

ZOË'S ARC

(Provisional title)

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Feature length film project
90' format
Fiction.
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Idea

There are as many ways to understand love as people who can experience it but, when you come down to it, love is always the same.

Plot

Zoë owns a place near a church, where weddings, first communions and christenings are held. One of her events falls apart when the bride's father kidnaps the priest and asks to speak with his daughter.

He wants to make up with his family.

To do so, he must reveal the family infidelity secret that resulted in a series of misunderstandings that lead to misjudging the couple.

The father is considered a wimp although he desperately loves the mother, who could not help going to bed with other men.

His daughter is in love with her mother's lover.

She is getting married out of spite, to get out of the house. Her father wants to avoid this at all cost.

Her father convinces her to put aside her doubts and have the relations with her mother's lover that she so much craves.

So she does.

Her mother feels the pain of infidelity in her own flesh.

The daughter discovers that true love is closer to the idea that her father showed her with his example than carnal desire.

The mother discovers that you do not stop loving just because of that.

Zoë is the catalyst of conflict and unwillingly interferes at the beginning and willingly at the end. She is only interested in the wedding. She has a respectable business and does not want to blemish her reputation.

Thanks to Zoë and her maneuvers, the family comes around.

After the father's lesson of generosity and humanity, they feel ashamed. They realize they need to give each other a chance.

The daughter, after flirting with sexual freedom with her mother's lover, marries her boyfriend.

The lover goes back to the wife: they decide to try it again, having learned the lesson.

After the wedding, they all go their own way.

The bride's father and Zoë decide to go on together.

Characters

ZOË (47 years old)

Owner of an inn specialized in religious events.

Beautiful, lively, single and childless.

She spends her life getting people married and waiting for the man of her life.

Endowed with an unbreakable faith in people and the future.

Her knowledge of human beings is based on observation, on knowing how to put herself in the place of other people and how to discover the best way to express a feeling.

This vicarious skill enables her to anticipate other people's wishes, to help them and lead them where she wants them to go.

"Make it easy for others and they'll be grateful."

MARIO (49 years old)

He has a particular view of the world and of love. His tolerant attitude falsely looks like a lack of character and self-respect.

On the contrary, his will and convictions lead him to undertake brave actions that others do not feel capable of undertaking.

Discreet and with a good bearing, he knows better than anyone how to listen and convince when he deems it appropriate, but he does not accept challenges or useless undertakings.

PATRICIA (47 years old)

Mario's wife, a mundane woman, still attractive in spite of her age.

At ease at parties and social gatherings.

Never takes 'no' for an answer and is used to getting her way.

Incapable of loving anyone at all and of keeping this from causing trouble in her family.

A strong, intelligent woman who usually gives second chances when she thinks they may be to her advantage.

BERTA (25 years old)

Patricia's and Mario's daughter. Used to getting her own way. Lacks her mother's intelligence and *savoir-faire*. Depends on her for many things.

Challenging, she is waiting for an opportunity to show her worth.

Although impetuous, she knows when to back off.

ANTONIO (years old)

Patricia's lover.

He is attracted to Berta's youthful exuberance.

A sanguinary and visceral man who seeks the warmth and safety of a family, something he has never had.

Although cunning in business, in love, he is clumsy.

His strong appearance hides a weak man who depends on Patricia more than he is willing to acknowledge.

RAUL (26 years old)

Berta's boyfriend. A man that puts his whole being into everything he does, convinced of the goodness of things, naïve but intelligent.

In love with Berta, he accepts her whimsies and feels capable of leading her without her realizing it.

THE PRIEST (59 years old)

Humane and hefty, he is a *bon vivant* with a past that he does not like to talk about. Knowing the fragility of the human spirit, he is always tolerant and not given to long sermons.

At Zoë's, he finds a refuge to finish his days of priesthood in peace.

TREATMENT

Mario receives the wedding invitation.

His daughter is getting married. He is supposed to feel happy, but has no reason to. Berta, his daughter, is being led directly to the slaughterhouse.

His bags are packed but a doubt tortures him. He makes up his mind.

In a hermitage belfry, bells toll under a blue spring sky.

Inside the temple, a young man in a dinner jacket tolls the bells.

He is a waiter.

Irked by his sweating, he stops tolling, cursing his boss' whim.

The bells, by inertia, peal the last chimes.

The young waiter leaves the hermitage.

He walks across a lot where cars are arriving and parking.

The young man walks among those that have just arrived.

In the dining hall, Zoë, the boss, is touching up the bouquets; the flowers must be in just the right place...

A waitress does as bid under the priest's attentive look. He is an absent-minded old man who enjoys contemplating young people's energy.

If it were not for Zoë...

She checks the nametags and supervises a thousand details in the twenty places set.

The waiter tells her that the guests have arrived.

Zoë, worried, sends word to the priest and the bride.

Mario, a 45 year-old man, spies from the woods. He approaches a building near the hermitage: Zoë's inn.

He mixes with the guests, trying to not be noticed.

In one of the rooms in the inn, Berta, an impatient bride, tests her mother's serenity.

The dress resists both women's skills.

The waiter's arrival, asking how everything is going, makes matters even worse.

They end up arguing.

The waiter calls Zoë. They need her up there.

But the innkeeper does not get to the room; the priest needs her...

Mario explores the building. He spies Zoë entering the bride's room.

The coast is clear.

He follows the priest to the sacristy.

The priest gets ready for the ceremony.

But first he celebrates his own particular rite. A glass of anisette and a game of solitaire. In the priest's mind, duty does not exclude the few pleasures he can still enjoy.

Zoë bumps into Raúl, the groom and mistakes him for a waiter. She asks him to do something he considers impossible.

Zoë realizes her mistake and, apologizing, gets him out of the way by treating him to a cup of lime flower tea. The real waiter leaves him by himself with a newly filled thermos.

Antonio approaches the radiant bride. Berta sees him coming and does not like it. Half angry, half proud, she turns her back on him but cannot avoid the meeting.

Antonio is not only her mother's lover, but also her boss. Is he coming to her as her boss or just as a guest?

Antonio forces her to face him. He will never be just a guest.

