Amelie

Screenplay by GUILLAUME LAURANT & JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET

Scene 1 - ext. & int.

VOICE OVER
"On the third of September, 1975, at Twelve Twenty-Eight and Thirty-Two seconds, a small gnat of the Forcipomyia family, one of Nature's minor miracles, capable of 62,670 wing-beats per minute, landed on the road to Banon, in the Alps of Haute Provence..."

(Suddenly, a car appears from behind and squashes it...)

"...At that exact moment, on the terrace of a restaurant, in a small village on the Greek island of Kalymnos, the wind ballooned a tablecloth and sent the glasses waltzing. There were no witnesses to this event."

(The glasses sway on the rippling tablecloth as if by magic)

"At the very same second, in New York, at the southern tip of Manhattan island, Joseph Polonski, returning from the burial of his best friend Wendell Curtis, erased the name from his address book..."

(The old man sadly blows away the eraser dust)

"And still at Twelve Twenty-Eight and Thirty-Two seconds, a spermatozoon, marked with an X chromosome belonging to Mr. Raphaël Poulain, broke away from the pack and reached the ovum belonging to Mrs. Poulain, née Amandine Fouet."

(Scientific images of racing spermatozoa - one of them is circled in red.)

"Nine months later came the birth of : Amélie Poulain."

(A midwife's hand holds up a slimy baby.)

TITLES

Scene 2 - int. & ext.

"Amélie's father, a former army doctor, now works at the spa of Enghien-les-bains."

(Raphaël Poulain poses as if for a picture. We close in on his mouth as an inscription and arrow appear : **"tight-lipped, sign of a lack of feelings."**

"Raphaël Poulain dislikes:

-Pissing in public
-Lurching in train aisles
-Coming out of the water and feeling his swimming trunks sticking to him

" Raphaël Poulain likes:
-Speeding straight down a winding road without braking
-Lining up his shoes and carefully shining them
-Emptying the tool box, cleaning it, and putting everything back in order."

Scene 3 - int. & ext.

"Amélie's mother, Amandine Fouet - a primary school teacher from Gueugnon - has always been rather nervous and unstable."

(The mother too poses as if for a photo. We close in on her flickering eyelid as the following appears : **"slight nervous tic, sign of neurotic agitation"**)

"Amandine Poulain dislikes :

-Hot baths that wrinkle her fingers
-Someone she doesn't know brushing against her
-Finding, in the morning, the imprint of the sheet on her cheek

"Amandine Poulain likes:
-Speeding straight down a winding road without braking...

(She's sitting next to her husband and is actually shrinking, terrorised, into the passenger seat)

"-Shining wooden floors by wearing slippers all day...
-Emptying her handbag completely, cleaning it, and

putting everything back."

Scene 4 - int. day - living room -

"Amélie is six years old. Like all little girls, she would like her father to take her in his arms from time to time. But the only time he touches her is during her monthly physical check-up. Overwhelmed by this exceptional moment, the little girl's heart races a mile a minute. Her father, therefore, is convinced she suffers from a heart condition."

(Amélie's father checks her up with his stethoscope and looks at her worriedly...)

"Because of her supposed illness, little Amélie does not go to school. Her mother tutors her at home and teaches her French."

The mother has her daughter repeat :

AMELIE
L'écureuil a croqué une araignée crue Ledru Rollin..."

Scene 5 - int. & ext.

"Deprived of the company of other children, shunted between her mother's perpetual angst and her father's distant coldness, Amélie's only refuge is an imaginary world."

(The little girl, dressed up as a nurse, imitates her father and gives a check-up to an imaginary (cartoon) crocodile. The sweet, slightly shy crocodile watches her every movement.)

"In her world, LPs are made like crêpes ..."

(On the screen, a hand spreads the LP batter evenly in a pan, to make a micro-groove crêpe.)

"French clouds are created by nuclear plants..."

(Steam rises from a plant's cooling tower and forms magnificent cumuli-nimbi.)

"... and the next-door-neighbour's wife, who has been in a coma for months, has simply chosen to have done

with her allotted sleep-time in one go ."

(The woman, lying in bed, wakes from her coma and sits up calmly.)

THE WOMAN (very calmly)
This way, I can stay awake night and day for the rest of my life....

And she goes back to sleep....

Scene 6 - int. day -

Amélie studies a goldfish in its bowl.

"Amélie's only real friend is 'The Whale'. Unfortunately, the pervading familial atmosphere has made the goldfish depressive and suicidal."

The goldfish jumps out of its bowl and lands on the kitchen tiles. Squirming, he slides under the washing machine. The little girl cries for help while her mother screams hysterically, trying to hook the animal out with a broom handle.

The Whale is finally back in his bowl, where he swims, whiter than usual. There is now a cast-iron pot on a telephone book on top of the fish-bowl.

"The Whale's repeated suicide attempts only increase the mother's stress... And vice versa. Finally a decision is made."

Scene 7 - ext. day

Mother and daughter enter the rainy park watched by a benevolent park-keeper. Everything seems perfectly normal: the mother appears to be 9 months pregnant. Having reached the park's pond, the mother unbuttons her coat and pulls out the goldfish bowl, which she pours into the pond. Restraining a sob, Amélie watches her only friend disappear underwater amid ripples and raindrops. When they pass the park-keeper on their way out, he's stunned. The mother hasn't just given birth in the bushes - has she?

Scene 8 - ext. & int.

"To console Amélie, her mother gives her a second-hand Kodak Instamatic camera."

Amélie decides to give it a test-run by taking pictures of clouds shaped like animals. At the exact same moment that she presses the button, there is a car-accident on the corner.

> *"A neighbour tries to take advantage of Amélie's naiveté by making her believe that her camera has a defect : it sets off accidents. Amélie refuses to listen to him. She takes pictures all afternoon; but that evening, she is overcome by horrible doubts. She rushes to the television and crumbles, crushed by the responsibility of a gigantic pile-up, two train crashes and the plummeting of a twin-engined plane."*

Scene 9 - int. evening -

> *"A few days later, realizing that the neighbour has been teasing her, Amélie comes up with a plan..."*

The football-crazy neighbour in question is watching a final on television. Amélie, hidden in the basement, a small radio glued to her ear, listens to the match, unplugging the aerial cable every time the ball gets close to one of the goals. From her hiding-place, she can hear the neighbour's irate swearing and stamping...

Scene 10 - ext. day -

> *"And then one day, tragedy strikes. As is her practice every year, Amandine Fouet takes her daughter to Notre Dame to light a candle so that the sky will send Amélie a little brother. The answer to their prayers arrives three minutes later. Unfortunately, it isn't a new-born infant that falls from the sky but a Québecois tourist - Marguerite Bouchard - ending her life after a heartbreak. Amandine Poulain, née Fouet, is killed on the spot."*

Scene 11 - ext. day -

> *"After her mother's death, Amélie is left alone with her father. Not a very expansive man in the first place, he now closes up even more. He begins obsessively to build a miniature mausoleum for the ashes of his wife."*

The mausoleum is in the middle of the garden. With excessive

zeal, he adds a flourish here, an accessory there. Amélie watches him from the window.

"The days, the months, the years go by. The outside world seems so dead that Amélie prefers to remain in her dream- life until the time comes for her to leave home."

Beneath the window, a teddy-bear belonging to the young Amélie lies forgotten on the lawn.

Years pass. The teddy-bear disintegrates, bit by bit.

When there's just a little of its stuffing left, a bird lands next to the bear, picks up the morsel of stuffing in its beak and flies away.

We follow the bird and discover Amélie, now a teenager, leaving the house with a suitcase in her hand.

Scene 12 - int. & ext.

"Five years later, Amélie Poulain is a waitress in a café-restaurant in Montmartre : "Tout va Mieux".

We see her working. She's twenty-two.

"It's August 28, 1997, exactly three days before the event that will change her life forever; but for the moment she is oblivious of this ..."

We catch a brief glimpse of a large Mercedes racing down the highway on the banks of the Seine, then a swarm of paparazzi on motorcycles. Finally, a bottle of perfume falls and bounces on the tiling of a bathroom floor.

Back to "Tout va Mieux".

VOICE OVER
That's Suzanne, the owner. She limps a bit but she's never spilled a drop. When she was younger, she was an equestrian dancer with the Medrano circus. She likes : athletes who cry with disappointment. She doesn't like : seeing a grown man humiliated in front of his children in her café. At the cigarette stand is Georgette, the hypochondriac. When she isn't having a migraine, her sciatic nerve is bothering her. She doesn't like hearing : "blessed be the fruit of your womb." That's Gina, Amélie's co-worker. She likes

day-dreaming over road maps but she doesn't like folding them up again. She's serving a Monaco to Hipolito, the as-yet-unpublished writer. What he likes best of all is watching a toreador on TV getting run through by the horns of a bull. The bitter-looking man who's keeping his eye on her is Joseph, Gina's jealous ex-lover. He spends his days watching to see if he's been replaced. What he likes is the sound of a pinball machine racking up a free game. And here's Philomène, an airline stewardess. Amélie cat-sits Rodrigue for her when she's got a flight. Philomène likes the sound the cat's water bowl makes when you put it on the floor. And as for Rodrigue, he likes bringing home dead mice and laying them out on the living room carpet. He also likes listening to fairy-tales with children.

