

SWIMMING POOL

a film by François Ozon

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**For Educational
Purposes Only**

1. EXT DAY / LONDON STREETS.

A rainy morning in a business district of London.
Huddled under their umbrellas, people scurry to work.
Others take refuge in the underground.

2. INT DAY / LONDON UNDERGROUND COMPARTMENT.

The tube is packed.
Labourers, businessmen, secretaries, students.
Most of them read a newspaper: The Sun, The Daily Mirror, The Times...
A plump, rather jovial looking woman of about 40 sits on a bench, engrossed in a mystery novel.
The tube stops at a station. She looks up to see where she is, and notices a woman sitting on the bench across from her. The woman is around fifty, still beautiful. Her hair is short, her clothing strict and her expression stern. She seems to be elsewhere, lost in thought.
The plump woman examines her closely, like she's trying to place an old acquaintance, then suddenly looks down at the back flap of her book jacket.
She believes she recognizes the woman across from her as the woman in the picture.
Excited, she can't help herself: she boldly approaches her as the other passengers look on in surprise.

THE FAN

Excuse me, aren't you Sarah Modwell?

The woman doesn't answer. She appears to be annoyed by the inquisitive stares around her.

THE FAN (*thrilled*)

I recognized you, look! I'm reading your latest book, I love it, I'm a big fan of Inspector Dorwell's. I've read all your books, I...

THE WOMAN (*cold*)

Oh, stop this nonsense. I'm not the person you think I am. You've mistaken me for someone else.

She rises abruptly and heads for the exit.

The fan is crestfallen. She looks back down at the photo on the jacket cover and shows it to the man next to her like proof.

3. INT DAY / PUB.

At the bar, Sarah Modwell, the woman from the tube, orders a scotch. Everyone around her is sipping coffee or tea. She knocks back her drink, pays and leaves. The waiter, who recognized her, smiles and winks at a nearby customer.

4. INT DAY / PUBLISHING HOUSE, RECEPTION AREA

Sarah arrives in the reception area.
A secretary seated behind a desk greets her with a smile.

THE SECRETARY

Oh hello Sarah, how are you?

SARAH (*in a foul mood*)

Could be better... Is John in?

THE SECRETARY

Yes, but he's in a meeting.

SARAH

With whom?

THE SECRETARY (*amused*)

Terry Long.

SARAH

So, who's this one now?

The secretary points to a large promotional display featuring a photograph of Terry Long presenting his book. Sarah steps up to take a closer look. He's a handsome young yuppie with a carnivorous smile. Laudatory reviews hail his book as a masterpiece, not to be missed. Sarah frowns as she reads them. The door to John Bosload's office opens.

He's a man of about sixty, still rather handsome and very charming, with a reassuring aura of virility and a spark in his eye.
He shows Terry Long out of his office.
He notices Sarah, who turns and glares at them.

JOHN

Sarah, what a surprise! I'd like to introduce you to Terry Long.

SARAH (*glacial*)

Charmed.

TERRY

Oh, I'm so happy to meet you, my mother adores you, she's read all the Dorwell books!

Sarah remains stony.

JOHN

Right then, Terry, I'll be seeing you soon. Call me. And well done winning that award!

They shake hands.

TERRY

Cheers, John. (*to Sarah*) Pleased to have met you, and do hurry, my mother impatiently awaits the further adventures of Inspector Dorwell!

He flashes her a broad grin, then turns and heads for the elevator.

JOHN (*turning to Sarah*)

It's nice of you to stop by, but you should have rung me first. I'm already taken for lunch...

SARAH

So, I see you've got a new protégée.

JOHN

Sarah, please... Won't you come in for a minute? I've got a half an hour before my next appointment.

He leads her into his office.

The secretary gives John a sympathetic, supportive look.

5. INT DAY / JOHN BOSLOAD'S OFFICE

Sarah's books enjoy a prominent position on the bookshelves in the office. Photos of Sarah winning awards show her smiling at her publisher's side.

She sits down in the chair across from John's desk.

SARAH

So, what award did that little shit get?

JOHN

The Manchester Book Critics' Award. Not bad for a first novel, he's off to a good start. And he's got talent, now we just have to hope he sells.

SARAH

What about me? Have I got talent?

Surprised, John looks at her and smiles.

JOHN

But of course, Sarah. Your books sell, don't they?

SARAH

I trust you told him your favourite motto.

JOHN

Which one?

SARAH

You know damn well, the one you drilled into me twenty years ago, "Awards are like haemorrhoids, sooner or later, every asshole gets one".

JOHN *(laughing)*

What's got into you? Don't tell me you're jealous of this lad just starting out, when your books are selling like hot cakes?

SARAH *(after a pause)*

You don't look after me anymore...

JOHN (*sighing*)

Oh come now Sarah, you... surely you can understand that a beginner requires more attention! And besides, you've never had any problem finding inspiration for the Dorwell series. Why, you've always written with such remarkable ease, sometimes I wonder if I'm any use to you at all...

Sarah lowers her eyes. She looks like she's about to cry. A pouting little girl.

John comes round and places a hand on her shoulder.

JOHN

Tell me, Sarah, what's the matter? You've never made this much money, for the first time in your life you don't have to worry about the future...

SARAH

Incredible! The only thing you can find to talk to me about is money. I don't give a damn about your bloody money, or success, all I want is... is...

JOHN

To come up with a good story?

SARAH

You don't understand. This has got nothing to do with inspiration...

Anyway, what's the point? I'm fed up with murders and investigations...

JOHN

Why don't you write a different book, something more personal? Give the critics a surprise. Without Dorwell.

SARAH

You didn't like the last one, did you? I knew it. And you didn't even have the balls to tell me.

JOHN

Honestly, darling, you know I'm your greatest admirer! I've loved the Dorwell series from the beginning.

SARAH

As well you should, considering the money it makes you!

John sighs and begins pacing the office.

Sarah watches him circle around her.

He's thinking.

Suddenly he stops short, smiles and looks at her mischievously.

JOHN

Do you know France?

SARAH

The country? Sure, frogs' legs, good wine... but what's that got to do with...

JOHN

You know I have a house there?

SARAH

Yes, so?

JOHN

Why don't you go for a while, clear your head, get out of London, breathe some fresh air... maybe you'll be inspired.

SARAH

Alas, my dear friend, that's not the way it works.

JOHN

Look, I'll loan you my house. It's free, this is the off-season, you'll be all alone, far from London... The weather's nice, there's a swimming pool...

SARAH (*hesitating for a moment, then lowering her eyes*)

Would you come with me?

JOHN

No. Oh hell... sure, why not? But you know, I'll have to look after my daughter.

Sarah says nothing. She turns away, looking out the window.

JOHN

Anyhow, I think you need time alone, so you can reflect, focus, perhaps find a subject that's closer to you...

SARAH

Rubbish! I'd do well to stop writing this crap altogether...

JOHN

Darling, listen to me. Your star's on the rise and everyone's waiting to see what your next move will be, but there's no sense rushing into a new project. Take your time, get some distance, give yourself a chance to let it all sink in...

Sarah can't stifle a yawn.

John picks up a box of fan mail and shows it to her.

JOHN

Look at the all letters we've received for you and your Inspector Dorwell. You've created a star, Sarah. The readers love him. So there's no harm in you dropping out of sight for a while. Get some peace. I'll join you for a weekend.

SARAH (*looking disdainfully at the letters*)

Sure. Promises, promises...

John sighs and says nothing.

SARAH

So just where is your French house?

JOHN

In Provence, The Lubéron.

Sarah laughs sarcastically.

6. INT DAY / LONDON UNDERGROUND.

Sarah rides home in the tube. It's half empty now.
She looks at the people around her.
They look sad, lost, grey.

7. INT DAY / SARAH'S HOUSE.

Sarah enters. The house is dark, crammed with books and furniture.
Several lamps are on. Everything seems dusty and old.
She sets down her things and goes into the living room.
Seen from behind: a man sitting in an armchair facing the window.
He is perfectly still.
Sarah approaches him and places one hand on his shoulder.

SARAH
Father?

The old man sleeps. His mouth is open a crack and he's snoring.
Sarah notices a bottle of scotch and a half-empty glass on the table beside him.
She sighs and pours herself a glass.
Her father sleeps like a baby.
She sits down on the couch and drinks her scotch.
She looks across the room to her desk: the laptop, printer, sheets of paper, pens.
She gazes down into the empty glass in her hand and closes her eyes for a moment.
She opens them again, watching her father sleep, then talks to him as though he were awake.

SARAH
Father, I think I need a break.

8. INT DAY / EUROSTAR.

Sarah sits in the train watching England roll by, with its bricks and grey skies.

The train enters the tunnel.

9. INT DAY / TGV - PARIS AVIGNON.

Sarah smokes a cigarette and drinks a coffee in the restaurant car.

She studies the French people around her as if they were unique biological specimens in a petri dish. Potential sources of inspiration.

A rather pretty young girl, a bit of a neo-hippy with a backpack, is asked to show her ticket. She doesn't have one and tries to talk her way out of it, but the ticket inspector shows no signs of indulgence.

Sarah is amused.

Back at her seat, she takes a small notebook from her bag and jots down two or three impressions.

Across from her, an old man snores loudly, annoying the surrounding passengers.

10. EXT DAY / AVIGNON TRAIN STATION.

Sarah exits the station, her luggage in tow.

An old man of about seventy awaits her with a sign reading "Sarah Modwell".

She smiles at him and walks toward him.

SARAH

Hello, I'm Sarah. Are you Marcel?

MARCEL (*timidly*)

Yes, good day Madame. Did you have a nice trip?

SARAH

Yes, thank you. It was quick.

MARCEL

The car is in the parking lot over there.

May I take your luggage?

SARAH (*showing him the wheels on her suitcase*)
No, it's not too heavy, and it has wheels.

MARCEL
Let me take your bag, at least.

Sarah hands him a large duffel bag and follows him out to the parking lot.

11. INT DAY / MARCEL'S CAR

The sky is blue, the sun is shining.
The car ambles through a postcard-perfect Provencal landscape.
From the backseat, Sarah sees small villages, rolling hills, children playing in the streets...
Marcel silently drives.

12. EXT DAY / JOHN'S PROPERTY.

The car turns into the driveway.
Marcel gets out of the car, opens the boot and takes out the luggage.
Sarah joins him, admiring the house and the garden around her.

SARAH
Oh my, it's beautiful here!

MARCEL (*carrying the luggage*)
I'll show you the house.

She follows him inside, looking very pleased indeed.

13. INT DAY / JOHN'S HOUSE.

The house is immense and sparsely furnished. It is functional: the walls are white and there is no artwork, creating an impression of purity. Like a blank page.

Marcel has set the luggage down in the entry hall. Sarah looks around.

MARCEL

The bedrooms and bathroom are upstairs, the kitchen is to the left. I'll let you show yourself around. I turned on the gas and hot water heater... If you have any problems, do you have my number?

SARAH

Yes, John gave it to me.

MARCEL

Good. For grocery shopping or anything else, you can walk to the village using the little road I showed you, or take the scooter in the garage. The key's in the ignition.

SARAH

Ok.

MARCEL

Well then... goodbye Madame, and enjoy your rest.

SARAH

Thank you, Marcel. Goodbye.

She shakes his hand.

The old man leaves the house.

We hear the car driving away.

Sarah goes into the kitchen and takes a peek in the cupboards.