He tries to convince her that she is making a mistake with this wedding but she says she loves her fiancé, Raúl. Antonio insists: being in love is not the same as loving.

Berta considers the matter closed. Maybe Antonio knows a lot about finance but he he knows nothing of the human heart, as he does not have one.

Antonio desists. He contains his desire to hug her, his wrath, his craving to kiss her all over, but he does not want to waste any more time.

Patricia, the bride's mother, interrupts. She thinks they are talking about work and waves Antonio away to take Berta to the room. They have to finish touching up the hairdo.

Berta complies. It is not the right time to start an argument. On the other hand, her mother must not suspect her affair with Antonio.

Alone, mother and daughter fight their private duel. Uncomfortable with her silence, Patricia tries to temper the situation by gossiping about the wedding.

A comment about Raúl, such a handsome groom, causes hell to break loose.

Does she want him too? What is she going to do to keep them apart? It might be a good idea to call off the wedding.

Patricia gives her a dressing down; she could care less if she does not want to get married. Berta is a big girl now and it is about time she started fending for herself.

Berta thinks her mother would like to see her defeated, incapable of overcoming a setback. She is wrong about her. She asks her to leave.

Patricia does not want to play her game. She knows her. In fact, she made her. Better leave her alone...

Patricia approaches Antonio: he wants to know what Berta told her to put her into such a bad mood.

Antonio apologizes; he likes Berta and Raúl. He hates to think that their relationship is not going to work...

Patricia needs to get something clear about Antonio's fears. She does not know if he is concerned about the couple's well-being or the business.

Antonio gets angry. He accepts them in his company because they are good workers. And, if at any time, they are not up to the job, they are out, no matter who their parents are.

Patricia feels proud; that is her Antonio. They make up. She apologizes: stress, nerves... Antonio accepts; nothing has happened.

They kiss.

Berta comes out of the room. She sees them. Patricia notices and prolongs the kiss.

In the sacristy, the priest receives Zoë's visit. The ceremony is starting in five minutes.

The priest puts his cigar out. He finishes his anisette.

He is about to put the chasuble on when he notices the missal is missing from the lectern.

Someone knocks.

He thinks it is Zoë bringing the missal, but a stranger, Mario, rushes in and tries to press a handkerchief over his face.

The priest immobilizes Mario with an arm lock.

I haven't always married people. He apologizes but thinks he owes him an explanation.

Mario whispers something in his ear.

For the priest, it is enough.

Zoë comes in with the missal. She notices the cigar, the empty glass, and the bathroom door closed.

That old priest...

She tells him they are waiting for him.

Zoë leaves the sacristy and the priest and Mario come out of the bathroom. The time has come.

The priest wishes Mario luck.

Everything is ready in the chapel.

The guests, the bride and groom... Everything but the priest.

Zoë signals the organ player. The wedding march sounds. Everybody turns to the door; the bride enters holding Antonio's arm.

Zoë is getting nervous. That absent-minded priest... She decides to go looking for him.

Zoë walks in on the priest playing solitaire.

The priest asks her to sit down. He has something to tell her.

Zoë cannot believe it...

Mario takes the priest's place in the chapel.

Barely anyone notices, as they are all looking at the bride.

More and more heads turn towards the altar. The one standing there is not a priest. Some recognize him.

The music stops.

Mario starts talking. The wedding must wait. He has to speak with the bride, his daughter Berta; it is a matter of life and death.

Berta leaves the church and gets into the decorated car that is waiting for her. She asks to be driven away from there.

But the chauffeur is waiting in the bar for the ceremony to be over.

Patricia confronts Mario.

Mario only wants to talk to his daughter.

Zoë intervenes and asks Mario for an explanation.

He tries to convince her to help him, but it is not necessary.

Zoë is an accomplice too. She only needs an excuse to take him aside...

In a corner in the kitchen, Zoë tries to steer the matter to her terrain. Loyal to her way of acting, she lets Mario explain the situation.

Mario does not want his daughter ruining her life with a hasty decision. Zoë expresses skepticism but Mario has an advantage; she has no children, only a business, and another wedding to cater two hours from now.

Mario needs to clear up a misunderstanding before getting out of their lives forever. She has to help him. He needs to talk to them.

Zoë gets Mario to make a commitment. She promises to mediate but, no matter what happens, Mario must cease in his attitude.

Mario accepts; he does not want to hurt Zoë.

Zoë meets disaster with her typical fortitude.

She mobilizes her people and the guests. She busies herself with the buffet until the matter is solved.

The priest vanishes. He is right. He knows Zoë and when it is time to make himself scarce.

On his way, he meets Raúl. The boy does not know what to do. The priest offers him spiritual consolation and a glass of anisette in the sacristy.

Zoë takes Patricia away from all the hounding to Berta's car. This serves no good.

Patricia does not accept what Zoë tells her, but does accept a truce. The girl needs some time.

Zoë grabs the opportunity to take Patricia away to rest and for... some lime flower tea.

By themselves at the counter of an empty bar holding their steaming cups, Patricia and Zoë reconsider their positions.

Patricia feels forced to face something she has been avoiding for a long time: her former husband, her past...

Zoë offers her the value of the perspective that, no matter what happens, Mario just needs to talk. They have his promise to allow the wedding to take place.

That perspective convinces Patricia.

Antonio goes looking for Mario. He finds him in the poolroom.

Mario is expecting someone, but not Antonio or his proposal to play billiards.

The two confront each other.

Mario tries to get closer to his opponent's position. Antonio is now the only one who can act as head of the family. He asks him to do that as well as he plays billiards.

Antonio wins the game. He calls Mario a loser. He has no intention to change his attitude. The wedding is Berta's decision.

Mario makes it clear that he knows what Berta feels for him.

Antonio also makes something clear: he always copes in every situation.

Berta is still locked in the limousine. She does not want to talk to anybody.

To keep from hearing her mother's sensible observations, she turns the radio up full blast.

Patricia despairs. She walks away from the parking lot determined to put an end to the whole thing. On the way, she runs into Antonio. But he is not the one she is looking for.

Neither is the groom, Raúl, who is standing guard by the car.