It's clear that everybody likes Amélie, because she's always available and forthcoming. But we also get the feeling that she is a very private person, that she never really gets close to anyone.

Scene 13 - int. day - Train station

VOICE OVER
"Often, on Sundays, when she has a day off, Amélie takes the train from the Gare du Nord to visit her father."

Amélie is walking towards the platform. She makes a detour to give some change to a homeless person.

HOMELESS
Oh, no thanks sweetie. I don't work Sundays.
Amélie smiles at him...

Scene 14 - ext. day - - Father's garden

Amélie's father is in the garden, on his hands and knees. He's rearranging a few details on his mausoleum. Behind him, Amélie waters flowers.

THE FATHER
Are you still taking your medication?

AMELIE
Of course, Dad.

THE FATHER
You're not feeling breathless, I hope?

AMELIE
Of course not Dad.

Later, they have dinner in the kitchen.

AMELIE
Now that you've retired and you have the time, why don't you travel a bit? You've never left Enghien...

THE FATHER
When we were younger, we would have liked to travel, your mother and I, but we couldn't because of your heart... So now....

Amélie nods.

Scene 15 - int. Cinema, night

VOICE OVER
"*Sometimes, on Friday nights, Amélie goes to the cinema.*"

VOICE OVER - AMELIE (whispering to us)
What I like is turning around in the dark to look at other people's faces...

(We see a dozen astounded faces, each stamped with the same happy grin.)

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
And I also like finding a detail that no one else notices...

(We see an excerpt from "Jules et Jim". At the end of the film, a fly on the window appears to crawl into Jeanne Moreau's mouth. A red circle is drawn around it)

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
But I don't like it in American movies when the driver doesn't watch where he's going...

(Bogart is at the wheel, his back to the windscreen, talking away....)

Scene 16 - int. night

VOICE OVER
"Amélie doesn't have anyone in her life. She tried once or twice, but the result didn't quite reach the heights she had hoped for."

As she's losing her virginity, she notices two flies on the ceiling. They too are copulating.

Scene 17 - ext. & int.

VOICE OVER
"Instead, she cultivates a particular taste for the small pleasures of life : plunging her hand deep inside a barrel of rice...

(As she's passing the corner grocer's, she pauses to sneak her hand into the barrel)

...Skipping stones on the banks of the Seine...
...Cracking the hard shell of a crême brulée with the back of a teaspoon..."

Scene 18 - Int. Amélie's apartment, night

From her apartment, Amélie looks down into her neighbour's - Mr. Dufayel.

A little ashamed of herself, Amélie turns off the lights, grabs a telescope and spies on the apartment.

Dufayel, an old, emaciated, hirsute man with a strange look in his eyes, is in a threadbare bath-robe. He's busy completing a painting with only an overhead spot for light.

Behind him is a television, with the sound off, which displays a clock ticking away the seconds.

VOICE OVER
"That's the glass man. Due to a hereditary disease his bones are as fragile as crystal. A simple handshake could reduce his metacarpals to dust. He has avoided leaving his apartment for the last twenty years."

Amélie, pensive, puts the telescope down.

Scene 19 - on the roof & various

Amélie, sitting on the roof of her building, looks out over Paris.

VOICE OVER
"Time hasn't changed Amélie much. She continues to take refuge in her solitude. She loves asking herself silly questions about the world or the city below her...
How many couples, for example, are having an orgasm at this very moment?..."

(We see an extremely rapid series of a fifteen or so orgasms...)

AMELIE (to the audience)
Fifteen..!

Scene 20 - int. evening - Amélie's apartment

VOICE OVER
"And finally, here we are at 11:16pm. on August 31st., 1997. The event that is going to change Amélie Poulain's life..."

The television is on. We learn of Lady Di's accident under the Pont d'Alma.

In her bathroom Amélie, shocked, drops a bottle of perfume... The bottle bounces on the tiling, rolls and hits a plinth, loosening a tile, which falls with a dull thud. Amélie, one eye on the television, leans over distractedly for the bottle when, all of a sudden, she notices a hole. Intrigued, she slides a hand inside and pulls out an old, rusted, metal sweet-box.

Increasingly curious, she absentmindedly hits the remote control, turning off the television and sending Lady Di off into oblivion...

At dead of night, Amélie carefully opens the metal box.

VOICE OVER
"Only the first man to have entered the tomb of Tutankhamun could have understood the emotion that grips Amélie as she discovers the treasure a little boy hid with such care forty years ago."

(We can see inside the box : an entire box of agates, a toy racing cyclist, a photo of Just Fontaine, jacks...)

Scene 21 - int. night - Amélie's room

Amélie, lying in bed, her eyes wide open, can't get to sleep.

VOICE OVER
"Amélie realizes suddenly that leaving the house in Enghien to live here was just running away. It's 2:16 a.m. on September 1, 1997 and something has just been triggered off. Amélie finally has a goal in life. No matter where he might be, she will find the rightful owner of the box of memories... and return the treasure to him."

Scene 22 - int. day - Ground floor of Amélie's building

Amélie knocks on the Concierge's door

CONCIERGE
Well, well. If it isn't the young lady from the fifth floor. We don't see you much, do we?

AMELIE
Excuse me... I was wondering... a little boy that would have lived in my apartment in the fifties, does that ring a bell?

CONCIERGE (dragging her in)
You'll have a little Port, won't you?

AMELIE
Umm... no thank you.

The place is crammed with knickknacks : a rococo tea service, religious icons, a stuffed black dog on the china cabinet, an old cash register on which a cat, apparently still alive, is sleeping...

THE CONCIERGE (pouring herself a drink)
A little boy... I've seen so many of them grow up. They're adorable at first, but then it's chestnuts, snowballs, chewing gum on the ceiling...
AMELIE (amused)
And you, when did you move here?

THE CONCIERGE
In '64... (lowering her voice) : I'm sure they all had

a great time telling you about...

AMELIE
No... what?

THE CONCIERGE
My husband was an accountant at "Ladybird Insurance". People just love saying he had an affair with his secretary...

Amélie pretends to be offended on the Concierge's behalf.

THE CONCIERGE
Well, actually, they did test out every hotel in the Batignolles - and not the seedier ones, I can assure you. Because this was the kind of lady who'd only spread her legs on satin, thank you very much. That's why he started "borrowing" from the till. Discreetly at first and then fifty million in one go. And then the two of them flew off to the Pampas.

Amélie, hiding a little smile, walks toward the stuffed dog.

THE CONCIERGE (pointing to the dog))
To do that to me, I can accept, but to him...

Amélie, sympathetic, pets him carefully with her fingertips.

THE CONCIERGE
We called him "BLACK LION"[1] because he used to roll over at our feet so often that he ended up shining our shoes...

Noticing that her fingers are sticky, Amélie discreetly wipes her fingers.

THE CONCIERGE
The first few years, I cried non-stop...so, this boy of yours, even if he went past my door a hundred times...

AMELIE
Was just a shape in the fog...

THE CONCIERGE (not listening)
Exactly.

AMELIE
And do you think there's anyone in the building who

---

could...

THE CONCIERGE (still not listening)
On the 14th of January, 1967, someone came to announce that my husband had died in a car accident over in South America. My life came to a halt, and Black Lion - well, he just let himself waste away with grief.

She looks at the stuffed dog compassionately.

THE CONCIERGE
The eyes of a dog: that's a lesson in forgiveness. Have you noticed he's still looking adoringly at his master?

Only then does Amélie realize that the dog's glassy stare is aimed at the portrait of the deceased husband.

THE CONCIERGE
Next time I'll read you his letters.

She goes to the old cash register and hits a key. The drawer opens with a "dringg". The cat opens an eye as the Concierge pulls out a stack of envelopes.

THE CONCIERGE (opening one)
Oh, here he was in the army : "Dear Mado... your absence is harder and harder to bear as each day passes. I am exiled in a desperately khaki world. I no longer sleep, I no longer eat. I live with the certainty that I have left my only reason for living in Paris. I won't see her again until Friday fortnight, when my adorable little weasel appears on the station platform in her blue dress with the little straps (the one you think is too see-through)."

The Concierge starts to cry. A tear falls on the letter, diluting the blue ink.

THE CONCIERGE
Has anyone ever written you letters like that young lady?

AMELIE (smiling)
No, I'm not anybody's weasel.

THE CONCIERGE
Well, let me tell you something, when you write letters like that to a woman, it's her you think about in your dying moments...!

She finishes her Port in one gulp.

THE CONCIERGE
My name's Madeleine Walace. They say that you "cry like a Madeleine", and "like Walace"...you know, what with all of them Walace fountains... Go on - tell me I'm not condemned to drown in a river of tears! (She pours herself another drink). As far as that boy of yours is concerned, go and see Collignon the grocer, he's always lived in the building...