In the living room, she has a look at the books on the shelves.

She sees one of her own, translated into French: "Dorwell enquête". She leafs through it, then puts it back, pleased. She goes upstairs and discovers several bedrooms. She chooses the largest and sunniest, with a view of the pool.

Content, she goes back downstairs to collect her bags, carrying them up to her room.

As she is settling in, she notices a crucifix hanging above the bed.

She takes it down and places it in the drawer of the night table, alongside several bottles of sleeping pills that were there previously. She opens her luggage and takes out her clothes to put them in the closet. She finds an old dress already hanging there.

Intrigued, Sarah takes it out and examines it. It's a very eighties dress, in terms of colour and design. It smells of mothballs but looks rather sexy. Sarah puts it back in the closet and hangs up her own clothes.

Afterwards, she goes about setting up a workspace. She pushes a small table up to the window and sets one of the bedside lamps on it. She takes her laptop, printer, a ream of paper and a little sachet of pencils from her large bag.

She meticulously puts each object in its place: the printer on the floor, the laptop in the middle of the table...

She takes three steps backwards and looks over her new set-up, satisfied.

She finds some sheets and blankets in an armoire and sets about making her bed.

14. EXT DAY / SMALL VILLAGE.

The village is very pretty, the English stereotype of the perfect French village.

Sarah walks through the streets with a shopping basket on her arm.

She enters a grocery store to do her shopping.

15. INT DAY / GROCERY STORE.

The cashier, an obese woman with a blank expression, dozes behind her cash register.

Sarah buys vegetables, fat-free dairy products, fruit, rice, diet Coke. She hurries past the alcohol.

16. EXT DAY / CAFÉ TERRACE.

Sarah stops before the deserted terrace of a café and sets down her heavy shopping basket.

She takes a seat and savours the last rays of sunshine.

A waiter, handsome but unrefined, comes out to take her order.

He has a strong southern French accent.

THE WAITER

Aperitif, Madame?

SARAH (*in tentative French*)

Um... No. Bring me a glass of sparkling water.

THE WAITER

Perrier?

SARAH (*reconsidering*)

Actually I'll have tea, please.

The waiter goes back into the café.

Sarah sighs, then yawns. She looks relaxed.

17. INT EVENING / KITCHEN.

Night is falling.

Sarah puts her groceries away in the kitchen.

She begins preparing her dinner.

She takes a large bowl from a cupboard and fills it with fat-free *fromage blanc*, then pours herself a diet Coke. She places both items on a tray and goes into the living room.

18. INT EVENING / LIVING ROOM

Sarah sits on the couch with the tray on her lap, eating her *fromage blanc* and watching telly. She surfs the French stations. It's time for the 8 o'clock news, but nothing captures her interest.

She turns off the television, finishes her bowl, drinks down her large glass of Coke and takes the tray back into the kitchen.

19. INT EVENING / BEDROOM.

Sarah enters the bedroom carrying a tray of tea and diet cookies. She sets it on the bed and sits down at her desk.

She plugs in her laptop, hooks it up to the printer and turns it on.

She sits before an empty screen. It illuminates her face. She concentrates. A long moment passes.

She looks around the room, studying every nook and cranny: a spider's web on the ceiling, the chipping paint, the dusty bedspread, the cracked red floor tile...

Sarah closes her eyes and buries her face in her hands.
Suddenly her fingers scramble to the keyboard, and she begins writing.

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Sarah looks at her watch. She hasn't seen the time go by. She goes downstairs to make a phone call.

SARAH

Hello Father, it's me. All's well, I got here safely.
I'm sorry to be ringing you so late, but... How are you doing,
all right? Yes, I'm nicely settled in. The house is lovely, and
the weather's gorgeous...
No, no, I haven't seen anyone. Right then, I'll ring you again,
and if you have any problems, be sure to ask Miss Smith for
help...
Ok... I love you...

She hangs up and goes back up to her bedroom.

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While Sarah gets ready for bed, the printer spits out the pages she has just written.

She finishes brushing her teeth and turns out the light in the bathroom. She picks up the fresh printout and a pencil and slides into bed.

Her reading glasses suspended on the end of her nose, she rereads what she has written and jots down some notes, then places the printout on the night table. She sets the alarm for 8:30 and turns out the light, satisfied.

Bedtime in the silent house.

20. INT MORNING / BEDROOM.

The alarm goes off.

Sarah jumps out of bed.

She opens the curtains. It's a beautiful day. Sunshine floods the room.

She opens the window and looks out at the pool, which is covered by a tarpaulin. -

21. INT MORNING / KITCHEN.

Still wearing her nightshirt, Sarah finishes making coffee.

She pours herself a cup and takes it out to the terrace by the pool.

She crouches down at water's edge and lifts up a corner of the tarpaulin. The water is green and looks dirty. Rotting leaves float on top.

She sits on a chair and drinks her coffee, soaking up the morning sun.

22. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

The bed is made, the window is open, and the laptop sits in its place on the table, humming.

We hear Sarah finish taking her shower. She enters the room in a bathrobe.

She sits down at the table, slips into a pair of slippers and begins typing on her computer.

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Sarah lies on her bed rereading a printout of what she has written, then rises and makes the corrections on her laptop.

23. INT EVENING / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah sits on the couch with a cup of herbal tea, lost in thought.

The telephone rings.

SARAH

Hello? John, how are you?

JOHN

I'm very well, but I should be asking you that question. How is everything going? Did Marcel come to fetch you, are you settled in?

SARAH

Darling, listen, I have but one thing to say to you, and it's thank you! You were right, as usual. Your house is little piece of paradise and I feel so fabulous that I've already begun working again.

JOHN

So soon?

SARAH

Yes. As a matter of fact, the idea began running through my mind while I was on the train, you know, one of those ridiculous things that just latch on to you and won't let go? Anyway, I'm not sure where it's heading, but I've thrown myself into it and I get the feeling it's not half-bad...

JOHN

Is it another Dorwell, or something more personnel?

SARAH

No, Dorwell's in it... You'll see. I'm not ready to tell you about it just yet, but I think it might be rather funny. I want to wait until I'm sure and I've ...

JOHN

Well, I'm glad you're happy and liking it there. Have you been out to visit the region a bit?

SARAH

Not yet, but I haven't really felt like it for the moment to be honest. I'm enjoying the peace and quiet. Oh, by the way, when do you think you'll be coming?

JOHN

Mmm... I don't know, maybe... well, it'll depend on my workload, we'll see... *(a heavy silence between them)*
Right, I've got to get going. Take care darling, see you soon. Call me when you're ready to read me something.

SARAH

Right. Goodbye.

She hangs up, looking disappointed.

She rises and opens a liquor cabinet. She gazes at the bottles before her. She's tempted to have a drink and lingers there for a moment.

But then she closes the cabinet and goes back up to her bedroom to work.

24. INT DAY / BEDROOM - KITCHEN - LIVING ROOM - GARDEN.

A new day of work, much like the last one.

Sarah has found her marks, established a routine.

Writing on the computer.

A snack in the kitchen.

Rereading in the living room.

Tea at five.

A walk in the garden. Nature's beauty and tranquillity.

Dinner in front of the television.

A last bit of work in the bedroom before going to bed.

25. INT NIGHT / BEDROOM.

Sarah, dressed in her nightshirt, sets the alarm. She looks tired but happy with her day.

She slides into bed and switches off the lamp.

She has left a window open. It looks out onto a starry sky.

She gazes at the stars with a child's wonder, then closes her eyes, soothed by a lullaby of crickets singing.

Suddenly, the sound of a car engine disturbs this nocturnal bliss.

Startled, Sarah sits up and listens.

The vehicle sounds like it has parked near the house. A car door slams.

Sarah rises to look out the window, but she can't see anything. The car must be on the other side of the house.

The sounds are uncomfortably close: a car boot slamming shut, footsteps crunching on gravel...

Sarah looks worried. She listens intently.

She hears nothing more. Relieved, she goes back to bed.

But then she hears the sound of keys and it feels like someone is entering the house.

Panicked, she rises, grabs the bedside lamp by the base, unplugs it and leaves the room without a sound.

26. INT NIGHT / STAIRWAY - LIVING ROOM.

The sounds become clearer. Someone has indeed entered the house. The person has even turned on the living room light.

Sarah stands at the top of the stairs, straining to see something, but she can't make anything out.

Prudently, she tiptoes down the stairs.

She comes face to face with a young woman.

They both jump.

JULIE

Oh, you frightened me!

The girl is blond, quite pretty and voluptuous, about twenty years old. She has set a backpack and several plastic bags down on the couch.

SARAH (*in French*)

Who are you? What are you doing in my house?

JULIE

Your house? This is my house!

I'm the one who should be asking you!

Sarah looks at her, speechless.

JULIE (*amused*)

Oh, I see... You're English!

SARAH (*in English*)

That is correct. I'm Sarah Modwell, I'm a writer. My publisher John Bosload is letting me use his house...

JULIE (*laughing, and answering in English*)

Ah ha... so you're Daddy's latest conquest!

SARAH (*flabbergasted*)

You're... his... daughter?

JULIE

Of course! Didn't he warn you?

SARAH

No... He never told me you would be coming...

JULIE (*hurt*)

I'm not surprised!

Is he here?

SARAH

No, I'm on my own. And I'm here to work. But he'll be coming to join me soon...

JULIE (*starting to unpack her bags*)

I'm glad he's not here...

SARAH

But... will you be staying long?

JULIE

Oh, I don't know, we'll see, I don't have much work these days...

So, which bedroom did you take?

SARAH

Uh... The one looking out over the pool.

JULIE

Of course. That's the best one.

Julie lights a cigarette, picks up her bags and goes upstairs to get settled.

Sarah watches her go up, then finds herself standing alone in the room. She's still clutching the lamp.

She realizes this and sets it down.

She listens as Julie goes into a bedroom upstairs, then rushes to the telephone.

She dials a number as quietly as possible.

We hear a man's voice on an answering machine.

SARAH (*whispering*)

You bastard, you could have told me that your daughter was coming to your bloody house! How can you possibly expect me to work now? Right, it's Sarah, call me back!

She hangs up, irritated, and turns around.

Julie stands in on the stairs watching her, and smiling.

SARAH (*embarrassed*)

Um... I can't reach London... It's...

JULIE

Is there anything to eat?

SARAH

Oh, listen... Sort it out yourself, go look in the kitchen.

Personally, I'd like to go back to bed now if you don't mind.

I'm up early tomorrow, I've got work to do.

JULIE (*nonchalant*)

Fine, goodnight... Sarah, right?

SARAH (*cold*)

That's right.

JULIE (*heading into the kitchen*)

I'm Julie.

27. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah walks down the hall, passing Julie's bedroom. The door is ajar. Her things are spread out on the bed. The room already looks a mess. Sarah goes into her bedroom and closes the door behind her. She realizes she's left the lamp downstairs. She sighs, shuts the window and goes to bed.

We hear rattling sounds coming from the kitchen. They are muffled, barely perceptible, but they are driving Sarah crazy.

She gets up, goes into the bathroom and takes a little plastic box of earplugs out of her toiletry bag.

She pops the plugs in her ears and goes back to bed.

Finally, she falls asleep.

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It's the middle of the night. Sarah wakes with a start. She's had a nightmare and is sweating lightly.

She removes her earplugs, takes a deep breath, checks that the house is silent... but is still bothered and can't stop herself getting up to have a look.