Mario looks for Zoë. He is willing to back down.
But he does not find her. Instead, he finds Patricia.
They have to talk.

Zoë complains bitterly to the priest. That was all they needed! A wedding with barely twenty guests and now they are running the risk of spoiling the second wedding.
They only have an hour and a half left.
The priest avoids arguing. He knows Zoë and lets her have her way, waiting for the big question.
Zoë cannot stand the priest's silence any longer and poses the question: what the hell (sorry) were he and Mario up to?
The priest appeals to the secret of confession. That man has his reasons.
Zoë gets angry. She has her own reasons. She has a business that also benefits the priest.
Zoë is sorry. She apologizes and helps herself to an anisette and drinks with the priest.

Patricia takes Mario aside.
Once again by the billiards table.
But Patricia does not want to play. She refuses to run the risk of losing.
He accuses her of using Berta to justify her failure; he wants Berta to live her own life and make her own mistakes.
Mario asks Patricia not to let their daughter make that mistake. She must talk to her and convince her to listen to her father. He has that right.
Mario is about to give up.
But Patricia considers he is playing the victim. She prepares her blow.
Berta is not his daughter...
Mario controls himself. That is not new for him. It is enough knowing she is Patricia's daughter, the woman he still loves.
Patricia does not trust him. She knows him too well. He does not know how to play to win but she does not believe he is accepting defeat before starting, either.
Patricia gives in. She does not feel obligated, but gives in. He will get his meeting with Berta.
Mario feels his hope reviving. He tries to thank her.
She does not let him. She is just doing it to get this over with once and for all. Even if THIS refers to a relationship that has been agonising for too long.

Berta starts feeling fed up with the situation and with Raúl.

Raúl is a good fellow. He believes that if Mario is doing this, he at least deserves being listened to.

Berta sees Patricia and Mario leaving together. She turns the radio off.

Raúl thinks Berta is yielding to his pleadings.

Berta gets out and walks over to her mother as Raúl goes on reasoning his decision.

But Berta plans to put off the wedding.

By the time she gets to Patricia, the guests are already sitting at the table.

Zoë greets her with relief.

They toast her.

Berta is not in the mood and asks Patricia to come with her to her room just as Raúl asks her for another chance.

Berta is moved. She wants to console Raúl. She kisses him. She is willing to try.

She plans to give Raúl another chance while Raúl believes he has convinced her to give Mario another chance.

Mother and daughter leave. Zoë goes with them.

Raúl feels proud of having convinced Berta to change her attitude.

They toast this.

But not all raise their glasses.

Antonio works up the guests. They are a bit fed up with the situation and Antonio uses their uneasiness against Mario.

Raúl intervenes. The wedding is about to take place. Everything is settled. If Berta changed her attitude, it was because of him.

Antonio prepares his rejoinder but Zoë does not let him.

She asks everybody to calm down. The situation relaxes. Nobody like Zoë to solve that kind of situation.

Zoë places Antonio, Raúl and Mario around the same table.

Everything goes back to normal. They all resume their seats at the tables.

In the room, Berta takes off her wedding gown. She changes clothes ignoring Patricia's discomfort.

She looks for clothes in the baggage prepared for the honeymoon, but opens Raúl's suitcase.

Berta expresses her rage, her contempt for Mario and all men. She feels abandoned by Mario and thus justifies standing everybody up and leaving.

Patricia shows her how Mario, her father, acts, running away instead of facing the situation.

Patricia hands Berta the right suitcase and asks her to listen to Mario.

Berta accepts.

Patricia helps Berta change.

Around the table, Antonio, Raúl and Mario show no interest in their food. They are deep in thought.

Around them, dining-room noise and chatter.

Suddenly, silence.

The three men look up.

Berta, wearing regular clothes, heads towards them.

Berta feels stronger, more of a woman. She yields to her mother, but nobody manipulates her. Antonio is surprised when he notices her suit. He loves it.

Raúl stands up as she approaches. Berta uses this to cover her foul mood under an appearance of acceptance. She assures them she will solve the problem; she will talk to her father.

Antonio is disgusted. He is fed up with the situation, with Mario and with everything else. He cannot take it any longer and does not have to. But some of the guests are important people and therefore decides not to intervene. It is not in his interest.

Patricia sits next to him. She knows what is happening to her man and how to handle him.

Mario gets up to be available for Berta. He controls his desire to run away and struggles with himself.

Raúl encourages him. Everything is solved.

Mario takes Berta's arm and walks her away.

Zoë interrupts them with the excuse that Mario's tie is askew.

Her gesture does not go unnoticed.

Zoë reminds him of his promise. She had better be dressed in white in an hour.

Berta starts getting impatient. She finishes straightening Mario's tie.

Raúl is very happy, but pessimism is in the air. The bride is wearing street clothes...

But Zoë does not suspect Berta's intentions, although she is concerned about her composure. She regains control of the situation. This is what she was born to do.

Displaced by Berta's intervention, she recovers her leading role.

She flutters from table to table, spreading optimism. She has no doubts the wedding will be performed.

Applause and toasts.

Berta leaves. Point for Zoë.

Berta leads Mario to the ladies'.

That makes Mario uncomfortable. He should not be there. Berta sees no one stopping him. It is a quiet place. She has him where she wants him.

Love of her father passes through Berta's mind, but so does her resentment for being abandoned.

As always, Mario wants to leave. Perhaps he should not be here.

But he is not brave enough to leave, or to face Berta, not in a restroom.

He makes sure there is nobody else around while thinking about what to say to his daughter.

That is a mistake.

Berta knows very well.

The waitress walks in on them.

She is not the only one.

The waiter is right behind her.

Caught out, the two employees act nonchalant; the waitress goes into one of the booths and the waiter leaves, proffering apologies.

Berta takes advantage of Mario's confusion and reproaches his past indecisiveness, when she most needed him.

Mario vainly tries to justify himself but Zoë's appearance looking for the waitress keeps him from doing so.

Mario has to control himself. Frustrated, he walks out of the ladies'.

Berta has beaten her father. Her exit is more dignified.

Once alone, the waitress gets ready to report to Zoë.