The Concierge scratches the stuffed dog's back as Amélie thanks her and leaves.

Scene 23 - ext. day - In front of the grocer's

Collignon, in his fifties, thin moustache, grey apron, bow tie, is filling up his displays. Amélie, who has just arrived, quietly slips her hand into the barrel of rice.

AMELIE
Hello.

COLLIGNON
Hullo scallywag! Your usual one-fig-and-three-hazelnuts?

AMELIE
I was wondering... the people who lived in my apartment in the fifties, you wouldn't know their name would you?

COLLIGNON
Well now girlie, you've got me there. In 1950 I was two years old... The exact same mental age as this cretin is today.

The grocer points out Lucien, his apprentice, who is busy carefully choosing endives for a customer.

VOICE OVER
"The "cretin" is Lucien. Lucien might not be a genius, but Amélie likes him. She likes the way he handles each endive delicately, as if they were precious and worthy of respect... It's just his way of showing his love for a job well done.."

COLLIGNON (to the customer)
Just look at him... you'd think he was picking up a baby bird that's fallen from its nest... You're just lucky you didn't ask for Corinthian raisins, you would have had to come back Monday! Move it mongoloid, the lady's got better things to do!

Amélie would be quite happy to slap the grocer, but he is busy scribbling on a piece of paper.

COLLIGNON
Here, go and see my mum, she's got an elephant's memory... My mum - elephant - get it?... Ha ha ha...!

Amélie leaves, a murderous look in her eyes.

Scene 24 - ext. day - Suburbs

Amélie walks up to a small house in the suburbs. While she's looking at the number, she automatically picks up two or three flat stones and slips them into her pocket. Then she rings.

Scene 25 - ext. day - The back yard

Amélie and an old man are sitting in the back yard. The old man is deep in thought :

THE OLD MAN
Bredoteau!

AMELIE
Sorry?!

THE OLD MAN
That's the name you're looking for. But if I tell you, it doesn't count (lowering his voice) : I'm senile.

An elderly lady appears with old delivery registers in her arms.

THE OLD WOMAN
Don't listen to him, he's senile. Have you seen what he's done to my laurels?

She grabs a branch. All the leaves have little round holes in them.

THE OLD WOMAN
Before he had the grocer's he used to punch tickets in

the metro... well, for three months now, he's been getting up every night and punching holes in my laurels...

THE OLD MAN
I would have preferred lilacs. Life isn't fair. (Leaning towards Amélie): Everyone has to have something to calm their nerves...

AMELIE (smiling)
For me it's skipping stones.

THE OLD WOMAN (flipping through the books)
I'll get it for you. I write everything down! It's a good thing I'm around. When I think that my son's fifty years old and I'm still doing the books for him...

THE OLD MAN
When he was fifteen you were still putting his toothpaste on his toothbrush for him. Everything catches up with you in the end.

THE OLD WOMAN (her nose in the books)
Camus... Camus... no, that was on the second floor... The Brossards were staircase B... here we are, I've got it, Bredoteau, Fifth floor on the right! They were from Pas-de-Calais.

THE OLD MAN
Bredoteau...that's what I said...

The old man winks at Amélie.

Scene 26 - int. - Metro station

Amélie takes the metro home. One of the stations is being renovated. In the spaces allotted to billboards, there are different layers of old posters from the 40's and 50's.

Amélie gets off the metro to look at them, as if she's getting off a time-capsule. Fascinated, she lingers in front of the posters. An old song by Fréhel can be heard:

Si tu n'étais pas la, comment pourrais-je vivre?
Je ne connaîtrais pas, ce bonheur qui enivre
Quand je suis dans tes bras, mon cœur joyeux se livre
Comment pourrais-je vivre, si tu n'étais pas la...

If you're not there, how can I go on living?
I'll know no more this intoxicating happiness:
When I'm in your arms, my joyful heart arises -
So how can I live if you're not there?]

Progressively, as if in a long fade, the music disappears... We can only hear the words, awkwardly sung by a male voice. Coming out of her daydream, Amélie turns around. A young man is kneeling next to a photo booth. He's trying to yank out something that's stuck between the wall and the machine, singing all the while. Amélie walks towards him.

Scene 27 - int. day - Class room

VOICE OVER
"*While Amélie was unwillingly deprived of the contact of other children, Nino, at the same age, would have been very happy to have been equally deprived.*"

(We see little Nino at eight years old, a victim of his classmates, who are stuffing him into the classroom waste-paper bin. They heave both him and the bin onto a desk. Little Nino has no other choice but to sit in this ridiculous position and wait for the teacher to arrive.)

VOICE OVER
"*Often, at the very same moment, one would be dreaming of a sister and the other of a brother with whom each would spend all their time.*"

(The screen is split into two halves. On each side the sun is shining. On the left, we see Nino daydreaming while reflecting the light off a silver tray, while on the right Amélie is doing the same with a hand-mirror. On the left, we see Nino flickering spots of light on a wall so that a cat can chase it frantically; on the right, Amélie is doing the same with a young puppy.)

Back to the metro platform.

Nino senses a presence behind him. He stops singing and turns round. Amélie runs off.

Scene 28 - int. & ext. day - Raphaël Poulain's house

In the kitchen, Amélie's father is evening off the feet of a garden gnome with sandpaper. The door opens. Amélie appears.

AMELIE
Hi Dad. I see you've made a new friend.

THE FATHER (serious)
No, I've had it for a long time, but I forgot about it. And your mother hated it, so it was put in the tool shed. Come on, we're going to effect a reconciliation...!

In the garden, Raphaël Poulain delicately positions the gnome on top of the mausoleum, both its feet in wet cement. He looks at his work with satisfaction.

THE FATHER
Not bad, eh?

AMELIE
Ummm... Tell me dad, if you were accidentally to find something from your childhood, something that was very important to you, a treasure for example... would you be happy, or sad, or... nostalgic... how would you feel...?

THE FATHER
If you mean the gnome, I didn't have it when I was a boy... My friends from the 26th regiment gave it to me for my retirement.

AMELIE
No Dad, I mean things from your childhood that you keep secret as if they were incredibly important.

THE FATHER
Yes, yes... (not listening) : I'll have to varnish it before the autumn...

AMELIE (disappointed, heading towards the house)
I'm going to make some tea. Do you want a cup?

Scene 29 - int. day - "Tout va Mieux"

At the café, it's the calm before the rush. While Gina is filling up carafes of red wine, Amélie is setting the last of the tables.

Georgette, white as a sheet, is buried in a huge cardigan with a scarf wound tightly around her neck. Two customers enter.

GEORGETTE (moaning)

The door... it's so draughty !

Gina and Amélie look exasperatedly at each other.

GINA (to Georgette)
Come on, it's not exactly Siberia.

GEORGETTE
It's obvious you're not allergic to carbon monoxide. I coughed so much last night ... I'm sure I punctured a lung.

Gina rolls her eyes.

THE CUSTOMER
What's good today, Suzanne?

GINA
Endive *gratin.*

SUZANNE (sticking her head out from the kitchen)
Just you wait, you're going to be on your knees.

THE CUSTOMER (to his friend)
Is that good?

THE FRIEND
Depends where you end up on your knees...

THE FIRST CUSTOMER
Yeah... if it's in front of the toilet...

THE FRIEND
Then it's not so good!

Gina laughs out loud.

At his table, Joseph rewinds a little dictaphone. Then he presses 'Play' and we hear that he's just recorded the sound of Gina's laugh.

Everyone in the bar suddenly falls silent.

Joseph starts recording again.

JOSEPH
12:15. A throaty laugh evoking the sound of orgasm.

Motive: to attract the dominant male.

Gina slams a carafe on the counter.

GINA (to Suzanne)
Right. If he goes on coming here, I won't be answerable for myself!

SUZANNE (of Joseph)
Fair enough! There's a café every 20 yards round here. Why does he insist on this one?

JOSEPH (to the customer next to him)
Scientific reasons. I'm studying the sexual behaviour of waitresses.

GINA (to Suzanne)
I really do seem to be a magnet for these nutters.

SUZANNE
Not exactly. You collect them.

GEORGETTE (changing the subject)
Endive *gratin*... that has béchamel in it, right ?

SUZANNE
Yes, so?

GEORGETTE
Gives me an upset stomach. Like you and horsemeat.

SUZANNE
It's nothing to do with my digestion : it's my memories. I'd rather eat human flesh.

Meanwhile, Amélie has disappeared behind the counter.

She is looking through the phone pages. Three "Bredoteaus" are listed. She jots their addresses down.

AMELIE
Suzanne, would it be a problem if I were to leave a little early this afternoon?

SUZANNE (teasingly)
Not at all.... What's his name?

Scene 30 - int. & ext. day

AMELIE (as if answering Suzanne)
Dominique Bredoteau.

In fact she's at the front door of an apartment building and is reading the name written above the bell. Amélie rings it.

MALE VOICE
Coming..!

Amélie stands up straight, visibly nervous. The door opens. A young, friendly-looking student answers. Amélie has a difficult time hiding her disappointment.

AMELIE
Dominique Bredoteau?