She cautiously opens her door and slips into the hallway.

She sees a thin ray of light under Julie's door.

28. INT MORNING /KITCHEN.

Dressed in her nightshirt, her face sullen, Sarah enters the kitchen. She's in a bad mood.

The table, which she was in the habit of keeping clean, is now littered with a dirty plate, utensils, a bottle of pastis and a glass.

She tries to resist cleaning it up, but the disorder annoys her. She likes things tidy when she makes her breakfast.

She hesitates for a moment, then puts away the bottle and places the dirty dishes in the sink.

Then she prepares her coffee and takes it out on the sunny terrace.

29. EXT MORNING / TERRACE.

Sarah strolls round the terrace, sipping her coffee.

She glances up at Julie's room.

The curtains are closed.

She wanders over to the pool and notices a red buoy sitting on the edge of it.

She seems upset and goes back into the house.

30. INT MORNING / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah sits at her desk typing on her computer, concentrating before the open window.

Suddenly she hears a door slam, then footsteps on the stairs.

She stops writing and listens.

No further noise.

She gets up and goes to the window, taking care to keep herself hidden behind the curtains.

She strains her neck to have a look below.

After a moment, she sees Julie come out on the terrace in knickers and a T-shirt.

The young woman yawns and stretches.

Sarah watches her.

Julie approaches the swimming pool. She pulls off the tarpaulin and discovers the murky water.

She pulls her T-shirt off over her head and dives into the water, topless.

Sarah grimaces in disgust, closes the window and goes back to her desk. She rereads her last sentences, but she has lost her concentration.

So she decides to print out the pages.

While she's waiting, she stands up and begins pacing the room.

The pages print out, one after the other.

Sarah can't help herself. She goes back to the window and looks out.

Julie has come out of the water and lies by the edge of the pool sunbathing, her eyes closed.

31. EXT DAY / TERRACE

Sarah walks out of the house in sunglasses, her printed pages in hand. She brings a deck chair into the sun and settles into it to reread her work.

Julie still lies like a corpse at the edge of the pool.

Her eyes concealed behind her sunglasses, Sarah glances over at Julie periodically, all the while pretending not to see her.

She begins rereading her text, but cannot stop herself looking over in Julie's direction. The young woman lies perfectly still.

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Sarah has dozed off in her deck chair, clutching her work. The pages flap around in the wind.

A shadow approaches her.

It's Julie, who hasn't noticed that she's asleep.

JULIE

You're not too hot?

Sarah wakes up like she's been caught in the act.

Julie hovers over her, wearing nothing but her knickers.

JULIE

I woke you up...

SARAH

Oh, I was just dozing...

JULIE

You must be working too hard! It's good to get some rest too. Anyway, I recommend a swim in the pool, the water's cold, it'll wake you up.

SARAH

Thank you for your advice, but I absolutely loathe swimming in pools. Especially that one!

Julie sits down on the ground at her feet, ready for a chat.

Sarah notices a large scar on the girl's stomach.

JULIE

Oh, I know what you mean. I prefer the sea, too.

The ocean, the crashing waves, that feeling of danger, that you could lose footing at any time and be swept away... Pools are boring, there's no danger, no excitement, no feeling of infinity... A pool is too limited, it's just a big bathtub.

SARAH (*dry*)

What it is mainly is a veritable cesspool of living bacteria!

JULIE

Oh, it's not that bad, it's just a bit of dirt and leaves, anyway I couldn't resist... By the way, did my father tell you about Marcel?

SARAH

Marcel?

JULIE

Yes, the handyman! He takes care of the garden and the pool...

SARAH

Ah yes, he picked me up at the train station.

JULIE

I must ring him...

(*noticing Sarah's pages*)

What are you writing? A romance novel?

SARAH (*turning them over so she can't read anything*)

Hardly! I write mysteries.

JULIE

Oh yes, of course, that's how he makes his money!

SARAH

Yes, that's how he can buy a beautiful house in France for his daughter to enjoy!

JULIE

Oh, you know, I don't give a shit about this old place... I don't come here for the comfort or luxury, it's just a *pied à terre*, and I don't have much cash right now, so... Are your books selling well?

SARAH

I can't complain.

JULIE

What's this one about?

SARAH

Murders, and a police investigation.

JULIE (*laughing*)

In The Lubéron, with rich English tourists?

SARAH (*annoyed*)

Listen, I've got work to do, so if you wouldn't mind...

JULIE

Ok, Ok, I'll leave you alone, Miss Marple! I need to make some phone calls anyway...

Julie rises lazily and goes into the house.

Sarah finds herself alone with the latest pages of her manuscript.

32. INT DAY / KITCHEN.

Sarah opens the half-empty fridge.

She takes out her fat-free *fromage blanc*. In the background, we hear Julie on the telephone, joking and laughing in French.

Exasperated, Sarah serves herself a large bowl of *fromage blanc* and sits down at the table.

Julie's laughter is driving her crazy. She slams the door shut and begins eating, but a feeling of disgust overtakes her. She sets down her spoon and thinks.

Abruptly, she rises and scrapes the barely eaten *fromage blanc* into the garbage, then leaves the room.

33. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

Julie lies on the couch in her knickers.

Sarah enters the room, takes her coat from the coat rack and slips into it.

JULIE (*noticing her*)
Going shopping?

SARAH
No, I'm going to have lunch in town!

JULIE
Ah, good idea...
By the way, I spoke to Marcel, he's coming tomorrow for the pool...

Sarah ignores her and leaves. The door slams behind her.

JULIE (*into her cell phone, in French*)
Fuck, that English woman he sent down here is no fun, she's got a real broomstick up her ass!

34. EXT DAY / CAFÉ TERRACE.

Sarah sits on the terrace contemplating the menu.
The waiter comes to take her order.

SARAH (*in French*)
I'd like a salad with goat cheese toasts, please.

THE WAITER
What would you like to drink?

SARAH

Just water... Actually no, I'll have a little red wine.

THE WAITER

A glass? A carafe?

SARAH

A carafe...

Amused, the waiter smiles. Sarah is a bit embarrassed, but smiles back at him.

She admires his backside as he walks into the café. His shoulders are broad, and his ass looks good in snug jeans.

.....

Sarah has finished her salad and half the wine. She eats her dessert: profiteroles with chocolate sauce and whipped cream. She gobbles them down hungrily.

She pays the bill and begins strolling through the village. The sun is hot, the little streets are empty, the few stores closed. It's siesta time, the village is a veritable ghost town. Sarah goes home.

35. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

The living room is empty. Julie is no longer there. A bottle of alcohol and a glass sit next to the telephone. Sarah hangs up her coat and puts the bottle away. She takes a look in the garden. Nobody's there. Relieved, she goes up to her room.

36. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Sarah is working, but she doesn't seem as focused as usual. She stops often, to daydream or look out at the garden. She starts up again half-heartedly after each interlude.

Suddenly the telephone rings. Sarah jumps up and runs downstairs to answer it.

37. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah races down the stairs, but the ringing stops before she gets there. Julie has picked up the phone. She's dressed now, and carrying several plastic bags of groceries from a supermarket.

JULIE (*in French*)

Hello? Oh, it's you.... I'm not too bad...

Yes, she's here, I'll pass you to her... Don't worry about it, I'm not going to bother her, anyway it's a big house!

Sarah enters the living room and walks up to Julie. The young woman turns round and sees her.

JULIE (*into the phone*)

Did you ring Mum? I'm telling you, she's still waiting, so hurry up!

Yeah... Ciao. (*to Sarah*) It's your publisher!

SARAH (*taking the receiver*)

Hello? Hello? He's hung up.

Sarah turns and looks inquisitively at Julie.

The young woman shrugs her shoulders, unconcerned.

Sarah sighs and dials John's number.

Julie gathers up her groceries but stays in the room to observe Sarah.

SARAH

Hello, may I speak with John, please? This is Sarah. Sarah Modwell.

Oh really? Could you have him ring me back then? I'm in France.

Thank you. Goodbye.

She hangs up, angry.

JULIE (*ironic*)

He scolded me... he told me not to bother you, I should leave you alone so you can work...

SARAH

Listen Julie, I'm going to be frank with you. I need peace and quiet so I can concentrate, and since we have to share the same living space, I must ask you to just go about your business without getting in the way of mine. This house is certainly big enough for the both of us, so please make an effort, I'm simply asking you not to pay me any mind. Don't speak to me, don't...

JULIE

I was only trying to be polite and make friends, but if you prefer I ignore you, that's no problem for me!

SARAH

I don't *prefer* anything... I just need peace so I can finish this bloody book!

JULIE (*going into the kitchen*)

Fine.

It's too bad though, because I just bought loads of nice food... I guess I'll have to eat my foie gras all alone.

38. INT EVENING / KITCHEN.

On the kitchen table: bottles of red wine, a nice country bread and an appetizing dry sausage.

Sarah opens the refrigerator.

It's filled to the brim with food: cheeses, cooked meats, crème fraîche, fruit yoghurts, chocolate puddings...

Sarah takes out her fromage blanc and two pieces of fruit and leaves the kitchen.

Julie watches telly in the living room. She doesn't even notice Sarah as she passes by on her way up to her room.

39. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah sits on her bed reading over her latest printout.

Suddenly, she hears Julie's car engine revving up, then the car driving away.

Taking advantage of her temporary solitude, Sarah slides into her slippers and takes her dinner tray downstairs.

40. INT NIGHT / KITCHEN.

The kitchen is relatively tidy, everything appears to be in order.

Sarah does her dishes, then, unable to help herself, she opens the fridge.

A piece of foie gras and several slices of dry sausage are assembled on a small plate.

She takes the plate out and cuts herself a razor-thin slice of foie gras, swallowing it down without pleasure. She follows this with a bit of sausage on a hunk of bread.

She turns round and spies a bottle of red wine on the table. She removes the cork and takes a healthy swig right out of the bottle.

She puts everything back in the fridge, wipes off the table, throws away the crumbs.

Of her presence here, not a trace remains.

41. INT NIGHT / BEDROOM.

Sarah sleeps. The window and curtains are closed.

42. INT NIGHT / GARDEN.

Julie's car pulls into the grounds and parks close to the house.

Julie gets out, followed by a man of about forty, staggering behind her. They're both well pissed. He clings onto her for support as they enter the house. They laugh.

43. INT NIGHT / LIVING ROOM.

The man lies on the couch like a wet rag.

Julie pours them two drinks. She brings his over to him.

He takes advantage of their proximity and kisses her. She kisses back, and lies down on top of him.

THE MAN

Got any music?

JULIE

Yeah, but the old lady's sleeping upstairs...

He begins undressing her. She opens his fly.

They commence lovemaking.

Hiding in the shadows at the top of the stairs, Sarah watches them.

44. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Without a sound, Sarah returns to her room.

We hear the two lovers moaning.

Sarah gets her earplugs, puts them in her ears and goes to bed.

45. INT MORNING / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah goes downstairs to have breakfast.
The couch is unfolded into a bed.
Julie sleeps on it, alone.

Sarah passes before her, noticing the bottle of alcohol and the glasses,
then continues into the kitchen.

46. INT MORNING / KITCHEN.

Sarah enters the kitchen.
The man sits at the table drinking coffee, wearing nothing but a pair of
underpants.
Startled, Sarah takes a step backwards.

THE MAN (*in French*)
Good morning.

SARAH
Uh... good morning...

