

La Femme (AT)

by

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<version 5>

Note to the script: The dialogues will be translated in different languages (Italian, German and English).

1 INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY - EVENING

1

We see the back of a little girl, standing on a stairway and holding a doll. She is looking up, scared, many steps ahead of her.

VOICEOVER OF A WOMAN ECHOING
Come on baby. You can do it!

We hear the sound of some running water.

CUT TO:

2 INT. HAIR DRESSER - DAY

2

Two hands are washing someone's hair.

CUSTOMER

(VO)

I am glad I don't have to do it anymore. Being responsible for something or someone can put a man under a lot of pressure. A boss can never afford to show himself weak or no one will ever take him seriously. I couldn't be myself at home either. My wife wouldn't let me. I had to wear the mask of "the man" the whole time. So I ended up having to pay to take that off. I started going to psychologists, to cry. Do you know how many tears a man can cry in a minute?

EMPLOYEE

I never counted them, sir.

CUSTOMER

You would, if you had to pay for them. I eventually ended up broke. I lost my company, and my wife with it.

We see Nana's profile, in the semi-darkness.

OPENING CREDITS (appearing on the last shot)

3

INT. TAXI - DAY

3

Nana is sitting in her private driver's car. She is dressed elegantly and carries a business bag. She is trying to call someone, unsuccessfully.

She sees a woman along the road, in a wedding dress, impatiently waiting for a bus.

NANA

Pull over, Charles.

The car pulls over.

NANA

Need a ride?

The woman gets into Nana's car. Everyone is quite for a little while. Nana keeps trying calling, with no success.

WOMAN

Is he ghosting you?

Nana raises her eyes.

NANA

Excuse me?

WOMAN

That's why I am getting married. For the clarity of it. In all my past relationships I never knew what to expect. Was he not calling me back because he was busy or because he had totally not liked me? Was he not showing up with flowers at Valentine's day to fight capitalism or because he was a total prick not giving a damn of me? Interpreting a man's behavior is hard work, and you can never be sure you are doing it right. With marriage, as with kids, everything changes. You may be miserably married but at least you know what you have.

NANA

Someone so insecure should not rely on public transport on her own wedding day.

WOMAN

Someone so self-confident should not be afraid to be left by her boyfriend either.

NANA

.. Even if he was breaking up with me, I could handle it. I've been alone before and I always did just fine.

WOMAN

All these concerns are anyway gone with marriage. At least if you make a prenuptial contract. Then it doesn't really matter whether he is gonna leave you or not.

DRIVER

Traffic jam, ladies. I hope you'll get to work on time, Nana. I know you are like a Swiss watch.

NANA

Let's hope so Charles. Or I'll have to find a new driver.

Nana turns back to the woman.

NANA

And where is love in your perfect plan?

WOMAN

You don't get it. That's the whole point: I can only love what I am free to leave. The modern self suffers in its struggle to conciliate the wish for autonomy with the desire for recognition. With Marriage, and a prenuptial contract, I get to have both.

NANA

(ironically)

I forgot that Romantic Love is just a collective arena within which the social divisions and the cultural contradictions of capitalism are played out.

The woman and Nana stares at each other in silence for a little while when the taxi stops at the corner.

WOMAN

This is me! Thanks for the ride!
Get him to marry you, if it's not
too late.

The woman gets out of the car when Nana's phone ring. She looks at it. She picks up.

NANA

Hi babe! I got just a few minutes
as I am getting close to work.

Everything turns into silence. No sound. Nana is listening to what the other person on the other side of the phone is saying. She turns speechless and does not react. She detaches the mobile phone slowly from her ear. On this shot of Nana, holding the phone and looking straight into the camera, a Voice Over (Nana's voice):

VO (WE HEAR THE SOUND OF RUNNING WATER)

Western culture has endlessly represented the ways in which love miraculously erupts in people's lives, the mythical moment in which one knows someone is destined for us; the feverish waiting for a phone call or an email, the thrill that runs our spine at the mere thought of him or her. Yet a culture that has so much to say about love is silent on the no less mysterious moments when people fall out of love, when the one who kept us awake at night now leaves us indifferent.

Camera stays on Nana. Sound comes back.

DRIVER IN VO

We've arrived. Looks like this is
not the day I get fired.

Nana looks out of the window. The Insurance company she works for in front of her.

NANA

Turn around, Charles. I forgot to
do the laundry.

BLACK.

4

INT. WASHING SALOON - EVNING

4

A stuffed doll is being washed inside a washing machine.

Nana stands in front of the washing machine in the washing saloon. She is still wearing her fancy professional clothes and carrying the business case with her. Together with it, a pile of bed sheets and pillows covers in her arms. She is trying to fit everything inside in one machine. She is left with a pillow cover. She gets close to it with her nose and smells it, she hesitates.