THE YOUNG MAN
Yes...can I help you?

AMELIE (improvising)
Uhhh... well... it's for the petition...

THE YOUNG MAN
Petition..?

AMELIE
The petition ... to canonise Lady Di...

THE YOUNG MAN
Oh no, no thank you...

In the street :
She crosses the first address off her list.

In the metro
Speeded-up, Amélie takes the metro. Stairs, turnstiles, elevated tracks...

Scene 31 - int. & ext. day

At the door of another building in the 16th *arrondissement* : another doorbell, another nameplate: "Dominique Bredoteau", perfectly typed.
Amélie rings.

MALE VOICE (through the entry phone)
Yes...?

AMELIE
Hello, I'm looking for Dominique Bredoteau, it's for the European Union census...

ENTRY PHONE
Come on up. Third floor, on the right.

Amélie rings again once she's on the landing. Mellow chimes can be heard. The door opens a little and a woman in her forties appears.
She has very short hair, a masculine voice and a cigarette in one hand.

THE WOMAN (suave and seductive)
Earl Grey? Souchong? Bergamot? Jasmine? Do have a little something...

Amélie is speechless.

On the street :
She crosses the second address off her list.

On the metro :
Still speeded up, tunnels, line changes, moving walkway...

Scene 32 - int. Building entrance.

One last doorbell. A concierge appears.

AMELIE
Oh, hello. Do know where I could find Dominique Bredoteau?

CONCIERGE
Mmm, well... you could say you've just missed him. There he goes now...

In the stairwell, four undertakers appear with a coffin on their shoulders.

Scene 33 - int. evening - Amélie's building

Amélie is on her disappointed way home. On the fourth floor, a door opens and a voice calls out from behind her.

RAYMOND DUFAYEL
Bretodeau..! Not Bredoteau..

Amélie turns around and discovers Dufayel, the glass man, looking at her.

DUFAYEL
You. You need some mulled wine. With cinnamon. Come on.

Amélie wavers. Dufayel withdraws into his apartment.

DUFAYEL (off screen)
Well... Come in. You seem scared.

AMELIE (twitching her nose)
Erm... In the six years I've been living here, this is the first time our paths have crossed...

DUFAYEL (heading for the kitchen)
I never venture out as far as the landing. I don't want to bump into just anyone.

Amelie closes the door.

The apartment is lined, cushioned, softened. The TV continues to broadcast the image of the clock.

DUFAYEL (preparing the mulled wine)
Rude people call me "l'homme de verre". But my name is Raymond Dufayel.

AMELIE
Amélie Poulain. I'm a waitress at...

DUFAYEL (disappearing into the kitchen)
At "Tout va Mieux". I know... And today you're coming home empty-handed from your hunt for Bretodeau. That's because it's not "do" but "to" ; as in "Toto".

Amélie is looking at a half-finished copy of a painting on an easel. Dufayel reappears with a bowl in his hands.

AMELIE
Thank you. I really like this painting.

DUFAYEL
It's "Le Déjeuner des Canotiers" by Renoir.

He opens a cupboard. Nineteen copies are stacked there.

DUFAYEL

I've painted one a year for the last twenty years.

Amelie says nothing.

DUFAYEL (in front of one of the paintings in the cupboard)
The hardest part is painting the glances. A stroke too much shadow or light and, instead of resentment, you've got love... Sometimes I have the feeling that they change their expressions as soon as my back is turned.

AMELIE
Well they all look pretty happy to be there.

DUFAYEL
Well so they should! Hare and morel terrine, veal Marengo, cheese, sorbets, liqueurs... and waffles and jam for the children...

AMELIE (pointing to the girl leaning on the railing)
She's... the children?

Dufayel shuts the cupboard and goes to a chest of drawers. He opens a drawer and starts rummaging in it.

DUFAYEL
No. They're having a spitting contest further down the Marne. She... well she's just at that age where you don't like waffles anymore but you aren't allowed to have champagne cocktails. Incidentally, do you know what she's leaning on?

AMELIE
Umm... it's a wooden railing, isn't it?

DUFAYEL
It's the barrier between childhood and the adult world.

AMELIE (smiling)
I see. Between the safety of the tadpole's shallows and the restaurant where the grown-ups are partying.

DUFAYEL
Have you noticed what a hurry she's in to grow up, the silly thing? Rushing to chew on her little bit of existence like a scraggy dog. And the more meat there is on the bone, the more ferocious she's going to be... just like everyone else.

AMELIE
Now I understand why you never go out.

DUFAYEL (showing off his apartment)
In here, I've rounded off all the hard angles, I've done away with everything that bangs, everything that crashes, everything that has the power to hurt me. In the outside world I can't do that.

Just then, Amélie notices an old video camera focused through the window towards a watchmaker's shop. She finally works out that the clock on the television screen is no more than the shop sign, permanently broadcast via the video camera.

Dufayel, scribbling on a piece of paper, watches Amelie from the corner of his eye.

DUFAYEL (pointing to the camcorder)
Oh, that's just a present from my sister-in-law... I put it there so that I don't have to set my clocks anymore.

Amélie smiles. Dufayel, sipping his mulled wine, goes back to his painting.

DUFAYEL
After all these years, the only person that I still don't quite understand is the girl with the glass of water. She's in the middle of it all, and yet she's also outside.

AMELIE
Maybe she's just different from the others.

DUFAYEL
In what way ?

AMELIE (evasively)
I don't know.

DUFAYEL
Well, I'll tell you... (he continues instinctively, staring straight at Amélie the whole while) : She doesn't know how to form relationships. She's never known how. When she was younger, she didn't often play with other children. Perhaps never.

Amélie is suddenly troubled and doesn't know what to answer. She puts her bowl down and heads towards the window, just for

something to do.

DUFAYEL (handing her a piece of paper)
Here... Dominique Bretodeau, 27 rue de la Butte aux Cailles. I checked in the telephone book for you.

Scene 34 - ext. day - Street and bar

Bretodeau, now in his 50's, is climbing a small street lined with shops in the 14th *arrondissement.*

VOICE OVER
"*This morning, just like every Tuesday morning, Dominique Bretodeau is going to buy his free-range chicken. He usually bakes it with potatoes. He starts by carving off the legs, the thighs, the breasts and the wings, but his favourite bit is removing the last morsels off the steaming carcass with his fingers, starting with the little oval sections on the back.*

In fact, no, not at all. Today, Bretodeau will not buy a chicken. In fact, he won't get further than that telephone booth..."

As he walks by an empty phone booth, the phone starts to ring. He stops, and can't decide whether to answer or not.

From the front window of a nearby café, Amélie is watching him, a receiver in her hand.

Bretodeau approaches hesitantly, then steps into the booth. The telephone stops ringing immediately.

The rusty metal box is lying on the shelf. Intrigued, he looks at it a long time; then grabs it, turns it upside down, then right side up again, becoming increasingly troubled.

He opens it... sees his jacks, his marbles, the little cyclist, the photo of Just Fontaine... and is overwhelmed.

Behind the window, Amélie has tears in her eyes.

Scene 35 - ext. & int.

Bretodeau looks around, trying to understand how such a miracle could have occurred.

VOICE OVER
"In a flash, everything comes back to Bretodeau : Fédérico Bahamontes' 1959 Tour de France victory...

(Bretodeau and his friends, as children, play with little cyclists as they listen to the radio)

"...His aunt Josette's bra and knickers...

(The boy stares at a woman getting undressed through a hole in the wall, which he quickly covers back up with a photo of Just Fontaine...)

"... and especially the tragic day when he won the whole class's marbles during break..."

(The victorious boy picks up hundreds of marbles under the envious glare of the losers. But the teacher whistles the end of break-time. At top speed, the boy stuffs his pockets full - but he's won so many! The teacher drags him off by the ear... At that moment, his bulging pocket splits and, to the triumphant yells of his schoolmates, hundreds of marbles spill all over the courtyard!)

Scene 36- ext. & int. day - Street and bar

Inside the café, Amélie is gulping back a white wine when Bretodeau opens the door. He lays the box on the zinc counter.

BRETODEAU
A coffee please.

As the owner serves him his drink Amélie, at the other end of the counter, shrinks into the corner.

BRETODEAU
You'll never guess what's just happened to me! Either it's the biggest coincidence, or someone... But who, for God's sake! who..? Apart from a ghost - or my guardian angel...

The owner is wiping glasses behind the counter; she points to a photo of the French football team.

THE OWNER
My guardian angel is Fabian.

BRETODEAU (ignoring her)
The strangest thing is that I was going right past that

booth, I wasn't going to stop. It started ringing all by itself to get my attention...

THE OWNER
Sure... sure...

Just then, a timer starts ringing.

THE OWNER
Hey, well there you go. That's the microwave calling me.

BRETODEAU (turning towards Amélie)
Life's funny that way... when you're young, time just drags by and then overnight, you're fifty years old, just like that, Whoosh... And your childhood? You can fit everything that's left into a rusty little box... Do you have any children?

Amélie, so overcome she can't speak, shakes her head without even looking at him.