THE MAN
I've made some coffee, if you like...

SARAH
Yes, thanks.

She pours herself some. The man watches her, amused.

THE MAN
I hope we didn't make too much noise?

SARAH
I'm sorry, but my French is terrible, I don't understand
everything.

She takes her cup of coffee and goes out on the terrace.
The man smiles, rises and goes back into the living room.

47. INT MORNING / LIVING ROOM.

The man brings Julie a cup of coffee. She's still asleep.

He places a hand on her shoulder to wake her.

Julie opens her eyes and smiles at him. She leans forward and nestles sensually into his arms.

THE MAN (*gently pushing her away*)

Oh la la, I don't have time, I'll be late for work!

JULIE (*pouting*)

C'mon, just a quickie...

THE MAN

I'd love to, but... I've really got to go!

Anyway, that woman's here...

Julie sits up, yawning and stretching.

The man looks at her while finishing his coffee.

JULIE

You saw her?

THE MAN

She's a foreigner?

JULIE

Yeah, English.

THE MAN

She's in the garden.

She's quite attractive, isn't she?

JULIE

So fuck her then, if you like old ladies!

THE MAN

Oh, I was only joking.

48. EXT MORNING / GARDEN.

Sarah sits by the pool.
She watches the red buoy float and thinks.

49. INT DAY / BATHROOM - BEDROOM.

Sarah finishes taking her shower.
She wipes herself off, dries her hair and looks at herself in the mirror.
She styles her hair and applies make-up.

She stands before the closet, trying to decide what to wear.
She chooses a light coloured pair of trousers and a revealing shirt.
From the window, she sees Julie with the man. They are saying
goodbye, with no perceptible passion.
The man leaves on foot, while Julie goes over to the pool for a swim.
Sarah closes her window and goes to her desk to work.

50. EXT DAY / CAFE TERRACE.

Sarah sits at her usual spot having lunch: meat in sauce with vegetables
and a glass of wine.
The same waiter from before comes over to strike up a conversation.

THE WAITER

Is everything ok?

SARAH (*smiling*)

Delicious, thank you.

THE WAITER

Are you here on holiday?

SARAH

Yes, I suppose you could say that...

THE WAITER

It's nice right now, there aren't too many people, but in a month or two, it'll be hell... Tourists come from everywhere. You've picked the right time to come...

SARAH

Are you from around here?

THE WAITER

Yes, Lacoste, nearby. Have you been?
The Marquis de Sade's castle is there.

SARAH

Oh right, I've heard about it, I haven't been yet... But I've been told the castle is pretty much in ruins, isn't it?

THE WAITER

Yes, that's true, but it's still well worth a visit for the panoramic view of The Lubéron.
And think of all the things that must have gone on in that place...

They smile at each other.

51. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah enters.

The house appears to be empty.

The room is tidy. The bed has been folded back into a couch.

Julie has left her a little note on the table: "John rang, he'll ring you back tomorrow".

Sarah looks out the window and sees Julie tanning herself in a deck chair by the pool.

52. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Seated on her bed, Sarah contemplates her desk, her computer and the pages that await her.

She yawns and stretches out on the bed for a little nap.

53. EXT DAY / GARDEN.

Julie lies in her deck chair by the pool, sipping a glass of coke.

A man uses a large pool skimmer to gather up the leaves and debris floating on the top of the water.

Oozing sensuality, Julie watches him.

He stares back at her, concentrating on her breasts and bathing suit.

Julie crosses and uncrosses her legs, as if to provoke him.

The man starts rubbing himself through his pants as he watches her.

54. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Sarah wakes from her nap, rises and goes to the window.

Julie is no longer at poolside. The deck chair is empty.

Sarah turns on her computer and begins writing.

55. INT NIGHT / BEDROOM.

Sarah lies on her bed. She appears to be sleeping.

We hear moans of pleasure and recognize Julie's voice mixed with a man's groans.

Sarah opens her eyes and sits up in bed.

She looks at her earplugs on the night table. A moment passes.

The moaning continues.

Sarah sits motionless. Her hand moves toward the night table, but doesn't pick up the earplugs.

Instead she lies back down and, eyes open, listens to Julie make love.

56. INT MORNING / HALLWAY LIVING ROOM.

Sarah leaves her room.

The door to Julie's room is open.

Sarah can't stop herself looking in.

A naked man lies on the bed. He's not the same one as the last time; this one seems bigger and older. He snores.

No sign of Julie.

Sarah goes down to the living room.

Julie sleeps on the couch, half-naked.

Sarah bumps into a chair on purpose, to wake her.

Julie lifts her head, waking with difficulty.

JULIE

Ah, it's you...

SARAH

Your bedroom's not enough for you anymore?

JULIE

It is... but he snores like a pig, I couldn't get to sleep ...

Sarah shrugs.

Someone knocks on the door.

SARAH

Expecting another one?

JULIE

What?

Sarah opens the door.

It's Marcel, the gardener.

MARCEL

Hello, I've come to clean the pool, Julie rang me ...

Julie recognizes him and gets up to say hello.

JULIE (*giving him a peck on the cheek*)
Hello Marcel, how are you?

MARCEL (*entering the house*)
Not too bad. And you? Back already?

JULIE
Yeah, I was fed up with work, I felt like getting some rest.
Oh, this is Sarah, a friend of my father's...

MARCEL
Yes, we've already met...

SARAH
Good morning.
So, you'll be cleaning the pool today?

MARCEL
Well, yes. Isn't that what you wanted, Julie?

JULIE
Yes. Sarah would like to swim, but it's too dirty for her...

SARAH
If you two would excuse me...

She goes into the kitchen, leaving the two of them alone.

57. INT DAY / KITCHEN.

Sarah sits at the table drinking her coffee.
She hears them laughing in the next room, then sees them go out into the garden and head towards the pool.
She watches them go behind a bush.

SARAH
Little tart!

The kitchen door opens.
The man from Julie's bedroom enters.

THE MAN

Good morning. Where's the girl?

SARAH

What girl?

THE MAN

I can't remember her name, the little blond...

SARAH

Julie, maybe...

THE MAN

Yeah, that must be it...

SARAH

Go check in the garden, over by the pool. I think she's out there...

THE MAN

Thanks, Madame.

He goes out to the garden as Sarah looks on, amused.

58. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Sarah goes up to her room and hurries to the window to catch the scene between Julie and the two men at poolside.

Julie is talking to both men, introducing them. They shake hands.

Sarah leans forward to see better, but they go behind some trees.

Disappointed, she turns to her desk, and her manuscript.

Handwritten on the cover page is the title "Dorwell on Holiday".

She picks it up and leafs through it, then sets it back down, looking weary.

She settles in at her computer.

She opens up a new file, naming it "Julie", and begins writing energetically.

.....

The printer spits out the new pages.

Sarah hasn't noticed the time go by. She stretches and gets up to look out the window.

Nobody's there. Neither Julie nor the gardener.

She picks up the printout and begins rereading it, a pencil in hand to make corrections.

59. INT EVENING / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah sits on the couch.

She pours herself another glass of liqueur. The television is on but she's only half-watching it, more interested in what's going on upstairs. She turns down the volume, the better to hear Julie's footsteps as she moves round on the floor above.

Julie comes down wearing heavy make-up and a sexy skirt and shirt. She ignores Sarah.

SARAH

Going out?

JULIE

Yes, do I have to ask for your permission?

SARAH

I'd just like it if you wouldn't make any noise when you come home...

JULIE (*snickering*)

Yes, Mother...

SARAH

I feel sorry for your mother.

JULIE (*this hit her where it hurts*)

You feel sorry for her? Why?

SARAH

Well, I would imagine having a daughter who brings home a different man every night would be difficult for a mother.

JULIE

Well, you imagined wrong! You're just a frustrated Englishwoman who writes about dirty things but never does them! You can shove your uptight morals up your arse!

SARAH

How poetic...

JULIE

But whatever you do, keep up the hard work so my old man can buy a new house!

She leaves, slamming the door behind her.

Sarah finds herself alone with the telly. She looks pathetic, sitting there holding her drink.

.....
The bottle of liqueur is nearly empty.

Sarah has fallen asleep on the couch in front of the television. She snores lightly.

She wakes with a start, then slowly comes to her senses. Her head hurts. She turns off the telly.

She tries to get up, but has difficulty. She's still a bit drunk.

60. INT NIGHT / BEDROOM

Sarah enters her bedroom, holding on to the walls for support. Her face is tense.

In her bathroom, she fills a glass with water and takes some aspirin, then swallows a sleeping pill.

She half-heartedly undresses, flopping down on her bed before she's finished.

She falls asleep with the light on.

61. INT MORNING / HALLWAY LIVING ROOM.

Sarah comes out of her bedroom looking dreadfully hung over.

She stops before Julie's closed door, and listens.

Not a sound.

She puts her hand on the knob and slowly turns it, discretely opening the door a crack.

She pops her head in.

The room is empty. The bed hasn't been slept in.

Sarah goes down to the living room.

Julie isn't there either.

62. EXT MORNING / GARDEN.

Sarah steps outside and sees that Julie's car is gone.

She seems disappointed.

A bit dazed, she stands in the doorway for a moment, then walks to the pool.

The water looks clean, just a few leaves floating in it. The buoy sits on the edge.

Sarah dips her hand in, but the water's too cold.

She circles the pool, staring down at the water as if she were expecting it to reveal a secret.

Suddenly she stops. She spies a bit of cloth in the grass.

She goes over and picks it up. It's a pair of knickers. Women's knickers.

63. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Sarah hasn't washed, she's still wearing her nightshirt.

She sits before her computer, typing on the keyboard, highly concentrated, full of inspiration.

The knickers lie on the sheets of her unmade bed.

.....

Sarah stops writing, massages her neck and stretches. She gets up.
She looks out the window. Nothing.
She paces round the room, lost in thought.
She stares at the knickers and freezes.
She leaves the room.

64. INT DAY / JULIE'S BEDROOM.

Sarah listens at the door to make sure the coast is clear, then enters Julie's room.
She goes over to the bed. Several articles of clothing lie on it.
She picks up a shirt, brings it up to her nostrils and breathes in deeply, then throws it back on the bed.
She opens the drawer in the night table and finds a yellowing Agatha Christie novel in French and a box of condoms.
She opens the closet. Wrinkled dresses hang from rickety hangers.
Julie's travel bag sits on the floor.
Sarah crouches down and begins rummaging through it.
Suddenly she thinks she hears something. She stops and listens.
Apparently it's nothing. She continues rummaging.
She finds some dirty laundry in a plastic bag, a pair of shoes in another one.
She opens a side pocket in the bag and comes across a notebook with the word "Diary" written on it.
Sarah smiles, pleased with her discovery. She sits on the bed and begins reading Julie's childish handwriting.

The telephone rings.
Sarah jumps. She hurriedly puts the diary and the bag back in their places, shuts the closet and goes down to the living room.

65. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah picks up the phone.

SARAH
Hello?

JOHN
Hi, it's John. How are you?

SARAH

Ah, John, it's you!

I must say, you don't ring very often.

JOHN

I'm sorry, my dear, but you know I've got so damn much work, I don't get a minute's peace.

SARAH (*sarcastic*)

I suppose Terry Long is taking up all your time.

JOHN

How are things going with Julie? I do hope she's not getting underfoot.

SARAH

Oh, everything's fine... She does her own thing really, I made things clear... Anyway, she isn't always around. But I must say, I am rather annoyed at you for not warning me...