Nana throws the last pillow cover in the washing machine. She presses the start button and go sit.

In front of her, a washing machine and inside a stuffed doll being washed (the same of scene 1).

At the other corner of the room one woman is sitting on a washing machine. She looks bored when suddenly her phone rings. She looks at it and she shouts out of joy jumping off the washing machine.

WOMAN

Finally.

The woman has caught Nana's attention and she realizes that.

WOMAN

(to Nana)

Sorry, it's uncool to show such an excitement for a man. I didn't think he would text me but he did. He wants to meet me.

NANA

What does he say?

WOMAN

He wants to meet me and

...

Wait he is writing.

...

He says that the other night was fun.

...

He wants to meet me for dinner.

...

He is asking if I want to have dinner with him.

...

And cinema afterwards.

...

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

He is still writing. Oh my god
this is very overwhelming.

Nana is sitting, staring at the little doll inside the washing machine. Woman goes sit in front of the washing machine window, the one in which the stuffed doll is being washed.

WOMAN

I guess I'll decline his
invitation.

VOICE OVER

(nana's Voice) (we hear the sound
of running water)
As a child my family and I lived
on the 7th floor of a middle class
apartment. No elevator. I remember
that, since the time I could walk,
my mother never picked me up when
doing the stairs. Children have
small legs. I remember looking at
all those stairs ahead of me. I
was not able to see the end of it.
My mother would always wait for me
5 steps ahead. It was taking us
double the time that would have
taken us if only she had at least
given me a hand. She never did. My
father, on the contrary, would
always carry me. He would even now
if he could.

WOMAN

Wise woman, your mother. A girl
gotta learn to be autonomous.

Nana raises her eyes looking into the camera.

NANA

You seemed happy he wrote you,
earlier.

WOMAN

I was but he is not even asking me
what I want.

NANA

And what is that?

WOMAN

I don't want to be controlled...
that for sure. I am not the needy
type.

NANA

Then why didn't you write him
first?

Woman is staring at the doll being washed inside the washing
machine window.

WOMAN

(to Nana)

Who's still giving baby girls
dolls to play with? That's the
origin of the whole problem.

A little boy (8 y.o.) comes in front of the washing machine
window and stops staring at the doll. He looks back at Nana
and he smiles. The washing machines makes as a sound. Nana
stands up and pushes the bottom to open the washing machine's
window as the boy is not tall enough. Nana takes the doll out
of the washing machine and she gives it to the boy.

5 INT. NANA'S MOTHER HOUSE - EVENING

5

Nana is walking up the stairs of her parents' house (same
shot of scene 1 but instead of holding the doll Nana is
holding the business case).

Nana rings, no one answer. She rings a second time, no
answer. She then takes some keys out of her bag and open the
door.

NANA

Mom.

Nana goes around the flat, holding the business case in one
hand, looking for her mother. She then opens the bathroom
door. There she is, her mother, in the bathtub, sleeping. She
opens her eyes as soon as Nana opens the door.

NANA'S MOTHER

Oh dear, thank god you are here.

Nana puts her stuff down and touches the water.

NANA

The water is cold, mom. How long
have you been in here?

NANA'S MOTHER

Couple of hours. You know I cannot
get out on my own.

NANA

That's why we pay Betty, where is
she?

NANA'S MOTHER

Would you wash my back a little?

Nana opens the hot water again. She sits down next to the
bathtub and starts washing her mother's back and hairs.

NANA'S MOTHER

Is Micheal with you?

NANA

No.

NANA'S MOTHER

Things aren't going so great
between you two, aren't they?

NANA

We broke up.

NANA'S MOTHER

That's a pity. I liked him.
I am sorry, dear.

NANA

It's okay, I am gonna be just
fine. You raised me a strong
woman.

NANA'S MOTHER

Bullshit!

-

I wished I never divorced your
father.

NANA

So that he could be here washing
your back now?

NANA'S MOTHER

Well, that too. But mostly,
because I loved him.

NANA

You have always told me that you
left him because you were too
woman for him, remember.

NANA'S MOTHER

I got cold, detached. I never showed him my feelings. So here I am, wishing he could scratch my back.

6 INT. HAIRDRESSER SALLON - DAY

6

CONTINUE OF SCENE 2. We hear the sound of running water.

Nana is getting her hairs washed at the hairdresser. Through the mirror we see the CUSTOMER (of scene 2) listening to her while someone is combing his hairs.

Two hands turn Nana's chair after finishing washing her hairs. Nana looks straight into the mirror in front of her. She hesitates a second - as someone who is trying to hold on to an old habit just because is the only thing she has known her all life, just because she is scared of trying something new, something real - she hesitates a second, and then she cries.

END.