BRETODEAU
I've got a daughter about your age. We haven't talked to each other in years. I heard she had a boy last year. His name's Ludovic.

He unwraps a sugar cube and carefully puts it in his cup, then stirs pensively for a long while. He drinks his coffee in one gulp, nods to himself and puts the spoon back on the counter.

BRETODEAU
I think it's time I visited them... Before it's my turn to be put in a little box...

He pushes his cup away and leaves.

Amélie, her back to us, doesn't move.

Scene 37 - Ext. evening - Street

Amélie, excited, is floating down the street.

VOICE OVER
"All of a sudden Amélie feels completely at peace with herself. Suddenly everything is perfect... the soft lights, the scent in the air, the quiet murmuring of the city. She breathes deeply. Life seems so easy and clear to her: she is overcome by a surge of love, a desire to help all humanity. "

Amélie slows down and stops. In front of her is the blind man she walks past every day. He is hesitating at the corner, trying to cross. Amélie grabs his arm and walks him across...

AMELIE
Careful, there's the kerb... you can see the neon of the horse-butcher's shop reflected in the gutter... There's a chimney-sweep smoking on a roof in front of us. Here's an old lady crossing the street. She looks like a little girl made up to be an old lady... We're on the other side. There's a patch of grass on the kerb that's doing nothing there... that laugh you can hear is the shoe-repairer... he's got mean little creases at the corners of his eyes... Now, can you smell it? It's the fishmonger...the crabs all have their claws taped together and there's an eel that's still alive and opening its mouth... There's a special offer for suede and peccary at the dry cleaner's,... There's a baby in a buggy - who's looking at a dog in a lorry - who's looking at some chickens on a spit... That perfume is the florist's: she's wearing a tunic with epaulettes because she's going to a marching band rehearsal tonight... Here we are, we're in front of the butcher's: kidneys 15 francs, *filet mignon* 120, rump roast 88,50 and there, that music, that's the lottery stand.... It's funny ... the owner's watching "The Wheel of Fortune" on his little telly... and now, I'm turning off to the right...!

Amélie disappears into the crowd leaving the blind man stunned.

Scene 38 - Int. night - Amélie's apartment

Amélie, humming, is cooking herself a little meal. She sets the table and switches on the television, which is facing the table.

As she's passing the window, her gaze falls on Raymond Dufayel, the glass man, who is eating alone.
His only company is the television, its clock ticking the seconds away.

Amélie's enthusiasm disappears instantly. She looks at her own table. The same as Dufayel's : tablecloth, crystal carafe, bread basket...

AMELIE (mimicking Dufayel)
She doesn't know how to form relationships... She's never known how! When she was younger, she was always

on her own..!

Completely depressed, Amélie collapses in front of the television with a huge packet of cookies.

Scene 39 - Television show

Munching non-stop, Amélie imagines she sees a show by Frédéric Mitterrand on the fate of a mythical star - who turns out to be none other than herself : Amélie Poulain....

VOICE OF FREDERIC MITTERRAND
"On one of those sparkling October evenings where the city lingers amid the last flames of a vanishing summer..."

We see images of a city during a summer in the 1950's: fireworks, people on café terraces, children playing in the streets...

"Amélie Poulain, also known as the "Godmother of the Forgotten" or the" Madonna of the Unloved" faded away, alone, in her home just a few steps from the melancholic rippling of the Enghian lake... "

Hundreds of crying people are queuing in front of a suburban house. A gigantic heap of flowers is piling up in front of the gate as official visitors climb out of black automobiles.

"Hers was a strange destiny. This young woman, so unaware of herself, yet so sensitive to the subtle charms of life's little moments... "

We see Amélie plunging her hand into a barrel of rice while smiling at the camera, surrounded by applause; then she is skipping stones on the Seine surrounded by the flashes of photographers...

"Like Don Quixote, she had resolved to attack the implacable windmill of human misery."

Amélie is serving soup to a long line of homeless people at Montmartre: at the head of the line is the one who "doesn't work on Sundays."

Then, dressed as a nurse, she's pushing Raymond Dufayel, bundled up in a wheel chair, an impressive mountain range in the background...

Finally we see her, like a great actor, enthralling a crowd of

blind people; her hair, make-up and clothes are straight out of Hollywood's golden age.

In the living-room: Amélie dabs at her eyes with a Kleenex and sniffles.

VOICE OF FREDERIC MITTERRAND
"A battle lost even before it began, it undermined her youth and prematurely exhausted her life. At barely forty years of age, Amélie Poulain is at the end of her tether. Having allowed her short existence to fade into the undertow of universal misery, she has chosen to end her days alone, drained, in a suburban house that oddly resembles the one in which she spent that reclusive childhood which bordered on autism..."

Filmed from far away, as if by paparazzi, she is in a park, on a pilgrimage, feeding the goldfish in a pond similar to the one in which her mother abandoned "the Whale".

"But a piercing regret lay in wait for Amélie in the solitude to which she had resigned herself : the regret of having let her father die without ever trying to give this stifled man the breath of life that she had managed to impart to so many others..."

Amélie dabs at her eyes with a Kleenex in front of her father's coffin, as it disappears into the crematorium's oven.

In the living room:
Amélie has sunk into the sofa, sullenly melancholy, the empty package of cookies in her hand. Pensive, she looks out of the window.

Scene 40 - Ext. night - Commuter train

Here she is, in an empty carriage, on the train taking her back to her father's house.

Scene 41 - Ext. night - Suburban street

She arrives at the house. The darkened windows look blankly back at her. She tries to open the door with her key but her father has put the safety-chain on.
She grabs a handful of pebbles to throw at the window, but then changes her mind. She throws them all away except a beautifully flat one, which she automatically puts in her pocket.

She heads towards the garden gnome and looks at it for a moment... After a final glance at the windows, she starts shaking the gnome and pulls it loose from its pedestal...

Putting it under her arm, she runs off into the night, like a thief.

Scene 42 - Int. night - Suburban station entrance hall

When Amélie gets to the station, the last train has left.

She falls asleep on a bench in the entrance hall, holding the gnome in her arms as if it were a child.

Scene 43 - Int. day - Gare du Nord train station

It's dawn at the Gare du Nord. With the garden gnome hidden under her coat, an exhausted Amélie gets off the train and joins the first of the suburbanites heading to work.

Suddenly, she stops in her tracks: near a photo booth, the boy she saw in the metro station with the old posters (Nino Quincampoix) is busy picking up bits of paper from the bottom of a rubbish bin and putting them in an envelope. Amélie approaches and watches him attentively. She's intrigued and flustered.

Suddenly, he looks up at her and freezes, fascinated. Amélie's heart races... Nino rushes to her - Amélie is mesmerised, immobile.

But he goes past her without a glance ... and runs after a man leaving the station.

Amélie shakes herself out of her trance and runs after both of them.

The man, completely oblivious to all of this, climbs calmly into his car and drives off.

We have just enough time to see that he is wearing red trainers which have a white star on them.

Nino rushes to his Solex moped and dashes off in pursuit; Amélie looks on, dumbfounded. In his haste, he bumps into a taxi and loses a saddle bag before disappearing over the horizon... Amélie goes and picks up the bag.

Scene 44 - Ext. day - Station entrance

Sitting on the steps of one of the side entrances, the gnome sitting next to her, Amélie starts looking through the bag and pulls out a thick notebook.

Every page is filled with ID photographs, meticulously dated and indexed.

They all have one thing in common: they are overexposed, blackened or ruined by chemicals...

Their owners have abandoned them and Nino has adopted them.

VOICE OVER
"Entire pages of ruined ID photos that disappointed owners have crumpled, torn, and thrown away - and that a madman has meticulously reconstituted, filed, indexed... a rather unusual family album."

Scene 45 ext. & int. day - At "Tout va Mieux"

Over in the corner at the cigarette stand, a customer is speaking to Georgette.

CUSTOMER
Packet of *Gauloises*.

GEORGETTE (with red eyes)
Just a second.

Laboriously, she starts to put drops in her eyes.

GEORGETTE (the drops dribbling down her cheeks)
You asked for...?

CUSTOMER (exasperated)
Gauloises...

GEORGETTE (feeling around)
I can't see a thing. Can you tell me where they are?

CUSTOMER
Up a bit... to the right... there you are, that's it... no, just to your left...

He puts twenty francs on the counter. Georgette fumbles blindly

for the change.

CUSTOMER (discouraged)
Forget it.

He leaves, passing Gina on the terrace. She's taking an order, being particularly friendly with a customer.

From his corner Joseph is following her every move, her every gesture, talking into his dictaphone all the while.

GINA (coming back in to the counter)
A Kir aligoté, a *pastis* and barley water and two mint cordials!

Joseph grabs her arm as she goes by.

JOSEPH (pointing to the customer on the terrace)
Do clarify for me ... all this cooing: is it pre-nuptial or post-coital?

GINA
And your stupidity: is it congenital?

Gina makes a beeline for the bar.

Amélie, who feels rather helpless, smiles sympathetically and prepares the drinks.