Mario resumes his place at the table.

Coffee, liqueurs and cigars are served...

Raúl, expectant, gets no answer. He does not need one, as things are obviously not working.

In the sacristy, the priest is getting ready for the ceremony.

The waitress tells him the bad news. The wedding is off for the time being.

With resignation, the priest takes the chasuble off with the girl's help.

He returns to his solitaire, his cigar and his anisette.

Antonio leaves Patricia chatting with the guests.

He sits next to Raúl.

He tries to comfort him.

Berta takes refuge in her room.

Her wedding gown is on the hanger. She gets the feeling it is filling the whole room.

On the bed, Raul's suitcase, opened by mistake, shows her some ties.

There is a knock on the door. It is Zoë. She does not need to ask. Berta gets everything off her chest.

She complains that Mario finally said nothing.

Zoë does not want to intervene but maybe she did not let Mario talk.

Berta gets rid of Zoë. In fact, she does not need to ask her to leave. The innkeeper walks out, leaving Berta by herself.

Alone, facing a wedding gown on a hanger.

Berta fiddles with the man's clothes in the suitcase and plays with the ties.

She realizes she is acting like an adult woman who makes decisions and controls her destiny...

She takes the gown off the hanger and throws it into the wardrobe.

The closed door of the wardrobe has a mirror. Two identical faces stare at each other.

Yes, she managed to do what she wanted to; she punished her father, but she does not feel satisfied.

The spoiled girl does, but the woman emerging in her in the maturity of decision-making does not. She does not.

And she needs to.

The moment has come to bring peace to her soul.

The gown goes back on the hanger.

Berta decides to look for Mario.

Mario finds Zoë. They do not need to talk.

Zoë's expression indicates that the meeting is timely.

Mario's resignation vanishes with the new perspective.

Raúl does not give up and expects Berta to give in.

Patricia encourages the young man and shares his hope.

Not only does Antonio not share his enthusiasm, he openly doubts Berta's capacity to commit herself. That damages his image and he, the boss, must keep this from happening in the company.

Patricia accuses him of always thinking about business.

Antonio sees it is about time to express his point of view: after all, Berta is not his daughter or his problem.

Patricia dodges the argument. It is not the right time. She puts Raúl at ease with a gesture of complicity and gains herself some time.

The priest receives the news: Mario and Berta are talking.

The waitress prepares the chasuble but the wise priest is in no hurry.

He knows human nature. It is not that easy. He knows the battle is not over.

He puts her off. He has been waiting for them to make up their minds for over an hour, so now it is their turn to wait.

Mario is about to knock.

The door opens and father and daughter come face to face again.

Berta dislikes this. She wants to control the situation. She closes the door behind her.

Mario, in the middle of the corridor, is again at a disadvantage.

Berta perceives this, but he should make the first move.

And he does.

Mario asks her for a moment in private, but really in private.

Berta accepts.

Mario enters the room presided by the white gown. Mario will not be influenced. He approaches Berta before she has time to grab the reins. She must make up her mind.

Berta dodges the attack by presenting the wedding as a dilemma. This is nothing new, but Mario soon corrects her: she must chose between Raúl and Antonio.

Berta is trapped in her own net. Rage engulfs her. But, deep inside, she knows Mario has hit the nail on the head and that is why it hurts so much.

Berta acknowledges that she is in love with Antonio, which is not new, either.

Mario has her on his terrain: marrying out of spite is a mistake, running away towards the enemy, running nowhere.

Berta reproaches him for his past attitude.

But Mario will not be distracted from his goal. He is here now, by her side, begging her not to make a mistake.

She must test herself, go to bed with the man she loves. Fight at the same level as her rival, her own mother, Patricia. For it to be even, Antonio must be evaluated at Raúl's level.

Berta must at least know what she is fighting for.

Berta sends Mario away; she has kept her part of the bargain by listening to Mario, and now Mario has to leave her alone.

At the bar, Raúl and Antonio wait, drink in hand. Tall glasses with only ice left.

Antonio looks for the waiter and insists on refills.

The waiter busies himself with other things, putting his patrons off. Zoë makes a signals him: under no circumstance must they get drunk.

Antonio closes in on the waiter, who does not know how to react. Zoë is taking care of the dining hall. She is unaware.

He is saved; the waitress asks him to help with some boxes. The perfect excuse.

The waiter and waitress hide in the small storeroom behind the bar. The hard chore of loving each other awaits them there, until the next interruption.

Antonio decides to help himself. He jumps behind the bar to mix his drink.

But Berta interrupts the adventure.

Antonio hides behind the bar.

The waitress stops her lover to listen.

Raúl receives his bride joyfully and hopefully. He suspects nothing.

Berta becomes aware of Raúl's fragility, how gentle she must be and that she loves him.

She does not want to hurt him but needs to clarify something, a small doubt, an instant in their lives that can be decisive.

It is a hard blow. Raúl thinks he is controlling the situation but is ridiculed.

He gets mad and starts attacking Mario.

Berta asks him to trust her.

Raúl is a good boy and controls himself. He does not know how much he wants to trust her, needs to trust her... But she does, and relies on this.

Berta has Raúl eating out of her hand but pretends he is the one who is making the final decision.

Berta leaves him to go look for Antonio.

Antonio comes out of his hiding place to meet Berta.

Mario goes directly behind the counter to fix himself a strong drink and stands next to Raúl.

He is not surprised by the waitress' appearance or by the waiter behind her straightening his bow tie...

The waitress delivers the bad news to the sacristy...

This does not phase the old priest. He goes on playing solitaire, drinking his anisette and... he lights a fresh cigar. As always, the devil (sorry) is more cunning because of his age than because he is the devil.

Behind the counter, Mario stares at the lobster in the fish tank.

He has no time or desire to attack his bourbon.

Zoë asks him to explain. She wants to know the reasons for Berta's NO first hand.

Mario fills her in. Everything is up to Berta now.

But, what is up to Berta? The only thing Zoë knows is that Berta is floundering in an ocean of doubts and has to be married within the hour.

