

A SHORT FILM ON TORTURE

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EXT. QUAI DE MONTABELLO - PARIS - DAY

Afternoon traffic, moody skies, a rain storm on approach in the distance.

A tall woman (45) well dressed walks out of an English bookstore -Shakespeare & Co - she is visibly shaken. A man (55), dark wavy-ish hair, sunglasses, stylishly dressed follows her out of the store, she is unaware. She walks to the nearby park, Square Rene Vivani.

INT. ATTIC LOFT - MARAIS, PARIS - EVENING

High ceilings with wood beams, a black Parisian Pleyel grand piano is in the corner, a fireplace lite nearby next to it. A white sofa, comfortable. An open kitchen with a bottle of wine on the counter by the sink. A long wooden table that seats 8 people across from it. **A woman** (45) is at the head of the table, **a man** (55) sits at the chair next to her. He looks tired. His eyes. His hair is out of sorts, wild. (How do they look/physical descriptions? Are they drinking coffee, water)

MAN

I didn't expect to see you here...I trailed you for miles...I didn't know if I should stop you. At first I didn't know if it was you. We never came here together, but when I saw you in that hat (?) I thought we must have. It's been xxx (15?) years.

She listens.

MAN (cont'd)

So...I watched you. I kept my distance. And you went in the bookstore. The one that sells the books in English by the Seine. I remembered it was something we used to do when we traveled. I saw you as you picked up that book, the book - "Unbearable Lightness of Being." and I felt my heart tare. I felt tears almost burst from your eyes and I felt your heart as you put the book down and rushed out the door looking...searching for your breath.

A tear rolls down her cheek.

MAN (cont'd)

I wanted too...

He pulls his chair in closer to her. Her hand moves to her mouth, gesturing him to stop. It's obvious she holds back, her eyes press in the tears. He watches her. He feels his knife retwisting in her once again. The power he once had on her feels like a relief to him that it is still there, like a missing emotion in himself being reignited.

MAN (cont'd)

I tried to place it...what it was...
that made me feel that sense of
longing. I felt it. I felt it too!
Why else would you put that book down
and run out like that?

She listens. Her mouth shut so unlike how it was before. Her eyes look over to the essay "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldua on the table. It helps strengthen her resolve. She has learned the power in silence, the power in letting/watching someone think they have the last laugh. She feels it's best to let him do the talking, let him have his say.

MAN (cont'd)

Say something...

She stares at him.

MAN (cont'd)

Damnit say something! Anything!

Her nostrils flair.

WOMAN

So YOU sent that man to come talk to
me on the bench at the Square Rene
Vivani? Is that how he knew I spoke
Spanish!

Her anger wells.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Philosophy of dance! He couldn't even
answer what kind of dance he taught
and then he wanted me to ride off
with him on a bicycle. For what? Why?
And his shoes were horrible. Do you
know my grandmother - may she rest in
peace - was an eastern european
woman - she always told me to look at
a man's shoes.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

She said you can always tell a man
and his character by the shoes he
wears! AND where were your shoes!?
Let me look at your shoes. Show me...

She looks under the table, he shifts his feet. (How are his shoes?)

WOMAN (cont'd)

And you come here now! To the flat I
am renting while I am in town like
some stalker instead of a past love.
For what? Why do you strategize this?
For love? For protection of your
mouth, your heart, your soul, your
ego? YOUR CONTROL???

They pause. He looks over at her writing book on the table.

MAN

You still write...

His fingers pat / tap on it and his pointer finger edges it away.

MAN (cont'd)

You know they used to...joke and call
you Anne Frank.

She nods her head.

WOMAN

I do, I have over forty some books
now and I know, well I learned about
it a few years ago.

Pause.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Have you seen the Simon Fujiwara
exhibition at the Hofbanhof Museum in
Berlin, the installation he did of
her?

He shakes his head no.

WOMAN (cont'd)

It's beautiful. The way he created/
molded her and her smile at that
desk...yet sad, haunting, the story
dark around all this brightness...all
I could see was a Nazi occupation
that wanted to steal joy from a
child. Like they wanted to steal her
light.

He looks over at the piano and fireplace. Uncomfortable.

MAN

I tried to find you. I looked for
you. I'd hear some distant rumblings,
murmurs here and there about your
whereabouts from XXXX...

Pause.

MAN (cont'd)

(under his breath)

Unbearable Lightness of Being.

He shakes it off.

MAN (cont'd)

Then no one knew where you were. You
were gone.

She nods.

WOMAN

I took all my social media down a few
years ago...it's easy to hide online
if you want to...especially when no
one knows what country/city you are
in, etc.

He reaches for her hand. She pulls it back, to her waist,
her dress.

MAN

What are you hiding from?

WOMAN

What does it matter? And why try to
find me? What is your purpose for
doing that? Curiosity? What did you
want to know? Even more, what did you
hope you would find? Me alone?

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)
Married? with children? Rich? Poor?
Accomplished? What?

Pause.

MAN
I'm still sober...

He says like it's an excuse even though she wasn't an alcoholic. Her eyes fire.

WOMAN
I remember a man I once knew. I met him in Philadelphia. Very successful, handsome, a divorced rich playboy. Drove a beautiful black Porsche, the one that's in the six figures. I knew him for three months while I lived with my sister when I was waiting for my Visa to Oz. Right after I moved he had a tragedy. A brain aneurysm. He was in the middle of having sex when it happened. Fell down right on top of her. I never dated him, but he liked my sister and I. We spent a lot of nights having dinners, cocktails, wine and dancing around Rittenhouse Square together.

MAN
What's your point? What does he have to do with this?

WOMAN
Let me finish...

He looks at her and gestures for her to continue.

WOMAN (cont'd)
He would contact me for years. I'd left the city. I'd moved to many different places. I visited him once after I came back to the US, one side of his head was missing, concaved. I didn't even know it was possible for someone to live like that - it was a year after it happened. But I kept moving and he would contact me over the years, his caring for me turned to hate and anger. He send me nasty emails or post porn to my threads or say sexual things.

(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

We were never sexually involved with one another mind you. But all he could remember or the last thing, moments he knew before he had the aneurysm was his good life and me in it. And I'd feel his pain. His torture. He had me in it. And I'd try to rationalize my distance - I lived in another part of the world. I only knew him for three months, etc. And I knew I was one of his last memories of the time before. The time he wanted to recreate or be back in but the reality was impossible and painful...And his loneliness or prison of living with his parents wheelchair bound in his late 40's and 50's ate at him."

MAN

What does this story have to do with me still being sober?

She smiles.

WOMAN

Think about it. The why of why you haven't sat at a table with me sooner.

Pause.

WOMAN (cont'd)

It's because of your weakness and what you associate with me...the before.

She pushes her chair back as she gets up from the table and strikes her palms on the wooden table. She walks behind the marble (or gray cement) counter and pours a glass of wine for herself.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Coffee? Water?

MAN

You are not going to offer me wine?

He gets up from the table, approaches her, she steps back and becomes enraged.

WOMAN

You just said you are still sober!
(what is that French sober - wine is
ok? AND)! WHAT! So you want to see me
to...to what! Drink and fuck again?
Is that why you are here?

THE END

CHARACTERS

WOMAN (45) In Paris for a few months, she came to Europe to collect her things from her ex boyfriend's (ex-husband?) house in Vienna. No children.

MAN (55) an well known artist, sculptor, (nationality?). Lives in Paris.

Options:

He is a widow with a small girl, late wife french.

He is divorced with two children, his wife french.

He has a child with a French woman no longer together.

He has a child and is married to a French woman.

He is a 'bachelor'.