JOSEPH (into his dictaphone)
Pre-nuptial.

An elderly Casanova is speaking to Gina.

ELDERLY CASANOVA
Don't you worry your pretty little head, one of these days you'll find your Prince Charming. (Turning towards Suzanne) Every woman dreams of falling asleep on a man's shoulder; every single one!

SUZANNE
I'll go with that. But when men have had a couple of drinks they start snoring. And I've got an ear for music.

ELDERLY CASANOVA
Well, funnily enough, I've just had an operation on my nasal passages.

SUZANNE
Wow. You really know how to romance a girl, don't you?

Amélie and Gina can't help but smile.

ELDERLY CASANOVA (upset)
Well, it's perfectly obvious that you've never known great love.

SUZANNE
If I hadn't, I would never have had my left leg shortened.

GINA
I thought that was because you had a riding accident when you were in Medrano.

SUZANNE
Exactly. I was in love with a trapeze artist. I should have known: a trapeze artist always drops you at the last moment. And he dropped me just as I was going into the ring. I was completely bowled over. And so was the horse. Unfortunately, I was the one underneath.

Everyone watches her in silence.

ELDERLY CASANOVA (keeping stubbornly to the point)
Nevertheless, there is such a thing as love at first sight.

SUZANNE
There is if you make it happen. After thirty years behind this counter, I reckon I could tell you a whole lot about love at first sight. I could even give you the recipe.

Everyone is listening. Amelie seems to be very interested.

SUZANNE
Take two regulars, unattached and of the opposite sex, let them think they're irresistible to each other, allow to simmer. Works every time.

Amélie looks first at Joseph, who's been oblivious of all this, and then at... Georgette.

VOICE OVER
Amélie wonders if it isn't the moment to test out this particular recipe.

As Gina comes back towards the bar, Joseph calls to her as if he were just an ordinary customer.

JOSEPH
Excuse... Excuse me!

Gina rolls her eyes.

AMELIE
Leave it. I'll get it.

She goes up to Joseph.

AMELIE (in a whisper)
Don't you think you've done enough damage?

JOSEPH
Gina's old enough to defend herself.

AMELIE (lowering her voice even more)
I'm not talking about Gina... I'm talking about Georgette.

JOSEPH (perplexed)
Georgette..?

AMELIE
Open your eyes! She's sitting there hoping for the tiniest flicker of attention from you - and you, you've only got eyes for Gina.

Joseph stares at Amélie stunned.

AMELIE
The poor thing. When you look at what she has to do just to get your attention... You must be blind!

She turns her back on Joseph. He can't help but look at Georgette in the wall mirror; it's as if he were seeing her for the first time. She's putting more drops in her eyes.

Scene 46 - int. evening - "Tout va Mieux"

It's closing time. The chairs are stacked on the tables. Amélie sweeps around the counter while Georgette is locking up the cigarette stand cash register. Gina is finishing her make-up in the bar's mirror, between the bottles of alcohol.

GINA
I'm off, gotta date.

She leaves. Immediately, Amélie goes to Georgette.

GEORGETTE (watching Gina leave)
I don't know what the new one's like but he can't be worse than the one before... That pyromaniac who set fire to her pants.

AMELIE
Joseph's not that crazy. He's just suffering, that's all.

GEORGETTE
Two months since they broke up and he's still coming in here every day... He must enjoy suffering.

Amélie stares at her pretending to be surprised.

AMELIE
Nooo... don't tell me you haven't noticed...

Georgette looks at her uncomprehendingly.

AMELIE (grabbing her by the arm)
Come on. Follow me.

She takes Georgette to Joseph's usual spot.

GEORGETTE
But... ummm...

AMELIE
Sit down!

Georgette complies. Amélie points to the big wall mirror in front of her; the cigarette stand is reflected in it.

AMELIE
What do you see?

GEORGETTE
Well... my stand.

AMELIE
And... anything missing?

Georgette stares stupidly at the reflection of her empty chair.

GEORGETTE
Nooo... I don't think so.

AMELIE
Come on, try a bit harder. I'll leave you to think about it. Good night Georgette.

She slips away, leaving Georgette dubious but flustered.

Scene 47 - ext. evening - Street

Amélie stops to buy the evening paper near "Tout va Mieux". The stand is creaking under the weight of all the front pages dedicated to Princess Diana. Except one that catches Amélie's eye.
An expedition of mountain infantrymen has just discovered, in a melted glacier, a postal sack from 30 years ago, lost in the crash of a postal plane in the early 60s... Amélie buys this paper. As she's paying, the vendor sighs, looking at the photo of Lady Di.

VENDOR
What a shame! For once we had a princess who was young and pretty.

AMELIE
YOu mean it wouldn't have been so bad if she'd been old and ugly?

VENDOR
Well, yeah ... Look at Mother Theresa...

Just then, Joseph walks by the stand, a baguette in his hand.

VENDOR
What about him? He still running around after Gina?

AMELIE
No... he's interested in someone else now. (looking at her newspaper) : strange, this story about the glacier...

VENDOR (sticking to her theme)
Someone I know?

AMELIE
Yes. (holding up the postal sack article) Do you

think they're going to send the letters after all this time?

VENDOR
Someone from "Tout va Mieux"?

AMELIE
Uh huh.

VENDOR
Not you, is it?

AMELIE
No.

VENDOR
It can't be Suzanne.

She thinks awhile; her eyes widen and her jaw drops as it dawns on her..

VENDOR
Nooooo!

AMELIE
Yes.

Scene 48 - int. evening - Raymond Dufayel's apartment

Hands turn the pages of the ID photo album. Amélie and Raymond Dufayel are examining the shots.

AMELIE
Look, here he is again.

DUFAYEL
You're right: how very strange.

Amélie turns a few pages. The same expressionless person appears again.

AMELIE
And here...

DUFAYEL (reading)
"Tuesday, September 27; I've found him for the fourth time."

AMELIE (going a few pages further)

Here he is again! "*Thursday, November 22; still him.*"

DUFAYEL
Same look - always so bland.

AMELIE
Twelve times in all. I counted. It's very strange. Why would anyone go all over the city, getting their picture taken again and again, if they're just going to throw them away straight afterwards?

DUFAYEL
Especially when the pictures are perfectly good.

AMELIE
It's like some sort of ritual.

DUFAYEL
Maybe he's obsessed with getting older and it's the only thing that reassures him.

AMELIE
Ummm...

DUFAYEL
Or ... maybe he's making regular checks on the effects of a new hair cream.

AMELIE
No... He's dead.

DUFAYEL
Dead?

AMELIE
Yes, he's dead and he's scared of being forgotten. He uses the photo booth to keep his face alive in the minds of the living. As if he's faxing his picture from the hereafter.

Dufayel goes to his easel.

DUFAYEL
A dead man who's scared of being forgotten...

He flips a protective paper sheet over the people in the "Déjeuner des Canotiers".

They've got nothing to worry about. They've been dead for a while now but they're never going to be lost to

memory.

Amélie agrees silently, and takes a sip of mulled wine.

AMELIE
You know what? Your girl with her glass of water... If she seems a bit out of it maybe it's because she's thinking about someone.

DUFAYEL
Someone in the painting?

AMELIE
No, more like someone she's caught a glimpse of somewhere else. But she has this feeling they're rather alike.

DUFAYEL (needling)
In other words, she prefers to imagine she's like someone who's not there, rather than getting to know those who are.

AMELIE (on the defensive)
You don't know. Actually, maybe she spends all her time fixing the mix-ups in other people's lives.

DUFAYEL
But who's going to fix the mix-ups in her life?

Amélie, off her stride, stands up and goes towards the front door.

AMELIE
In the meantime, it's better looking after other people than a garden gnome. Goodnight Mr. Dufayel.

She leaves.

Scene 49 - int. evening - Amélie's landing

Amélie arrives at her door at the same time as Philomène, the stewardess. Philomène is out of breath, in her uniform and carrying the cat basket.

PHILOMENE
Oh ... I'm late!

AMELIE (unlocking her door)
Did you leave his flea collar on?

PHILOMENE
Yeah... And go easy on the dry food, he put on a bit of weight last time... So, is it here?

Amélie nods and drags her in. She pulls out a cardboard box, already tied up, and exchanges it for the cat without saying a word.

PHILOMENE
Count on me.

With a knowing look, the stewardess leaves.

Scene 50 - int. night - Amélie's bedroom

In bed, television on, a pensive Amélie examines the ID photo album with a large magnifying glass.

She lingers every now and again over a smile; over an enigma, like the man posing with a huge stack of bank notes; or because she's touched by a slightly lost look.

Suddenly she notices that the magnifying glass projects a circle of light on to the wall, and that the cat is stalking it. Entering the game, Amélie plays with Rodrigue, making him dance.

Amélie falls asleep, the notebook on her lap. As she wakes up her eyes fall on the still-flickering television: On the screen we see surprising, poetic shots of a horse that has escaped from its paddock to run with the lead racers of the Tour de France. As the shot is shown again in slow motion, Amélie hits the button on her remote, starting up her VCR.