Mario needs peace, tranquility, and rest... He has carried through his mission. He compares the lobster's situation to his own: its pincers held together by a rubber band, to render them harmless, the humane treatment it will receive before being boiled alive, like a parable of transition to adulthood.

Mario tries to justify his action: cruel, but necessary.

Zoë feels manipulated. She takes the lobster and throws it at Mario. She invites him to free its pincers and put it in a taxi to have it driven to the beach...

Mario's only out is to bring her up to date.

She should know one thing, anyway. If it were not for Zoë, Mario would have already given up.

Zoë suddenly calms down and becomes aware of the synergy between them.

She retrieves the lobster to put it back in the tank.

She settles down to listen. In fact, she is ready for something more than that. She wants to analyze this specimen in depth.

Antonio goes back to the table. Many of the guests leave the dining hall. Some remain seated, smoking and chatting.

Some approach Antonio and want to know how things are going. He puts them at ease. He is taking care of everything. They will soon get some news.

Patricia, on the warpath, is waiting for him. That is no way to solve things. Lie after lie.

Antonio cannot take it any longer. If it had been up to him, none of this would have happened.

Patricia is fed up too. She loses control and puts Antonio into a limit situation by asking if he is just sorry he is not the groom.

Her tone alerts the guests.

Antonio does not want to face the situation. He stalks out of the dining hall followed by Patricia.

Zoë enters the kitchen. Her talk with Mario has left her doubtful. She does not know what her next move should be.

But she is not the only woman in the kitchen.

A cook's assistant is confronting Berta.

Zoë intervenes. Berta feels like having ham and eggs.

The assistant withdraws. Berta eats compulsively.

Zoë now understands more than she would like to. That girl has never had it easy. It is about time somebody acted like a mother to her, without making her pay for it.

Zoë launches a subtle approach. She knows how to listen and therefore makes an unhurried approach. An untimely word can make her flee.

She helps her fry the eggs. Find the right balance; that is the challenge.

Berta likes Zoë, the frying pan poet.

But Zoë rejects the ironical compliments. She is just a lonely woman watching life go by, hardly tasting it.

Berta stays on the defensive. That way you do not make mistakes.

What matters for Zoë is results. Sooner or later, there comes a time when no one can tell her how to fry her eggs.

There also comes a time when Berta, too, is alone and has to make her own decisions.

Patricia comes in. She has been looking for Berta for a long time.

Zoë throws away the eggshells. A good excuse to leave them by themselves.

Patricia quietly sits next to Berta and waits until she finishes her eggs.

They are hot.

Berta attacks some meatballs.

Zoë goes to the sacristy.

She wants the priest to console her.

The old man cheers her up: things are going in the right direction. He invites her to sit down. Zoë watches him play solitaire.

Berta tries to eat her eggs.

Patricia interrupts her. She will not allow her to indulge her bulimia again; it is not the right time. She blames Mario for all of this.

Berta has had enough. The only thing that worries Patricia is making a bad impression on her friends.

Patricia defends herself. She thinks Mario is turning her daughter against her.

But it is not Mario.

Berta gets furious. The eggs end up on Patricia's head.

The waitress peeks into the sacristy and tells them about the incident in the kitchen.

Zoë runs out.

The priest shifts the card he has just played. He toasts with Zoë's empty glass. Things are definitely moving forward.

Patricia, in the kitchen, tries to wipe the egg off with a cloth and the help of the solicitous kitchen staff.

Zoë goes with Patricia to the room she shares with Antonio, near Berta's.

She helps her change her egg-stained clothes.

When leaving with the dirty clothes, Zoë notices that Antonio enters Berta's room.

Without commenting on this, she has the waiter take the dirty clothes to be laundered.

Upon returning, she sees Berta entering her room.

The priest is right: things are working out.

She plucks up courage and goes into Patricia's room. Those two need time.

Berta is aware of Antonio, but pretends not to be. She is not surprised, but neither was she expecting it this way.

She knows what Antonio feels for her mother and for herself. After all, he is just a man.

Berta undresses in front of the gown. She holds it up against her body in front of the mirror that reflects her nakedness and Antonio's desire.

Berta begins her seduction game. They know what they want most. Their prize is within reach and they cannot miss their chance.

She cannot live with the doubt and Antonio cannot control his desire anymore.

Antonio falls into the girl's trap. In a sense, the dream that he had been nurturing day after day is coming true. He thanks his lucky stars for having her close and curses the fact that she is who she is, that she is so close to being within reach and, at the same time, so very far...

After all, what Berta is offering is nothing but another of her games.

And she is already a woman.

The gown falls on the floor and Berta and Antonio on the bed.

Mario struggles to get the rubber band on the lobster's pincers again. He tries to get it drunk to immobilize it.

At the other end of the bar, Raúl and the waiter watch him. The money they are betting is on the counter.

Patricia complains about Mario; she unburdens herself to Zoë.

She compares Antonio to Mario, whom she considers childish for coming back with such a proposition.

Zoë grabs the opportunity to find out more about Mario. For example, he is as poor as a church mouse, unemployed and things are not going well for him at all.

She looks for the bright side of things: at least he is back. She provokes Patricia by saying she doubts Antonio would have.

This only makes Patricia laugh but gives her further information: Antonio has his head on his shoulders and is a better father for Berta than Mario.

Zoë counts to ten and holds her peace.

But she does insist on how Antonio acts under the circumstances. Patricia reveals herself to her. Her Antonio does not let things fall so far apart. He is a practical man, the kind she likes.

Zoë prepares her next step. She says Patricia is right but warns her of a danger. If he loves her, it is because he gets something out of it. When he stops getting it, he will look for another woman and that will be it.

Patricia takes this to heart. Antonio is not a despicable person.

Zoë sticks to her tactics by asking her to define Mario.

For Patricia, he is nothing but a big child and she is not cut out to hold kids on her lap.

Zoë springs her trap: she would rather have a big child on her lap than a practical man in another woman's bed.

Patricia gets in the last word. She is sure Mario did not love her. She left his bed in search of experiences, and he never reacted.

There is nothing worse than waiting for a man's reaction that never comes.

Talking about reactions, Zoë asks her to help her solve the wedding banquet problem.