JOHN

Well, the main thing is for you to have peace so you can write. Are you making progress?

SARAH

Yes, yes... well actually, no. I mean, yes, but I've changed directions... I think you'll like it, it's turning into something more... bizarre... it's mad, really...

JOHN

Oh really? What are you cooking up? Is Dorwell still in it?

SARAH (*mysterious*)

No.

JOHN

Tell me more... What's it about?

SARAH

Do you really want to know? You're interested?

JOHN

Oh for heaven's sake, Sarah, don't make me beg for it! I'm your publisher, after all. Your first reader!

SARAH

Well, I think it's going to be about... your daughter.

JOHN (*after a stunned silence*)

What are you on about? You're taking the piss, right?

SARAH

Not at all. She inspires me. I like her.

JOHN (*anxious*)

But you're... You're not going to write about me, I hope? What did she tell you?

SARAH

Don't you worry about it, nothing will be recognizable. She's just one source of inspiration among others. Besides, you have nothing to hide. Do you?

John is silent on the other end.

SARAH

Listen, I've got to be going, my work is waiting for me. I'll ring as soon as I have something I can read you. And let me know if you'll be coming down to see us...

JOHN (*in a feeble voice*)

All right, then. Stay well.

SARAH

Goodbye.

She hangs up, remains pensive for a moment, then goes to the liquor cabinet and opens it.

She pours herself a drink, knocks it back and goes back upstairs.

66. INT DAY / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah types excerpts from Julie's diary into her computer.
She types faster and faster, stopping occasionally to listen and make sure nobody's coming.

Still absorbed in the diary, Sarah jots down some notes on a piece of paper.
She finally finishes with it, gets up and takes it back into the young woman's room.

67. EXT DAY / GARDEN.

Wearing a bathing suit, Sarah eases herself into the pool.
She enters the water gradually, wets her neck and begins to swim.

Marcel hides behind a hedge holding a rake. He watches her swim. She doesn't see him.

Sarah gets out of the water and lies on the tiles to dry off, like Julie did.
She falls asleep.

Behind the hedge, Marcel rubs himself.

68. EXT DAY / THE CASTLE IN LACOSTES.

Sarah hikes through the steep streets of the village, the sun beating down on her. The place is practically empty; there are very few tourists.

She comes to a square and sees a little old woman sitting on a bench.
Sarah smiles at her.

SARAH

Is this the way to the castle?

THE OLD WOMAN

Yes... Straight ahead... Up there...

SARAH

Thank you, Madame.

She continues on her way and comes to the foot of the ruins. She lifts her head to gaze at the castle walls against a backdrop of blue sky. A plaque tells of the castle's history and gives the dates that the Marquis de Sade owned it. She passes before it and climbs the long stone stairway leading to the entrance.

The rooms are rough, empty, half-demolished. They look like basement rooms.

Sarah advances with caution, keeping an eye on where she's stepping. She starts up a small, dark, twisty stairway. These stairs are so dark and narrow that climbing them is nervous-making and dangerous. She finally comes to a luminous room with a large opening looking out over the surrounding countryside. She contemplates the panoramic view, then notices the remains of period paintings on the walls. At this point, they look at this point like modern art. Sarah places her hand on the wall.

69. INT EVENING / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah paces in circles round the room. She looks at her watch. Julie still hasn't come home. She goes over to the telephone, picks up the receiver, hesitates. After a moment, she sets it back down. She sits on the couch and thinks. Across from her there is a large chest of drawers. Sarah rises and opens the drawers. She begins rummaging through them. Maps of the region, an old deck of cards, train schedules... Then she comes across an envelope full of photographs. She opens it and looks at them. They are holiday pictures, snapshots of summer fun: Julie as a child, a younger John smiling at the poolside, and a beautiful young woman with a discreet smile and melancholic eyes. She looks like an older Julie. Sarah looks at the photo of the young woman for a long time. She seems to be hypnotized by the woman's face. She turns it over. On the back is written "Marie, Summer 1992". Sarah puts the other photos back in the envelope and keeps the one of Marie. She goes up to her room.

70. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Seated at her desk, Sarah types on her keyboard.
The photo of Marie sits next to the computer. Sarah looks at it regularly, to get inspiration or to help her with a description.

71. INT MORNING / HALLWAY LIVING ROOM KITCHEN.

Sarah leaves her bedroom in her nightshirt and immediately goes to check if Julie has come home.

The young woman's bedroom remains empty.

She goes down to the living room. No sign of Julie.

Sarah takes a deep breath and goes into the kitchen.

She runs water for her coffee and notices out the window Marcel working in the garden.

She sets down her pot of water and goes directly out to the garden.

72. EXT MORNING / GARDEN.

Sarah approaches Marcel, smiling.

She is not aware that her nightshirt is virtually transparent.

SARAH

Good morning Marcel.

MARCEL (*a bit timid*)

Good morning, Madame...

SARAH

Tell me, have you seen Julie?

MARCEL (*noticing the transparency of Sarah's shirt*)

No, not today...

SARAH

What about yesterday?

MARCEL

Oh no, yesterday I wasn't working here, I was at the Swiss's...

SARAH

It's odd, she hasn't been home for two nights...

MARCEL (*laughing*)

Oh, don't you worry, she's a big girl!

SARAH

Don't you think I should ring her father?

MARCEL

Oh no, I don't think that's a good idea...

SARAH

What about her mother, do you know her?

MARCEL (*uncomfortable*)

Uh no, not really... Well, I've got work to do, I need to take care of the roses...

Marcel turns away and leaves Sarah standing there with her thoughts.

73. INT DAY / BEDROOM.

Sarah sits at her desk facing her computer.

She wants to work, but for the first time she just can't.

She gets up and looks out the window at the empty pool.

She stands motionless, thinking.

Then she goes into the bathroom and slips into her bathing suit.

74. EXT DAY / SWIMMING POOL.

All is quiet around the pool.

Sarah lies on the tiles, sunning herself.

She appears to be asleep.

The calm is suddenly disrupted. Someone has just dived into the pool.

Sarah wakes up and rises.

She recognizes Julie's body as it swims underwater through the pool.

Julie comes up for air.

Sarah looks at her and notices that she has a slight bruise under her right eye.

SARAH

Did you hurt yourself?

Julie doesn't answer, she just looks at her with an unusually serious expression. Then she dives back into the water.
Sarah sits back down, disturbed.

Julie comes out of the pool and lies down on the tiles herself.

SARAH

I was worried when you didn't come home...

JULIE (*sarcastic*)

Are you going to tell my Daddy?

SARAH

I might do, yes.

JULIE (*bursts out laughing*)

Then why don't you? He'd love it!

SARAH

I'm not so sure about that...

JULIE

How can you be so naive? Your John wasn't born yesterday. You don't know him very well, do you? He's the king of orgies and sleazy encounters.

Sarah says nothing.

Julie lies back down, pleased with herself.

A long silence.

Sarah hesitates, she wants to say something. Julie lies before her, her voluptuous body taking in the sun.

Sarah tries to muster up her courage, then finally speaks.

SARAH

Julie?

JULIE

Yeah?

SARAH

Would you like to have dinner with me tonight?

75. INT EVENING / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah sits at her desk typing on her computer.

She's wearing make-up, her hair is styled and her clothes are rather chic.

Someone knocks on the door.

JULIE (*off*)

Shall we go? Are you ready?

Sarah jumps. She immediately closes the "Julie" file she was writing in and hides the picture of Marie under her computer.

SARAH

Yes, yes, I'm coming.

Julie opens the door.

She sees Sarah from the back, busy at her desk.

JULIE

You're working, as usual.

SARAH

No... I was just rereading an old piece...

Flustered, she turns off her computer and stands up.

Julie notices her pair of knickers lying on the floor.

JULIE

Those are my panties, what are they doing in here?

SARAH

I found them in the garden, near the pool.

Julie picks them up casually, thinking nothing of it.

SARAH (*ill at ease*)

Where shall we go?

JULIE (*yawning*)

Not too far, I'm exhausted!

76. INT EVENING / RESTAURANT.

They are in the same café where Sarah usually has lunch.
The room is virtually empty, and the lunch waiter isn't there.
A plump young woman serves them instead.
They look at the menu.

SARAH

I see the lunchtime waiter isn't here tonight...

JULIE

Frank?

SARAH

Maybe, I don't know his name...

JULIE

It's Frank, a boy from Lacoste. During the off-season, he only works days.

SARAH

I see.

Do you know him well?

JULIE

A little, I see him around sometimes...

SARAH

It seems you know just about everybody.

JULIE

But of course, I've spent my whole childhood here!

SARAH

Not with John?

JULIE

Hardly! He abandoned my mother and me. He just came on holiday, in the summer...

SARAH

You resent him for that.

JULIE

No, not really, I don't care. He lives his life, I live mine...

SARAH

What about your mother? Is she French?

JULIE

Yes.

SARAH

Where does she live?

Julie does not answer right away. She lowers her eyes for a moment, then looks at Sarah.

JULIE

In Nice.

Why are you interested now?

SARAH

I don't know... Maybe you and I got off to a bad start. I think I was angry at you for... Or actually I'm angry with John, for never really telling me about you, or her.

JULIE

He's the one you're interested in!

SARAH

Naturally, put yourself in my place. You find out a close friend is keeping an entire part of his life a secret from you, when you thought you knew him. It's frightening. And fascinating.

I can't deny that I'd like to know more.

JULIE

A secret life would be a good subject for one of your books, no?

SARAH

Yes... I'm interested in the mysterious, anything to do with secrets, or lies.

JULIE

I see... But don't count on me to tell you any secrets. If you want to know something, you should ask John.

SARAH

I'm not asking anyone anything!

JULIE

Oh, sure... You may pretend you don't care, but I can see you're hoping I'll tell you some secrets about my father...

SARAH

Actually, I'm more interested in your mother.
By the way, why don't you live with her in Nice?

JULIE

Oh, that's a long story.
Shall we order?

.....

The two women have finished eating. They've had a lot to drink.
The other customers have all left. The waitress waits for them to leave so she can close the place.

JULIE (*tipsy, into her monologue*)

I know I'm an easy girl. I do sleep with a lot of guys, it's true. And yet, I don't really enjoy it. I just don't like to fall asleep alone. But I prefer to wake up alone, and forget everything that happened. I don't want the guy's bad breath and ugly face cuddling up to me in the morning when we're not drunk anymore.

We start young around here: I was thirteen the first time! I haven't stopped since. I fell in love once. That was nice. He was my age, we were sixteen, it was summertime. He was handsome, romantic, he came from Paris. His name was Christian. I was crazy for him...

But I was too fast for him. I wanted him to take me, but he didn't know how to do those things yet. He was a baby, he was terrible, he came on me after two seconds. So I dumped him, because I thought I was such a big girl and when you're that age you want to do everything now, you don't want to waste any time, you know? He wrote to me for a year, but I never wrote back. I remember one time, in the fort we built in the forest, he asked me to marry him. It's stupid, we were just kids, but it made me cry. It was the first time anyone... Oh, I'm sorry... I'm boring you with my childish stories!

SARAH

No.

I'm enjoying it. Go on.

JULIE (*finishing her drink, aggressive*)

Go on with what?

SARAH

What happened to your eye?