Scene 51 - int. day - Building stairwell

As she's walking downstairs, Amélie pulls an envelope out of her bag and slips it under Raymond Dufayel's doormat. One floor down, Amélie notices that the grocer has left his keys in the door of his apartment.

She takes the key.

Scene 52 - ext. day - In front of the grocer's shop

She's dropping in at the grocer's to give him back his keys. He's serving a customer.

COLLIGNON
Can you imagine that? 2.8 grams of alcohol in his blood; a chauffeur..! (turning towards Lucien) Just goes to show I'm not the only one employing irresponsible cretins!

Exasperated, Amélie pulls out the keys so as to return them to the grocer.

AMELIE
Mr. Collignon...

COLLIGNON
Hold on a second scallywag - not so good to be in a hurry these days... Tell you, you should take a leaf out of Lucien's book... no danger of him getting done for speeding during working hours...

Lucien winces while embarrassed customers look on.

CUSTOMER
You shouldn't, Mr. Collignon, it's not his fault...

COLLIGNON
You're right Mrs. Cauchoix, it's Lady Di's fault he doesn't sleep. You'll never guess what I found in the truck... The "Trois Suisses" catalogue open on the nighties page. He'd cut out the face of one of the pin-ups and stuck on Lady Di's instead.

Lucien, red as a beetroot, disappears into the back of the shop.

COLLIGNON (turning towards Amélie)
So now, scallywag, what'd you like today? Bunch of asparagus? Local archives?

AMELIE (shaking her head)
No, nothing.

She puts the keys back in her pocket and leaves, livid.

Scene 53 - In the street

Amélie, furious, strides off. Inside her pocket, as in an X-ray, we see her fingers feverishly playing with the keys. Abruptly, she runs into a 'Jiffy Key' advertising "Key-cutting in fifteen minutes"...

In the stairwell of her building:

Here she is again in front of Collignon's door. She puts the original set of keys back in the keyhole. She goes back down the stairs. Through her pocket, X-ray fashion, we see the shiny, new second set...

Scene 54 - ext. day - In front of the newspaper stand

Georgette is buying newspapers for the café. The vendor smiles at her.

VENDOR (with a knowing air)
So, looks like the migraines are better these days...

GEORGETTE
Umm... yes, a little... but you know, 'cause I didn't get much sleep last night...

VENDOR
Well, anyway, you haven't looked so radiant in ages.

GEORGETTE
Really?

VENDOR (lowering her voice)
Just goes to show... a woman without love... is like a flower without sunlight... she just fades away.

Georgette is left speechless.

Scene 55 - int. day - "Tout va Mieux"

Amélie is late for work. Suzanne and Gina are behind the counter. There are very few customers.

Georgette is at her usual place.

Hipolito, in his thirties, unshaven, a doomed-poet air about him, is drinking a coffee at the counter. And Joseph's at a table having his breakfast.

AMELIE (entering)
It's beautiful out ...

Gina and Suzanne look at each other and laugh.

AMELIE
What did I say?

SUZANNE
No-one who's come in today hasn't said how nice it is out.

HIPOLITO
It's our fear of the days slipping away that makes us talk this way about the moments we have...

SUZANNE
Say that again?
JOSEPH
No... we talk about the weather so we don't have to talk that kind of crap.

Hearing Joseph, Georgette automatically looks at him in the mirror.
They exchange glances and turn away just as quickly. Georgette sits up a bit straighter and readjusts her blouse.

HIPOLITO
'Crap'... I write quite a bit too but unfortunately no one wants to publish.

SUZANNE
Still not...?
HIPOLITO (pulling a letter from his pocket)
The thirtieth...!

SUZANNE
What about your cousin, the literary critic?

HIPOLITO
Pchah!. Literary critics are scorpions who live by their stings, scuttling around among vultures who live by their quills.

AMELIE
What's your book about anyway? Love stories?

Georgette, looking up from her folder of stamps, catches Joseph - who has been looking at her. He immediately dives back into his newspaper.

HIPOLITO
No, it's the story of a guy who writes a diary. Except, instead of writing what happens to him day by day, he writes about the worst things that could possibly happen to him. So he gets depressed and

doesn't do anything.

GINA
So basically it's a story about a guy who doesn't do anything.

Georgette and Joseph look up slowly in unison. They look at each other, frozen for a split second... Still perfectly in sync., each of them dives back into their respective activities...

HIPOLITO
Here, Suzanne, let me dedicate to you the manuscript they sent back.

GINA (to Suzanne)
That's it. He dedicates his manuscript and you clear his tab!

SUZANNE
Pah ... so I'm exchanging his *chefs-d'œuvre* for my *hors-d'œuvres*. I'm sponsoring him!

HIPOLITO (before disappearing)
Thank you *Madame* Suzanne...

Suzanne flips through the manuscript.

SUZANNE (reading)
"He asked himself if this were in truth the real world, or merely the phantom reflection of another world where we truly exist".

Meanwhile Gina has grabbed hold of a customer's arm and, one by one, is cracking his knuckles.

GINA (to Suzanne)
Know what I think? If you get up at six every morning and work your ass off, you don't ask yourself that kind of question.

AMELIE
Could I borrow it? I really like this stuff about reflections.

She notices that Joseph is looking at Georgette in the mirror.

AMELIE (low)
Speaking of reflections: some meet through the Lonely Hearts, and some through mirrors.

Suzanne looks at Georgette, then at Joseph, stunned.

Scene 56 - ext. evening - In front of the grocer's

On her way home, Amélie stops in front of the grocer's when she hears Collignon yelling at Lucien. Lucien is petrified, a crate of salad in his arms.

COLLIGNON
No, just look at him! I ask him to empty the van; but - stupid old me - I failed to tell him where to put every single thing... Lucien! - shoelace!

A feverish Lucien puts the crate down and realizes that his laces are untied.

COLLIGNON
There you go... you can see when you feel like it! I'll be buggered if his dad didn't piss up his old lady...

Amélie, disgusted, enters her building determinedly.

Scene 57 - int. day - Building's stairwell

On her way up the stairs, Amélie glances down the stairwell, pulls out the brand new key and sneaks into the grocer's apartment.

Scene 58 - int. day - Collignon's apartment

She tiptoes around, discovering the home of an obsessive bachelor.

Everything is old and a little dirty except the nearly-new slippers which are perfectly lined up at the foot of the bed. Amélie picks them up, examines them attentively and puts them back exactly where they were. Then, taking out their little screws, she swaps the round doorknobs for the rectangular ones in the living room, the kitchen and the bathroom... After this, she opens a shoe cupboard and, with a nail file, files down two or three laces almost to breaking-point.

Next, she pours a little salt into any bottles of alcohol she can find.

Suddenly we see that Amélie is being watched by someone through a pair of binoculars.

Examining the bathroom Amélie finds, on the shelf over the sink, a tube of toothpaste and a tube of moisturiser for dry feet. She swaps them.

Finally, she sets the alarm clock for 5 A.M.

Scene 59 - int. day - Collignon's landing

Still on tiptoe, she leaves the apartment, the tension she has built up disappearing in a rush. In a flash, she "sees" herself as Zorro gouging a "Z" into the grocer's door with the tip of her sword.

Scene 60 - ext. day - Commuter train

It's Sunday. On the train that's taking her to her father's, Amélie is immersed in Hipolito's collection of short stories. She finds a sentence she likes.

VOICE OVER - HIPOLITO
"Today's emotions are no more than the sloughed-off skins of yesteryear's."...

Amélie, pensive, repeats under her breath :

AMELIE
"Today's emotions are no more than the sloughed-off skins of yesteryear's."...

The ticket-collector leans over and looks at her expressionlessly.

TICKET-COLLECTOR
Sorry?

AMELIE (pretending to divulge a secret)
"Today's emotions are no more than the sloughed-off skins of yesteryear's."...

TICKET-COLLECTOR
Ticket please.

Scene 61 - int. day - - Raphaël Poulain's house

Amélie and her father are having lunch.

He seems preoccupied.

FATHER (distractedly)
And your work?

AMELIE
You've already asked me that, Dad.

FATHER
Yes, but you, how are you?

AMELIE
Pretty good. I think something has changed and you see, I... (realizing that he isn't listening)... I've had two heart attacks and I had to have an abortion because I was completely out of it on crack during the pregnancy. Apart from that, everything's just fine.

FATHER
Good... Good...

AMELIE (after a while)
Is something wrong?

FATHER
No, nothing.

AMELIE
By the way, I noticed your garden gnome isn't there any more... did he go back to the tool shed?

After a slight hesitation her father gets up and, without a word, goes to get an envelope from the sideboard. He pulls out a Polaroid which he gives to Amélie.

She sees the gnome posing in front of the Empire State Building. She turns the photo over.

FATHER
Nothing. Not a word of explanation. It's terrifying!

AMELIE
Maybe he just wanted to travel a bit...

FATHER (disturbed)
I don't understand, I just don't understand...