Patricia is in high spirits. She has to keep face in front of Zoë. She does not know what she can do, but she guarantees five minutes with Berta to keep the wedding on.

Patricia's response is so sudden that Zoë cannot react in time.

Patricia leaves to look for Berta.

Patricia, reinforced in her role of boss-mother, is determined to straighten her daughter out, and she knows just how to do it.

Therefore, she opens Berta's door without knocking.

The lovers do not notice.

Patricia, at first, thinks it is Raúl but then recognizes Antonio.

Shocked, she noiselessly and slowly closes the door. Zoë watches her. Patricia feels the whole planet is watching her. She must act as the practical woman she is. There is a solution for everything. Everything. She feels weak.

She is in the corridor. She cannot faint here, or now.

Patricia faints. Zoë runs to help her. She sends word to Mario.

They must stretch her out and elevate her legs.

Mario helps Patricia. Zoë leaves them alone.

Patricia regains consciousness. She notices Mario.

She does not like having him leaning over her.

Her pride hurt, she sits up with her former husband helping her. She does not want it like that, but feels weak and cannot keep from accepting his help.

Patricia tries to light a cigarette but cannot because of the fury the hunter feels when hunted. She cannot take it. It is hard for her to admit that now she is in the situation Mario was when she cheated on him. She stalks around the room like a caged animal.

Mario leads Patricia around to acknowledging that, in spite of everything, she cannot help loving Antonio.

Without explicitly acknowledging it, she reaches the conclusion that Antonio is just a man in another woman's arms.

She must be practical.

Patricia gives Mario her lighter and sits on the bed, next to him.

Mario takes the lighter. He lights her cigarette.

Mario acts surprised. Patricia does not smoke anymore.

But you cannot give up everything. Sometimes something you want to give up, gives you up.

Mario offers his help. Patricia does not know what to do. She feels incapable of leaving Antonio but cannot forgive him either, with her own daughter...

Patricia tries to goad him, but suddenly stops, before saying, "She's your daughter too."

Mario gives her an out; Berta is not a little girl anymore. She is just a woman. Another woman.

Zoë interrupts them. She brings smelling salts. She asks Patricia how she feels. Patricia responds by asking Mario to leave her alone.

Mario leaves with Zoë.

Alone, Patricia breaks down crying.

The two defeated ones meet in the corridor, between two closed doors that conceal two different dramas.

Mario thinks his actions were worthless while Zoë believes the wedding is now impossible. It is the first time something like this happens to either of them.

But Zoë is not only holding the smelling salts for Patricia, but also French champagne for Berta's room.

Zoë proposes a toast, not to her failure, but to her good luck for having met someone as stupid as Mario. There is always a first time.

She uncorks the bottle.

Antonio empties himself into Berta.

They hear Mario and Zoë laughing in the corridor.

Antonio observes Berta's passivity, which disconcerts him.

Berta asks him to leave Patricia to run away with her.

Antonio thinks she is joking. But it is no time to laugh. Certainly not in Berta's opinion, who considers his refusal the key to their relationship. He does not love her but is too much a coward to admit it.

Now that he has what he wanted, there is no room for commitment. He only wants to to play with her, by appointment.

It did not work.

Antonio refuses to admit it. He needs time to get to know her better.

But it is already too late. You cannot lose what you do not have. Berta makes a decision about her future, and it does not include Antonio.

Deeply hurt, Antonio insults Berta and her mother.

But he is no better than they, he has to admit.

Antonio looks for his clothes. Berta lets in the waiter with the champagne.

She makes a lonely toast to fleeing Antonio.

Berta, naked in front of the mirror, the wedding gown pressed against her body, asks his opinion.

Antonio, disappointed, gets dressed. He thinks it suits her very well.

Patricia comes out of her room just as Antonio comes out of Berta's.

A moment of hesitation.

People disappear from the corridor. The waiter exists and Mario slips away through the door leading to the poolroom.

Antonio sees him and tries to follow, but Patricia gets in the way.

Patricia, her make-up recently touched up, but with red eyes after crying, musters strength to confront Antonio.

That is the last thing Antonio wants now, but he has to tell Patricia something.

Patricia asks him to explain his actions, but Antonio feels he has been used, victimized by the two women. He is faster than Patricia and catches her off-guard.

He breaks up with her and makes it clear that he will not be manipulated again.

Berta's door opens and out rolls the catering cart.

The waiter is about to roll it away, but Antonio stops him.

Antonio fills two glasses but Patricia refuses to toast. This is no game. Antonio challenges her. He drinks alone, leaving her holding the empty glass and then nudges her out of his way.

The time has come to settle accounts with Mario.

Berta comes out of the room in the wedding gown.

Patricia does not want her to see her defeat and hurries away down the corridor.

Berta sees her and so does Zoë. They exchange glances.

Zoë understands. The wedding is on.

She also dashes away, but in the opposite direction.

In the rectory, Raúl and the priest are playing cards and smoking cigars.

Berta is at the door, dressed in white, happy, while Zoë touches up the last details as they walk.

Raúl and Berta embrace. Berta apologizes. Raúl, uncomfortable, does not know what for.

The priest, watch in hand, interrupts them.

As they leave, Zoë retouches the groom's outfit.

The priest sees there are too many things are changing all at once and calls Zoë over. He needs help with the chasuble.

Zoë, amused by the old priest's jealousy, helps him.

The bride is received in the dining hall with a division of opinions.

Some guests decide to leave while the rest show their approval.

But Antonio is not there...

In the poolroom, getting even.

Antonio makes the umpteenth cannon. Mario's scoreboard only shows a few points.

As a farewell present, Antonio gives his family back to him. He thinks Mario is crazy believing Antonio would take care for those two bitches.

Mario plays his own trick; he still holds the same opinion.

Antonio blows up. Nobody in his right mind would want to be responsible for that gang of nuts.

He scores the last cannon.

Mario is left by himself.

He still does not manage a cannon. Zoë interrupts him. She is looking for Antonio. Berta refuses to get married without her best man.

Antonio is packing.

Zoë offers to help.