JULIE

Oh, it's nothing... Some asshole tried to hit me, but I fought back. He was bleeding like a pig, I got him good! Nobody better mess with me, because if they do, I'll mess with them back!

Shall we go? I'm exhausted.

SARAH

Yes. I'll pay the bill.

Julie doesn't say thank you. She gets up to go to the ladies' room.

77. EXT NIGHT / THE ROAD HOME.

The two women walk silently along the road in the dark night. Julie leads. Sarah follows, studying her closely. She gazes at the back of the young woman's neck, her swaying derriere, her little girl's walk in her grown-up high heels... She wavers every so often, like she's walking on a tightrope.

JULIE (*turning to Sarah and laughing*)
I'm drunk, are you?

SARAH (*smiling*)
No, I'm all right. I can hold my liquor.

78. INT NIGHT / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah pours two stiff glasses of whiskey, while Julie rolls a spliff. The two of them are sitting on the couch. Julie finishes rolling her joint and lights it. She takes a deep drag.

JULIE
I don't suppose you want any?

SARAH
Why not?

Sarah takes the joint and hits it. Julie drinks her whiskey and watches.

SARAH
Never judge a book by its cover! I've done my share of smoking...

JULIE
...and fucking!

She bursts out laughing.
Sarah smiles, a bit surprised. She takes another hit.

SARAH

Yes, that too. Swinging London was quite something...

JULIE *(taking the joint back from her)*

Yeah, I know. My mum already told me about it.

SARAH

What did she tell you?

JULIE

How she met John, how she seduced him...

Sarah picks up her glass and takes a drink.

JULIE

How is your book coming?

SARAH

It's coming...

I must say, it's quite strange to be writing a typically English story, set in London, when I'm here in this house in France, with such beautiful weather...

JULIE

My mother wrote a book too, but it was never published. He told her it was awful, so she burned it.

SARAH

That's terrible! Did you read it?

JULIE

Yeah, I liked it. It was a bit sentimental, kind of a Harlequin romance. But charming.

SARAH

What exactly was it about?

JULIE

Oh, about her and my father... it's a love story with an unhappy ending.

But what he wants is blood, sex, and money! That's what you give him, isn't it?

SARAH

Yes. But I like all that, too.

They smile at each other.

SARAH

Did your mother live in this house?

JULIE

Yes, sometimes, with my father. Especially in the summertime.

But once they were truly separated, she didn't want to come back anymore. She went to live in Nice. Anyway, it's really his house.

SARAH

Did she want him to come live with her in France?

JULIE

Yeah. She especially wanted him to leave his wife and family in London for her.

SARAH

John would never do that!

Sarah finishes her drink. Julie carefully scrutinizes her face.

JULIE

You would know, wouldn't you?

Sarah doesn't answer. She just smiles sadly.

Julie fills their glasses back up.

JULIE

Tell me, before I came, were you afraid to be here all alone?

SARAH

No.

It's true the house is isolated and anyone could break in, but I never thought about it. I'm not skittish by nature.

JULIE

My mother was terrified to be alone here.
Not me, I'm like you.

79. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah goes into her bedroom without turning on the light.
She sits on the bed in the obscurity, watching the shadows of tree branches cast into the room by the moonlight.
A light breeze blows outside.
Sarah stretches out on the bed and shuts her eyes.

80. INT NIGHT / JULIE'S BEDROOM.

Julie lies on her stomach in her bed, writing in her diary. She's naked.
She finishes her page and sets the diary beside her bed.
She turns over and stares at the ceiling.
She spots a spider in the corner of the room, wandering through its web.
She turns out the light.

81. INT MORNING / LIVING ROOM - TERRACE.

Julie gets out of bed. Her eyes are swollen and her hair is a mess. She goes downstairs in her T-shirt.

On the terrace, Sarah sits in a lounge chair in the sun reading her latest printout.

JULIE

Hi.

SARAH

Oh, good morning. Sleep well?

JULIE

Not great. I've got a headache. I've got a hangover!

SARAH

I made some coffee, it's in the kitchen.

JULIE

Ok.

She drags herself off to the kitchen.

Sarah watches her walk away, then turns back to her manuscript.

82. INT MORNING / KITCHEN.

Julie looks out at the garden while pouring herself some coffee. She sees Marcel near the pool with a long skimmer.

She forgets she's pouring coffee and the cup overflows. Coffee spills on the table and the floor.

JULIE

Shit!

She grabs a sponge and wipes off the table.

She takes another look outside.

Sarah is talking with Marcel.

Julie smiles and drinks her coffee.

83. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM.

Julie lies on the couch, fast asleep.
Sarah comes down from her room.
She picks up a piece of paper and writes a note on it:
"I've gone for a walk. See you later."
She puts it in a conspicuous place and leaves the house.

Julie hears the door shut and opens her eyes.
She gets up and sees the note on the table. She picks it up and reads it,
then crumples it up violently.
She throws it on the table.
She goes up the stairs to the bedrooms.

84. EXT DAY / CAFÉ TERRACE.

Sarah sits before a beer and a little saucer of peanuts.
Frank, the waiter, chats with her.
They laugh and seem quite close.

85. INT DAY / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Julie sits on Sarah's bed.
She's reading the older woman's manuscript. Her face is pale.

86. EXT DAY / CAFÉ TERRACE.

Sarah pays for her beer.
Frank gives her the change. They smile and say goodbye.
Sarah heads back to the house.
Frank watches her walk away.

87. INT DAY / HOUSE.

Sarah enters the house. She hangs up her coat and goes into the living room.
It's empty. Julie is no longer sleeping on the couch.

SARAH

Julie, are you here?

No answer.

Sarah sees that the note she left on the table is now waded up in a ball.

She goes up the stairs.

The door to Julie's bedroom is open, but there's no sign of her.

So Sarah goes into her own bedroom.

All is in order: the desk, the files, the bed.

She opens the window and looks out towards the pool.

No one.

She sits on her bed, yawns and stretches out to take a little nap.

.....

We hear a dog barking.

Sarah wakes up with a start, like she's been jolted out of a bad dream.

She rises and takes a look out the window, then closes it.

Suddenly she notices that the crucifix has been put back in its place above her bed.

She rubs her eyes to make sure she's not hallucinating.

But there it is. She touches it to see if it's real and opens the drawer of the night table. It's empty.

She stands motionless for a moment, pensive, contemplating the crucifix. Then she turns on her computer and begins to write.

88. INT EVENING / LIVING ROOM.

Sarah sits on the couch in front of the telly, balancing her plate on her knees.

She wolfs down steak and French beans.

In front of her sit a glass and a near-empty bottle of wine.

Out of nowhere, she hears laughter. She swallows her mouthful of food and sets her plate on the table.

It's Julie, who has come home.

Happy, Sarah turns off the telly and gets up to greet her.

But Julie is not alone. A male voice accompanies her.

Julie enters and stands facing Sarah.

JULIE (*smiling, half-drunk*)
Hello there!

SARAH
Good evening...

JULIE
I'd like you to meet a friend of mine who's come over for a drink...

Frank, the waiter from the café, enters the living room.
He is astonished to see Sarah, whom he recognizes from the restaurant.

FRANK
Oh, hello Madame... I didn't know you were staying here at Julie's place...

Julie, amused, watches Sarah's face fall.

JULIE
Oh right, I forget to tell you. Sarah's an English friend of my father's. We're loaning her the house so she can write her new novel. She's a writer.

Sarah says nothing.

FRANK (*trying to ease the tension in the room*)
You never told me you were a writer!

JULIE
Yeah, detective novels, so be careful...

Sarah turns round and heads for the stairs.

JULIE
Is there anything left to drink, Sarah?

SARAH (*stopping; in a flat voice*)
There should be some whiskey in the liquor cabinet.

JULIE

Could you make us a drink? I'll go get the weed in my bedroom.

(to Frank) Sit down, make yourself at home!

She goes up to her room, amused by the situation.
Sarah pours the drinks. Frank approaches her.

FRANK

It's funny that we should meet here, isn't it?

SARAH *(cold)*

I'm glad you're amused.

FRANK

I'm just glad to see you, that's all...

Sarah turns round and hands him his drink.
With two hands, he takes the glass, and Sarah's hand with it.

FRANK

Thank you. This time you're serving me...

Surprised, Sarah tries to draw back her hand.
But he holds on to it, bringing it up to his lips. Looking her in the eyes, he kisses her hand.
We hear Julie coming back downstairs. Frank lets go of Sarah's hand. Sarah is flustered.

Frank sits on the couch. Julie sits down beside him and starts rolling the joint.
Sarah sets the glasses on the table and sits down across from them.
Julie raises her glass in a toast.

JULIE

What shall we drink to?

Frank looks at Sarah and smiles.

JULIE *(looking Sarah in the eyes)*

Ah, I know!

To Sarah's book...

FRANK (*raising his glass*)
To Sarah's book!

Sarah flashes a fake grin and drinks her whiskey down in one gulp.

FRANK
So, what's it about?

SARAH
A police investigation in London, a detective...

FRANK
And what is the detective's name?

SARAH
Dorwell.

FRANK
Oh, I know him! I read the one that takes place in Scotland,
with the child murderer...

SARAH (*smiling*)
That was "Dorwell Wears A Kilt", but I don't know the
French title.

FRANK
This is amazing, I've never met a writer before! (*to Julie*)
Can you believe it?

JULIE (*finishing rolling her joint*)
Amazing...

SARAH (*rising*)
Right then, I think it's time for me to leave you two alone,
I'm sure you have a lot to catch up on...

JULIE
Oh, please stay for a while!

She hands her the joint.
Sarah hesitates. She looks at Frank, who smiles at her.
She sits back down and takes a drag.

Julie drinks her whiskey, keeping an eye on Sarah.
Sarah passes the joint to Frank. Julie slides up to him, affectionate.
He seems uncomfortable in front of Sarah and gently pushes her away.
Sarah pours herself another drink.

Julie gets up and puts on some hypnotic reggae music.
She approaches Frank, takes his hand and pulls him out to dance with her.
He goes along with it, passing the joint to Sarah, who smiles.
Frank and Julie slow-dance.
The young woman rubs up against him sensually, but he only has eyes for Sarah.

JULIE

Come and dance, Sarah.

Amused, Sarah gets up and starts moving to the music.
Frank takes her by the hand and pulls her close, creating a little dancing threesome.
Julie becomes aware of Frank's attraction to Sarah. She detaches from them and sits down on the couch to finish her drink.
Sarah and Frank dance a slow, languorous, sensual dance.
Julie stares at them blankly.
Frank starts kissing Sarah on the neck.
She instantly breaks away from him and turns the slow-dance into a fast one.
He smiles.
The song ends.

SARAH (*taking a deep breath*)

All right now, this time I really am going to bed!
Goodnight... Frank, goodnight, Julie.

JULIE

Sweet dreams ...

FRANK (*disappointed*)

I'd better be getting home too.

Sarah climbs the stairs.
Once she gets to the top, she hides and listens to their conversation.

JULIE (*aggressive*)

You don't want to take that midnight swim anymore?

FRANK

Oh, another time...

JULIE

But you still would if the old lady were coming, wouldn't you?

FRANK

Stop it, Julie. You're not funny.

89. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM - SWIMMING POOL

Sarah sits at her desk typing feverishly on her computer, as though describing the scene she has just lived.

She hears screams coming from outside. She stops.

She opens her window and goes out on the balcony.

The swimming pool is lit up at night.

