back to sleep.

FADE OUT.

A few days later. At the hospital.

Louis anxiously waits for Claudia, who is due to visit.
He constantly asks his sister the time.

Then:

LOUIS

Could be, she won't come.

ESTHER

You're tormenting yourself.

LOUIS

She keeps blowing hot and cold. It hurts.

ESTHER

I know.

Silences.

ESTHER

(starts to get up)

I brought you some clean clothes and your
after-shave.

LOUIS

Sit down.

Esther takes his hand.

LOUIS

(his leitmotif)

Could be, she won't come.

ESTHER

(diplomatically)

Perhaps she doesn't dare tell you it's really
over. Because of what happened.
If that's it, it must be difficult for her. You
mattered to her. She can't just throw you away.
So one minute it's, I'll go. And the next, I
won't go. She doesn't know what she should do.

LOUIS

Yes. I'm here waiting, stuck in this bed.
And what's she up to? Where is she? What's she

doing?
Is she with him?
I'm hanging on her calls, her visits. The
waiting is unbearable!

ESTHER

I love you, little brother. I can't bear to see
you like this.

LOUIS

What time is it?

Esther looks at her watch.

ESTHER

Ten to four.

LOUIS

Do you think *I* should break up with *her*?
For good?

ESTHER

(hesitates)

Only you can answer that.
Yes, I think so. To free yourself.
I think you have to be brave enough for both of
you.
When you get your strength back.

Louis tears up.

LOUIS

I love her.

ESTHER

My brother...

LOUIS

What about the play?

ESTHER

They replaced you.

LOUIS

Who with? Who?

The end. After the hospital.

Time has gone by.
Buds are appearing on the trees in Paris.

Louis goes to pick up his daughter from school.

Another street. Louis is walking hand in hand with Charlotte when a young actress he knows calls to him. He doesn't feel like chatting but stops out of politeness.

ACTRESS

Louis! It's great to see you! Is this your daughter?

LOUIS

Yes.

ACTRESS

How's things?

LOUIS

Okay, nothing special. You?

ACTRESS

I'm absolutely thrilled. I've been cast in a play. A two-month tour! What about you? Anything lined up?

LOUIS

Yeah... It's too early to talk about it, but it's upcoming.

ACTRESS

Great! Call me.

LOUIS

Right, sure.

ACTRESS

Without fail?

LOUIS

Without fail.

They part with a "See you around."

In a park, Louis, Esther and Charlotte feed the
birds (or the carp in the ponds in the
Tuileries if they're still there).

Very motherly, Esther shells peanuts and hands them to her
brother.

Actions, no words.

*René Char said, With the person you love, you don't talk
anymore, and it is not silence.*

It's almost like a mother feeding its young: one for Esther,
one for Louis...

That evening, after dinner.

Louis clears the table, including a kiddies' plate and cup.
Scrubs the dishes over the sink. He's miles away.

PAN across, or CLOSE-UP on his face. Pensive.
In voiceover, he recites a beautiful poem.

Louis is lying on the bed.

He switches off the light.

The End.