Antonio has just taken an important step. The pain of breaking up eases by thinking about starting over, even though some sore spots remain.

Zoë is counting on that. She lets Antonio's inertia lead. He is making a mess of the packing. He is out of practice.

Antonio leaves it to Zoë, who delicately folds and packs the garments as she aims her remarks.

Her darts score bull's-eyes. She talks about Patricia's foresight, about what can be solved and what cannot.

This leads him to a conclusion. Some things still allow him to come back, even though they seem inevitable.

Antonio feels trapped by Zoë. He reacts as usual, defensively. He is no loser.

Zoë does not allow herself to be baited. She says that is debatable.

Antonio falls into Zoë's trap: he is not like Mario.

Zoë agrees. He is not. But he could try to be.

Zoë does not wait to be told to leave. She walks out. Antonio is left by himself, with a closed suitcase and a doubt lingering in his mind.

At the bar, Patricia is about to take a tranquilizer.

Antonio interrupts and asks her not to take it as they are needed at the ceremony.

Patricia ignores Antonio. He insists.

Patricia decides to leave. They are not going to cajole her with subtleties.

Antonio does not renounce this last attempt. He owes it to himself.

Patricia touches up her face in front of the mirror in the bar. Antonio does not move from her side. He decides to give himself another chance, too.

To give herself some time to get ready, she asks Antonio what he plans to do after the ceremony.

Antonio does not know what to answer, being asked point blank, but he soon comes up with an answer: He will set it up with Zoë. The next wedding in the family will be his.

Surprised, Patricia dallies: he has got the wrong woman. He does not know how to chose.

Antonio acknowledges that he has made a mistake, but he will not stand for her doubting his taste.

Patricia feels happy and Antonio, satisfied. They walk out arm-in-arm, towards the church.

In the sacristy, Mario says goodbye to the priest.

But the priest will not let him miss the ceremony after all the trouble he has caused.

Zoë rushes in and tells the men to hurry.

They all follow her out.

The priest goes back to finish off his anisette and play another card. He leaves.

The wedding takes place.

Patricia and Antonio take their places of honor.

Berta notices the anisette smell on Raúl and the priest and a wink or two giving away their complicity...

Berta has to help with the rings.

Their nervousness is apparent.

Mario spies Zoë fixing the flowers in the chapel. Zoë is aware of his presence.

A silent dialogue starts between Mario and Zoë.

In the sacristy, Zoë helps the priest take off the chasuble. He picks up the cards and the anisette. Only ten minutes till the next ceremony.

They will not forget this day soon.

The priest asks Zoë not to let Mario get away.

Zoë blushes. How dare he ask something like that of her?

The priest washes his hands of the matter. He has no intention of arguing with his boss when she is in that state. He knows her too well.

He also knows he hit the nail on the head and she will give it a try with Mario.

The lot is a muddle of guests driving away and others arriving for the next ceremony.

Kisses, hugs and emotional farewells.

Berta gives Patricia her wedding bouquet, but Patricia refuses it.

Zoë leaves with a doubt in her mind.

She is checking the flowers in the chapel, where she meets Mario, who arranges them the way she likes them, ready for the next ceremony.

Zoë offers him a job in her inn. She knows his situation and thinks she can help.

Mario does not know what to say. He was caught off guard. He tries to go back to the flowers. Zoë helps him. Their hands meet.

Zoë makes an offer. Mario does not even think of turning it down.

He will start immediately.

Berta and Patricia look for Mario among those leaving and arriving.

But Mario is busy arranging flowers.

Patricia realizes the situation could never happen again. She accepts Berta's flowers.

They get in the cars.

The limousine drives off. It disappears down the forest road, behind a cloud of dust.

SAMPLE SCENES

9 SACRISTY INDOORS DAY

9

The PRIEST, deep in thought.

The morning light enters through the only window in the room, lighting the rustic TABLE he is sitting at.

Along the walls are BOOKSHELVES FILLED WITH BOOKS and a couple of CHAIRS. Behind the priest, there is an OLD PIECE OF FURNITURE with some OBJECTS FOR SAYING MASS. The CHASUBLE is hanging on a HANGER.

The priest holds a CIGAR in one hand and a GLASS OF ANISETTE in the other, resting on the table.

ZOË looks in through the door. The smoke bothers her.

ZOË

Five minutes, father.

PRIEST

What?

ZOË

Just five more minutes.

Zoë leaves, closing the door.

The priest puts his cigar out and finishes his anisette.

He is about to put the chasuble on.

He notices the empty lectern.

There is a knock at the door.

The priest searches the shelves.

Another knock.

The priest goes to the door and opens it.

MARIO comes in and tries to press a HANDKERCHIEF over his face.

The priest immobilizes Mario with an arm lock.

MARIO

Stop. You're breaking my arm.
I thought you were the priest.

PRIEST

I am, my son. But I haven't been marrying
people all my life.
I'll let go.

He lets go of Mario.

The priest takes another GLASS from the shelf and pours anisette.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

9

MARIO

Forgive me.

PRIEST

We'll see about that. First, an explanation.

Mario takes the glass the priest is offering him.
He drops onto a CHAIR.

MARIO

I don't know how to put it.

The priest scoots his chair close to Mario's.
Mario bends over towards the priest and whispers in his ear.

The priest slouches on the chair and then stands up.
Mario imitates him.
They hear steps approaching.
The priest takes Mario by the shoulders and guides him to the other side to room.
He moves a CURTAIN aside, revealing a door.
He opens it. It's a toilet.
They go in.

The door of room opens. Zoë enters holding a MISSAL. She observes the cigar, the empty glass, the closed toilet door, the curtain drawn aside.
She leaves the missal.

ZOË

They're waiting for you.

She leaves

The priest and Mario come out of the toilet.

PRIEST

Now.
Good luck.

They embrace each other and pat each other's back.

15 LADIES' REST ROOM INDOORS DAY

15

The door opens.

BERTA lets MARIO in first. Mario hesitates. He goes in.

Berta stands in front of the MIRROR, sets her TOILET CASE on a MARBLE COUNTER. She touches up her makeup.

BERTA

So, what do you want?