Julie and Frank are in the water, playing like children, splashing each other.

Sarah steps further out on the balcony to get a better look.

Julie is naked; Frank wears his underwear.

Frank hoists himself out of the water and sits on the edge of the pool.

Julie swims over to him and gets between his legs. She starts giving him a blow-job.

He tries to push her away, but she's determined. He lets himself go.

Bothered by this, Sarah bends over and fishes around for something on the floor of the balcony.

She finds a fairly heavy rock and throws it as hard as she can in their direction, aiming at the branches of a tree.

Frank hears the sound. He lifts his head and sees Sarah, who has just turned on the light in her bedroom. He immediately pushes Julie's head away and stands up.

He starts getting dressed.

JULIE

What's the matter with you?

Frank doesn't answer, he just looks at the house

Julie turns round just in time to see the light in Sarah's bedroom go out.

FRANK

Ok, I'm getting out of here. See you later.

Julie gets out of the water and runs over to stop him.

He throws her down hard on the ground. The young girl's body and face lie flat against the wet, green grass.

Sarah sits on her bed and puts in her earplugs. Then she slides under the sheets, pleased with herself.

90. INT MORNING / SARAH AND JULIE'S BEDROOMS.

Sarah gets up.

She goes into the bathroom and splashes cold water on her face.

She looks at herself in the mirror, and straightens her hair.

She leaves her bedroom.

Julie's door is open.

She pokes her head in.

The young woman sleeps alone in her bed.

Sarah looks relieved.

She goes downstairs.

The living room is empty. The couch is made. No sign of Frank.

91. INT MORNING / GARDEN.

Like every morning, Sarah goes out on the terrace to have her coffee.

She takes a look in the direction of the pool and notices that the tarpaulin is back on it.

Surprised, Sarah walks down to the pool.

There is a large bump in the middle of the pool, under the tarpaulin. It looks like someone is under it.

Frightened, Sarah thinks she understands. She sets her coffee cup down and pulls off the tarpaulin.

It's merely the red buoy.

Relief.

92. EXT DAY / VILLAGE.

Sarah walks toward the café.

She reaches the square, but the café appears to be closed. No tables are set up outside.

Sarah approaches and tries to enter, but the door is locked. She taps on the window.

SARAH

Is anyone there?

She waits for a moment, then taps again.
The night waitress opens a window on the floor above and leans out.

THE WAITRESS

Sorry, we won't be open until tonight.

SARAH (*looking up*)

Oh really? Why not? Usually you're open at lunch, I come every day...

THE WAITRESS

Well, Frank didn't come today, so...

SARAH

Do you know why?

THE WAITRESS (*surprised*)

I don't know, he must've overslept. Unfortunately he does that a lot.

SARAH

Do you think something may have happened to him?

THE WAITRESS

I have no idea!

If you'll excuse me, I have work to do.

She shuts the window.

Sarah stands in front of the café for a moment thinking, then leaves.

23. INT DAY / HOUSE.

Sarah opens the door.

Looking worried, she tiptoes silently into the living room.

Nobody's there.

The ashtray is full of butts. The telephone sits on the couch.

Sarah goes over to the window.

Julie is swimming in the pool.

94. EXT DAY / GARDEN.

Sarah goes down the steps leading to the pool.

Julie is swimming laps, her head underwater.

Sarah walks on the tiles near the edge of the pool. She notices little red droplets.

She looks closer. It's blood.

Julie still swims with her head underwater.

Sarah follows the drops of blood like a trail of breadcrumbs. They lead her into the grass, at which point they disappear.

Julie stops swimming and gets out of the water. She wraps her towel around her and puts on her sunglasses.

Sarah stares right at her, waiting for her to approach.

JULIE

Did you sleep well?

SARAH (*stern*)

Where did this blood come from?

JULIE

What blood?

SARAH

Here, on the tiles!

Julie moves closer and examines the drops of blood that Sarah is showing her.

JULIE

Oh right... That must be mine. I cut myself earlier.

SARAH (*sarcastic*)

Oh, really? And just where did you cut yourself?

Silence.

JULIE (*irritated*)

Oh, leave me alone!

She hurries back towards the house.

SARAH (*staying put*)
Little bitch!

Julie disappears into the house.

Sarah looks back down at the drops of blood. She tries to follow them into the grass. She advances bit by bit, then suddenly comes across a sock.

95. INT DAY / LIVING ROOM - HOUSE.

Sarah goes into the living room, holding the sock.

She breathes in. Something smells odd.

She goes over to the fireplace and discovers some hot ashes, still smouldering.

She moves in closer and recognizes a bit of material that strangely resembles the sock she's holding.

SARAH
Julie... Julie?

No answer.

Sarah takes a look in the kitchen, then goes up to the bedrooms.

Julie's door is open, but the room is empty.

Sarah checks her own bedroom. It's empty too.

She walks toward the window to check outside, but the sound of a squeaking floorboard makes her turn around.

SARAH
Julie, is that you?

Silence.

Sarah is beginning to get scared.

She goes into the bathroom is startled by her reflection in the mirror. She jumps.

96. EXT DAY / LACOSTES.

Sarah walks through the streets, looking for someone.

An old man sits on a bench.

Sarah approaches him.

SARAH

I'm sorry to bother you, monsieur, but I'm looking for a friend who lives here. I don't know his exact address. His name is Frank. He works at the café in Opède. Do you know him?

THE OLD MAN

Frank Durin? Yes, I know him, he's from here. His house is just outside of town...

SARAH

Does he live alone, or with family?

THE OLD MAN

Oh no, Frank is single. He had a girlfriend, but she left him a long time ago now...

SARAH

Thank you, monsieur.

Sarah hurries off as the old man looks on, amused.

97. EXT DAY / FRANK'S HOUSE.

Sarah comes to a non-descript house. On the letterbox is written: "Frank Durin".

She rings the doorbell at the gate.

No answer.

She decides to enter the yard.

She goes up to the front door and knocks hard.

Silence. She tries to open the door, but it's locked.

Sarah leaves, looking determined.

98. EXT DAY / VILLAGE SQUARE.

Sarah goes into a phone booth, puts some change in the telephone and rapidly dials a number.

SARAH

Hello, may I speak with John Bosload, please?

It's Sarah Modwell... Please hurry, it's urgent!

Sarah is put on hold. She hears classical music in the receiver. Anxious, she puts in some more change.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Hello? I'm sorry Ms. Modwell, but John is unavailable. He's gone out.

SARAH

But... Where exactly is he?

SECRETARY'S VOICE

I really couldn't tell you, his secretary is out as well. Perhaps you could try again next week...

Angry, Sarah hangs up.

She leaves the phone booth. She doesn't know what else to do. She thinks.

She looks at her watch and walks through the village.

She comes to the police station and stops, hesitating to go in. Ultimately she decides not to, and continues on her way.

99. EXT DAY / HOUSE IN OPEDE.

Sarah rings the doorbell of a modest village house.

She waits, nervous. She rings again.

The door opens.

Sarah recognizes the old woman she met near the castle in Lacoste.

The woman's face is strange and worrisome.

SARAH

Hello Madame, my name is Sarah Modwell. I'm looking for your husband. I need to speak with him, if you don't mind...

THE WOMAN (*speaking with difficulty*)

But... I'm... not... married...

SARAH

Oh, excuse me! But isn't this where Marcel lives?

THE WOMAN

Yes... He's... my... daddy...

SARAH (*after a surprised pause*)
Ah... I'm sorry, my mistake. Is he here?

THE WOMAN
No... He's... at... the... Swiss's...

SARAH
Is that nearby?

THE WOMAN
It's... 15... kilometres... near... Cavaillon...

SARAH (*disappointed*)
Well, will he be back soon?

THE WOMAN
To... night... normally...

SARAH (*ready to leave*)
Very good, thank you... mademoiselle.
Just tell him to ring me when he gets home.

THE WOMAN
But...maybe... I... can... help you...

SARAH (*turning back to her*)
Uh... Do you know Julie ?

THE WOMAN (*smiling*)
Yes... she's... pretty...

SARAH
Would you happen to know how I could get in touch with her mother? I need to contact her, it's very important.

The woman's expression abruptly changes. She seems to be having some kind of facial paralysis that deforms her.
Sarah steps back, a bit frightened.

THE WOMAN (*speaking with even more difficulty*)
Julie's... mummy... is... dead!

SARAH

What are you saying?

THE WOMAN

It... was... an... accident...

100. INT DAY / HOUSE.

Julie's car is parked in front of the house. Sarah comes home.

She goes directly into the kitchen.

She opens a drawer and selects a knife. She wraps her handkerchief around it and hides it in her pocket.

She crosses the empty living room and goes upstairs as quietly as she can, holding onto the walls for support.

Julie's door is wide open, but she's not in her room.

Sarah moves stealthily towards her own room. The door is half-open.

She hears barely perceptible noises and slides her hand into her pocket to have the knife at the ready.

She pushes the door open wide.

She discovers Julie lying on the bed, sobbing.

SARAH

What are you doing?

Julie looks up. Her eyes are red and wet with tears.

She smiles when she sees Sarah.

JULIE

You came back! You came back!

She runs into Sarah's arms and squeezes her tight.

Sarah is dumbfounded.

SARAH

But Julie, you...

JULIE

I thought you were never coming back, I thought you abandoned me, but you're here, you came back! Oh thank you, thank you...

She starts kissing Sarah's cheeks, like a little girl.
Sarah doesn't know how to react. She just stands there and accepts Julie's delirious outburst of affection.

SARAH

Calm down, Julie. What has got into you?

JULIE (*gazing at her lovingly*)

Mummy, Mummy...

SARAH

But I... I'm not...

Julie looks at her and begins screaming. She slides down out of her arms and falls to the floor. She's in the throes of an emotional fit.

Sarah immediately tries to calm her down.

But Julie is in a state of fury and pushes her away forcefully.

Feeling helpless, Sarah runs to the bathroom for a washcloth and some cold water.

When she returns, Julie has fainted and lies motionless on the floor.

Sarah taps her cheeks in an attempt to wake her, but Julie remains unconscious.

Sarah gathers her up in her arms and lays her down on the bed.

She wipes the sweat off her face with the wet washcloth, takes her hand and gently caresses it, like a mother would.

.....

Julie slowly comes to her senses.

She struggles to open her eyes, and recognizes Sarah.

JULIE (*having trouble articulating*)

What's going on? What happened to me?

SARAH (*tenderly*)

Nothing, you just fainted, everything's fine...

JULIE

Oh, my head hurts!

SARAH

Keep still, it'll go away.

Sarah smiles at her and squeezes her hand affectionately.
Julie rubs her forehead and furrows her brow.

SARAH

Julie?

JULIE

Yes.

SARAH

You have to tell me the truth now. I need to know...

JULIE

About Frank?

SARAH

Uh... yes.

Julie takes a deep breath, closes her eyes for a moment, then opens them and looks Sarah in the eyes.

JULIE

I think I killed him...

SARAH

But... whatever for?

JULIE (*upset*)

I don't know...

For you... for the book.

101. EXT DAY / GARDEN.

Sarah goes down towards the pool.

She holds a key in her hand.

She goes over to the shed containing pool supplies, sitting in the grass near the pool.

She puts the key in the lock and nervously enters the dark little room.

She looks down and sees a man's bare feet. His body is hidden under an air mattress.

Insects buzz around her. She holds her nose and kicks the air mattress off the body.