Mario paces nervously. He makes sure they are alone.

MARIO

I shouldn't be here!

BERTA

Who's to stop you?

The WAITRESS opens the door. Mario walks over to Berta in front of the mirror, and adjusts the knot of his tie.

WAITRESS

Sorry.

She walks in.

The waitress walks by them, goes into a stall and closes the door.

The WAITER looks in. He notices Berta and Mario.

WAITER

Oops. My mistake.

He leaves.

MARIO

Berta, my little girl...

BERTA

Don't you call me that...

You know how long it's been...?

Just leave me alone.

MARIO

... we got to talk.

BERTA

Talk? You're very good at that.

Do you realize how long it's been?

MARIO

Don't do this.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)

15

BERTA

What? What am I not supposed to do? Who
the hell do you think you are?
You show up all of a sudden...

(...)

Where from?
You're late, Dad. Late and wrong.
I don't need you anymore.
Have you finished?

The toilet flushes.

MARIO

No, not yet.

BERTA

What a pity.
... I have.

ZOË comes in. She notices Mario and Berta.

ZOË

Sorry to disturb you...

The toilet door opens and the waitress comes out.

CAMARERA

I was in here...

ZOË

Of course...

Mario walks towards the door.

MARIO

I made a mistake.

Mario leaves.

Berta picks up her toilet case.

The waiter looks in. He sees the women.

The employees look uncomfortable.

ZOË

(to the waiter)
Yes?

Berta leaves. The waiter holds the door for her.

(CONT.)

(CONT.)
15

ZOË

(to the waitress)
Tell me everything.

The waiter hesitates, leaves, closes the door.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal data.

Name: Pablo - Francisco Navarro Fuster.
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Academic training

I have completed my senior year of high school and passed the National University Entrance Examination as well as the subjects of Geography, Ancient History and Prehistory at the National University for Distance Education

At the same time, I have acquired notions of acrobatics with Tony and Piti Español at the *Timbal* school, of juggling with the *Andrey's Troupe* and of clowning with artists from of the *École Lecoq* such as Don Jordan, Eric de Bont and Philip Goulier.

Professional experience

I founded *Circ de Butxaca* in 1985.

At that time, I requested leave of absence from Bendibérica to work full time in entertainment.

My *Circ de Butxaca* project attempted to adapt the show to the demand, without forgetting the most important aspect: the pedagogical.

I shared billing with Bafuts Teatres, Boni Caroli, Coco and Raquel, Companyía Drup, Compañía Infima La Puça, Companyía La Tal, Dr. Soler, Enky and Lucy, Germans Totó, Japo Clown, Ingenuo Teatro, Johanes Vardar, La Farinera, La Tarántula, Marceline and Silvestre, Pep and Bocoli, Petit Circ de Carrer, Romadan Sacarrisas, Teatre Móbil and others.

Alternating with shows, I gave workshops on circus subjects, clowning and drama in elementary and secondary schools in collaboration with the firm, Eina d'Escola.

In 1989, I dissolved the *Circ de Butxaca*

In 1995, I attended a scriptwriters workshop taught by Albert Dumortier at the Escola de Guionistes (Scriptwriters' School) as well as its more advanced editions the following two years.

In the same center, I attended a re-writing workshop taught by the scriptwriter and directress, Montse Abbad (*Muere, mi vida; Osados*) [Die, My Love; Daring Ones] and talks by Cuca Canals ("Ham, Ham", "The Tit and the Moon", etc.), Ángeles González Sinde ("The Good Star"), Jesús Díaz, Enrique Urbizu, Andreu Martí and other professional scriptwriters.

Thanks to the working method proposed by A. Dumortier I have resumed writing and have produced several *bibles* not only for full-length features (*La Obra, Diez faltas y un delito*) [The Work, Ten Misdemeanors and a Crime], but also children's programs (*El Metrónomo*) [The Metronome], television comedies (*Vivir con ellos*) [Live with Them] and contests (*Cesta y compras, Pasaje a Jolivú*) [Basket and Shopping, Passage to Hollywood].

During the 1997-98 academic year at the Fundación Taller de Guionistas (Scriptwriters Workshop Foundation), I proposed a film script analysis course to

observe the structure as well as the elements and resources used in the finished product (the movie) of various current scriptwriters.

The project has been approved.

In 1997, the SABAM¹ selected and admitted me as a member.

During the 98-99 and 99-00 seasons, I taught scriptwriting classes as an instructor assisting Albert Dumortier at the Fundación Taller de Guionistas.

I wrote a script in collaboration with Mar Targarona as co-scriptwriter, (*Lo que me gusta de tí*) [What I Like about You], currently in the pre-production phase, and I authored another (*Flor de sal*) [Salt Flower] for the same producers (Rodar y Rodar Cine).

I participated in two projects with the TEVECINE network in Colombia, in close collaboration with the producer, Manuel Gómez Díaz.

In the year 2000

I taught classes on scriptwriting techniques as a lecturer at the Fundación Taller de Guionistas.

I participated in the marketing seminar for scriptwriters taught by Julian Friedman

I wrote two scripts for full-length features commissioned by Octubre Producciones and based on previously devised plots. (*El Rey del Mundo* [The King of the World] and *Not Found*) and a short (*El Minuto Loco* [The Crazy Minute]).

I wrote the first Spanish script expressly for DVD format commissioned by Kinematikal Factory and which finished shooting on June 30th with the provisional title, *Al final de la espera* (At the End of the Wait).

That same year, I put up two full-length feature projects for sale with the provisional titles of *El Arca de Zoë* (Zoë's Arc) and *Ejecución aplazada* (Execution Deferred).

I also wrote a comedy for television in 10' format (*El Patio*) commissioned by the Argentine producer, Martin Patricio, and a 20' drama for television (*El Desertor*) commissioned by the Colombian producer, Yeanneth Sarmiento.

In 2001.

I have written a play for alternative theater commissioned by the actors, Federico Muñoz and Mariona Bosch.

Currently, I am developing a full-length feature project commissioned by Director Manuel Magallanes and a short for the producer, Sonia Sampayo.

¹ Authors Society based in Brussels.