Frank's naked corpse is revealed, lying in a pool of blood. His head is severely bruised.

Horried, Sarah takes a step backwards and leaves the shed.

She locks the door, then turns round and leans back on it, facing the pool. She catches her breath, in shock.

102. EXT NIGHT / COUNTRY ROAD.

Sarah's in the car, driving with determination.

Julie huddles in the passenger seat beside her, her eyes red and swollen.

They drive in silence.

Sarah looks at the country road. Julie motions for her to turn left.

The car drives down a narrow dirt road in the forest.

103. EXT NIGHT / FOREST.

The car comes to a stop in the middle of the forest.

Sarah leaves the headlights on and gets out of the car.

She opens the boot. Julie stays in the car.

SARAH (*authoritative*)

Get out here and help me!

Julie reluctantly gets out of the car.

She helps Sarah hoist the cadaver, which is wrapped in a sheet, out of the boot.

There's blood in the boot.

SARAH

We'll have to clean all that up...

They each take a shovel and begin dragging the corpse.

JULIE

Where are we going?

SARAH

I don't know... A bit further down.

Laboriously, they drag the body below the road.
They stop, breathless.

SARAH (*pointing to the ground with her shovel*)
We'll dig here.

.....

The two women have finished digging their hole. They're exhausted.
Sarah pushes the body, and it falls heavily into the hole.
They shovel dirt in after it, burying it for good.

104. EXT NIGHT / COUNTRY ROAD.

On the way back home, the two women sit silently in the car, staring
blankly into space.
Julie can't stifle a yawn.

JULIE

I'm so tired...

SARAH (*cold*)

That's no surprise. You killed a man.

Julie looks at her.

JULIE

Thanks, Sarah.

Sarah doesn't answer. She concentrates on the road.

105. INT NIGHT / LIVING ROOM.

Sitting on the couch, Julie watches Sarah take care of business.
Sarah has built a fire, into which she throws the bloody sheet that Frank was wrapped in.
Once she's finished, she joins Julie on the couch.
The two women watch the flames gobble up the sheet.
Their faces are red. They're sweating.
Sarah looks worn out.

SARAH

Right then, that's done. I'm going to bed now, I'm exhausted.

She rises.

JULIE

Sarah, there's something you forgot to burn...

SARAH

What's that?

JULIE

Your book. It could serve as evidence...

SARAH

Did you read it?

JULIE *(after a pause)*

No, but I can just imagine...

SARAH *(softly)*

Well, stop imagining and get yourself to bed...

We've got work to do tomorrow.

Sarah goes up to her room.

Julie sits alone in front of the crackling fire. She stretches out on the couch and stares at the flames, hypnotized.

106. INT NIGHT / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah stands before her bed. She takes the crucifix down off the wall and puts it back in the drawer of the night table.

107. INT MORNING / KITCHEN.

Sitting face to face, the two women drink their coffee in silence.

Julie wears her sunglasses.

Sarah speaks up.

SARAH

Listen, I've thought it over, and we've got to go on with our lives as if nothing's happened.

You could ring Marcel and ask him to come this afternoon to do some yard work...

JULIE

Like cut the grass?

SARAH

Sure, why not. It's important for everything to appear normal, just like it was before...

Right, another thing... Did anyone see you with Frank before you two came here?

JULIE

No.

SARAH

Are you sure?

JULIE

Yes. I went to his house. He lives in an isolated place just outside Lacoste. And after, we came directly here in my car.

SARAH

Did you see anyone along the way?

JULIE (*thinking*)

No, I don't think so...

SARAH

Did he have family? Did he live alone?

JULIE

Yes, his parents are dead.

Sarah rises from the table. She rinses her bowl in the sink.

JULIE

Are you going back to London?

SARAH

No, not straightaway, that might look suspicious...

Now Julie rises from the table. She goes over to the window and looks out.

JULIE *(taking off her sunglasses)*

Why are you helping me, Sarah?

SARAH *(after a pause)*

Why wouldn't I help you?

JULIE

I don't know...

Do you think they will arrest me?

SARAH

No, not necessarily. If you do exactly as I say, you shouldn't have any problems.

JULIE

Why should I believe you? Because you write about murders in your books?

SARAH

Absolutely.

Sarah leaves the kitchen.

Julie puts her sunglasses back on.

108. INT DAY / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah writes at her desk. She stops, gets up and looks out her bedroom window.

She sees Julie lying by the edge of the pool. She appears to be asleep.

Marcel is also in the garden, mowing the lawn.

Sarah spies on him for a long while, then opens the window.

Marcel hears and turns round to face her.

They look at each other, without a word.

Then Sarah unbuttons her shirt and shows him her breasts.

Marcel turns off the lawnmower.

109. INT DAY / HOUSE - JULIE'S BEDROOM.

Marcel is in the house. He climbs the stairs leading up to the bedrooms.

His footsteps make the floorboards creak.

In the hallway, he stops before the door to Sarah's room. He opens it.

The window is open, but the room is empty.

He turns and goes to Julie's door, which is ajar.

He pushes it open.

Sarah lies naked on the bed, waiting for him.

Marcel enters.

Sarah closes her eyes.

110. INT DAY / SARAH'S BEDROOM.

Sarah works at her desk.

There is a knock on the door. Julie enters.

JULIE

I came to say goodbye.

Sarah gets up and takes off her glasses.

SARAH

Are you sure?

JULIE

Yes. I want to let you finish your book.

I'm going to Saint-Tropez. A friend of mine has a restaurant there. It's the start of high season, he'll find a job for me...

SARAH

Right... It's probably for the best...

JULIE

Are you going to speak to my father?

SARAH (*playing innocent*)

To John? What about?

JULIE

Never mind, you're right! Goodbye...

She turns to leave.

Sarah holds her back by the arm.

SARAH

Julie?

JULIE

Yes?

SARAH

How did you get that scar on your stomach?

JULIE

A car accident.

SARAH

Oh... I see.

JULIE

Is that for your book?

SARAH

Yes.

The two women stand facing each other.
Sarah smiles at Julie and takes her in her arms.
Julie holds her tight and shuts her eyes.

SARAH

Good luck.

JULIE

You too.

They separate. Julie leaves the room, shutting the door behind her.
Sarah remains, melancholic and pensive.
She sits down on her bed. She is overcome by a powerful feeling of loneliness.
From a distance, we hear Julie's car start up and drive away.

111. INT DAY / JULIE'S BEDROOM.

Sarah goes into Julie's room.
Everything is clean and in order. The sheets are folded on the bed.
Sarah sits down and buries her head in the sheets, breathing in the young woman's scent.
She lies down for a moment, then sits up suddenly.
She goes over to a small table. There is a large, worn envelope on it.
She recognizes Julie's writing: "For Sarah".
She quickly opens it. Inside, she finds a stack of old typewritten pages and a letter from Julie.
Stunned, Sarah sits down and reads it.

JULIE'S VOICE

"Sarah,

I don't really know why I'm doing this, but after everything that has happened between us, it seems like the right thing to do. I lied to you, my mother's book was not completely lost. It did burn, but she kept a copy, which she gave to me. John doesn't know I have it.

Perhaps if I give you these pages today, you will bring her back to life. So if they inspire you, take them, steal them, they are yours.

- Julie"

Moved, Sarah folds the letter.

Then she rises, the envelope in hand, and goes back to her room.

She turns on computer and sits down.

She takes Marie's manuscript from the envelope and leafs through it, then she begins rapidly retyping it into her computer.

112. INT DAY / JOHN'S OFFICE IN LONDON.

John sits behind his desk holding Sarah's manuscript.

He closes it.

Sitting across from him, Sarah looks at him and waits.

JOHN

Listen Sarah, I read it... I don't know what to say...

SARAH

You didn't like it, is that it?

JOHN

No, I wouldn't say that exactly, but I...

SARAH

Oh John, please stop beating about the bush and tell me honestly what you think!

JOHN

Look, I don't understand what you're trying to say with it. And I don't really recognize you in it.

SARAH

Isn't that what you wanted? You were dead set on having me write something more personal...

JOHN

Yes, maybe I was...

But you've got to admit, writing about feelings is hardly your strong suit. You're simply not good with complex, psychological portraits... You excel in murders, investigations! This will throw off your readers, it's too subtle, too abstract... Where is the action? Where are the plot twists?

This is precisely why I say you're made to write the Dorwells. That's what you do best.

SARAH

So, what's your advice?

Shall I burn it?

JOHN

Oh, you're always so dramatic.

No, but I do think... perhaps it would be more reasonable for your career if you didn't publish it. Throw yourself into a new Dorwell right away... Think of your audience!

Listening to him, Sarah can't conceal the hint of mischievous smile on her face.

SARAH

How amusing, that's precisely what I thought you'd say!

JOHN

Which only serves to prove that you yourself recognize... that this writing is below your standard...

SARAH

No, I don't believe it is.

Actually, I think this is the best thing I've written in a bloody long time!

John doesn't seem to understand. Sarah looks at him defiantly, as if they were two challengers in a duel.

SARAH

And, as I knew in advance you wouldn't like it, I took matters into my own hands ...

Sarah picks up her purse, reaches into it and takes out a book, which she sets on the desk, right under John's nose.

The title of the book: "Swimming Pool" by Sarah Modwell.

Flabbergasted, John picks it up.

SARAH

Yes, I thought I'd give you a surprise. I've signed with Faber. Unlike you, they adored the book and gave me a contract straightaway...

JOHN

But... but why didn't you tell me?

SARAH

It seems you have also hidden a few things from me...

She rises and puts on her coat while John looks on, totally disarmed.

SARAH *(taking her manuscript back)*

I'll leave you the book. You could give it to your daughter, I signed it for her...

She puts the manuscript in her purse.

SARAH

Ciao...

She opens the office door and turns back to John.

SARAH

Oh, and by the way, tell Terry Long's mother that the next Dorwell will be coming along very soon. And he's in top form!

She leaves the office, leaving the wreckage of John behind her.

113. INT DAY / HALLWAY PUBLISHING HOUSE.

Sarah heads toward the exit.

SARAH

Goodbye Debbie, I'll see you soon.

THE SECRETARY

Goodbye, Sarah.

Sarah smiles at her as she walks to elevators.

She passes a young blond girl of about fifteen. The girl lowers her eyes when she sees her.

Intrigued, Sarah turns round and watches the girl speak to the secretary.

THE SECRETARY

Hello Julia, how are you?

JULIA

Fine. Is my father in?

THE SECRETARY

Yes, I'll tell him you're here.

Sarah hides behind a door and watches the scene from afar.
The secretary tells John the girl is here.
He opens the door to his office and greets the young woman.
He kisses her like a father kisses his daughter and shows her in.
He closes the door behind him.

Pensive, Sarah stands motionless for a moment in the shadows...
Then she smiles and closes her eyes.

114. EXT DAY / LUBÉRON HOUSE.

Sarah's hands type at lightening speed on the keyboard of her computer.

Suddenly, we hear the loud splash of someone diving underwater.
Sarah, sitting at her desk, stops and goes out on the balcony.

Down in the swimming pool, a young girl swims underwater.
Sarah watches her as she gets out of the pool, her body dripping wet.
She is blond and wears the same swimsuit as Julie.
She takes a towel from a deck chair and dries her hair, turning to face the house.
She sees Sarah watching her from the balcony and waves to her.
Sarah smiles and waves back.
The girl has the childlike face of Julia.

FIN