Scene 62 - int. day - Station concourse

Amélie heads back to Paris, in a good mood. Cutting through the Gare du Nord, she finds a small flyer pasted to the photo booth where she found Nino the last time. She takes a closer look. In an effort to find his album, Nino has left his number on the flyer.

She glances around, unglues the flyer and puts it in her bag.

Scene 63 - int. evening - Amélie's apartment

As she opens the front door Amélie is welcomed by the cat, who purrs against her legs. She pins up the flyer in her bedroom, opposite the bed. In bed, she flips dreamily through the album again.
Each time she looks up, her gaze falls on Nino's flyer.

VOICE OVER
"A normal girl would call right away. She would meet up with him outside a café, give him back his album and, after a few minutes, she would know if he's really worth dreaming over. That's called facing reality. And that is exactly what Amélie has no intention of doing.
"

Amélie falls asleep, the lights on and the album open on the bedcover.

Two paintings hang on the walls of the room ; a goat and a rabbit.
The two animals come to life and turn towards each other; they seem worried.

THE GOAT (whispering)
She's not falling in love on us, is she..?

On the bedside table is a small, placid pig . It comes to life as well, turns towards the goat, sighs and nods its head.

With that, it grabs the lamp-cord and turns off the light.

Black.

Scene 64 - int. night - Collignon's apartment

Black. The alarm rings. It's five A.M. The lights go on. Collignon, the grocer, completely dazed, gets up. He stops the alarm without even looking at the time.

He gets up, haggard, and heads towards the bathroom. He automatically grabs for the doorknob, which Amélie has changed, but his hand closes around thin air. He stands there stunned, unable to understand what is happening to him. In the bathroom, blinded by neon, the grocer grabs what he thinks is the toothpaste and smears dry-feet-moisturiser on to his toothbrush. Bringing it to his mouth he freezes, his face betraying disbelief and pure disgust.

Scene 65 - ext. night - In front of the grocery store

Leaving the building, the grocer's feet appear in the street. A thick piece of twine has replaced a shoelace.

The grocer, still dazed, starts to raise the steel shutter when all of a sudden he stops. He turns around slowly and sees, at the other end of the street, the garbage truck finishing its rounds. Realising little by little that it's still night and that everything is closed, he stares stupidly at his watch as a nervous tic starts to pulse on his eyelid.

An inscription appears superimposed on the image :
"nervous tic, external sign of an internal breakdown".

Scene 66 - ext. day - In front of the grocer's

It's morning: the sun is out. The concierge arrives at the grocer's. Lucien, in a good mood, is taking care of the customers all by himself; but everyone is whispering.

THE CONCIERGE (aloud)
What? Isn't the boss here?

LUCIEN (whispering)
Shhh...! He's sleeping in the cauliflowers...

Scene 67 - int. day - Building stairwell

Amélie leaves her apartment. On the ground floor, she notices that the concierge's door is half open.

Amélie hesitates, then enters....

She goes to the cash register. The cat, still lying on it curled up in a ball, opens one eye. Amélie carefully reaches over and pulls out the drawer. She makes off with the the long-lost husband's love letters.

Scene 68 - int. day - "Tout va Mieux"

At the café, Georgette has changed her eternal heavy wool cardigan for a more attractive sweater with an open neckline. She has also put on lipstick. Suzanne is humming while she polishes the brass fixtures, and Amélie is preparing an ice cream sundae.
Georgette automatically looks in the mirror and catches Joseph's eye. This time, instead of turning away, Joseph gets up and goes towards her.

Amélie doesn't miss a moment of it.

GEORGETTE (Freudian slip)
Did you want me? Uhhh... Did you want..?

JOSEPH
A "Scratch and Win" please.

Georgette gives him one.

JOSEPH
It's my first time. I've never done this before.

GEORGETTE
Look, I'll show you. We'll do it together.

She scratches, he imitates her.

GEORGETTE
Nothing. And you?

JOSEPH
Nothing (pause) Some you lose...

GEORGETTE
...but some you win.

A long, tense silence.

JOSEPH (pointing to his table)
Well... ummm, I'll just go ... back.

Amélie and Suzanne are sneaking knowing glances at each other.

Amélie, a smile hovering around her lips, happily adds a handful of raspberries and a dollop of whipped cream to her sundae. She puts the sundae in front of a little girl, and a strawberry milk in front of her little brother. He immediately starts to whimper at the sight of his sister's sundae.

THE MOTHER
Don't even think about it. You know it gives you a tummy ache.

AMELIE
Don't be jealous. I've given you some special milk. Haven't you noticed the colour? It comes from a cow that only ever eats candy floss.

(We see, very briefly, a hand milking an udder. A stream of pink milk shoots out)

The little boy stops whining immediately and considers his glass with marked interest.

Amélie goes to the bar, cleans her tray and wipes her hands. On her way to the payphone, she discreetly slips the flyer out of her pocket. Taking a deep breath, she slowly dials the number.

MALE VOICE
"Eros Club"?

AMELIE
I'm calling about the ad.

MALE VOICE
You waxed?

AMELIE
Sorry?

MALE VOICE
I'm askin' if you're waxed. 'Cause these days, the crotch rug puts 'em off.

AMELIE
The what..?

MALE VOICE
Bikini moustache... gotta get rid of it!

Amélie, offended, hangs up.

Scene 69 - int. day - Building's stairwell

Lucien, making his deliveries, rings Amélie's door to make sure that no one is home. He waits a few seconds, then pulls out a huge collection of keys from his pocket and chooses one. He enters the apartment with a six-pack of mineral water. A few moments later he comes out, carefully closes the door and locks it, picks up another crate of groceries and heads towards the stairwell. He goes past the concierge who is on her way downstairs with a vacuum cleaner.

LUCIEN
How do you do Mrs. Walace?

THE CONCIERGE
Oh... You know. When you've got nothing left to hope for ...

He arrives at Mr. Dufayel's, rings and opens the door. Just then, he realizes that the doormat is lumpy. He pushes it over with his foot and finds the envelope that Amélie had left.

Scene 70 - int. day - Mr. Dufayel's apartment

Lucien puts the groceries down in front of Mr. Dufayel. We see, all jumbled up, leeks, tinned goods, cleaning products, artichokes...

LUCIEN
Here you are. Everything you asked for.

DUFAYEL
I seriously doubt it. I hate artichokes.

LUCIEN
You're wrong about them Mr. Dufayel. Here, let me show you.

Lucien rolls up his sleeves with an impish grin. Imitating a magician, he grabs the artichoke by the stem and presents it to Dufayel, also like a magician. Carefully grabbing the head, he pulls it off and unveils a small jar of caviar hidden inside the hollowed vegetable.

DUFAYEL
Well, now, that's more like it.

Taking a pre-cut can of tuna, Lucien uncovers a can of "foie gras". Then he unscrews the top of a bottle of clothes-washing liquid and reveals a bottle of champagne.

DUFAYEL
Lucien, you're the king of magicians!

LUCIEN
Anyway, it's compliments of Mr. Collignon. It wasn't hard today, he was completely out of it.

Dufayel looks very peeved all of a sudden.

DUFAYEL
From... "Mister" Collignon??? (reproachfully). Lucien!

LUCIEN
Oh, sorry Mr. Dufayel, I wasn't thinking.

DUFAYEL
Practice Lucien, practice...

LUCIEN
Oh no... Not today Mr. Dufayel, I don't have the time...

DUFAYEL (authoritatively)
Lucien!!! repeat after me. Collignon - what a pong.

LUCIEN (like an annoyed child)
Collignon.... what a pong.

DUFAYEL
Very good. Your turn. Collignon...???

LUCIEN
Collignon... what a scumbag!

DUFAYEL
Well there you go... you see, when you want to... Go on! Collignon?

LUCIEN
Collignon... 's got shit for brains.

DUFAYEL
Verrrrry good. Go on. Collignon?

LUCIEN
Collignon's got shit for brains, Collignon's got shit for brains. (Then more and more quickly until the words make no more sense) Collignon'sgotshitforbrains, Collignon'sgotshitforbrains, Collignon'sshitforbrains,

Collignonshitbrain...

DUFAYEL
Good, Good. That'll do for today.

LUCIEN (like a kid finishing his homework)
See you tomorrow Mr. Dufayel. Oh by the way... I found this under your doormat.

He pulls Amélie's envelope out of the crate and hands it to Dufayel, then runs off. Dufayel stares at the envelope suspiciously. He opens it, takes out a videotape, looks at it from all sides trying to find a clue to who it could have come from. He finally decides, after much hesitation, to put it into his old, knick-knack-covered VCR.

Scene 71 - int. evening - Dufayel's

On the screen appears a string of unusual and poetic scenes: The horse that escaped from his paddock to frolic among the racers of the Tour de France; a strange and complex machine that we discover is used to stir marshmallow batter, a little girl innocently bouncing her ball against a wall covered with obscene graffiti... Dufayel seems deeply perplexed. Nevertheless, little by little, he starts smiling - barely aware that he's doing so.

Scene 72 - int. day - "Tout va Mieux"

At the café, Amélie notices Joseph at the counter of the cigarette-stand, scratching another "Scratch and Win".

JOSEPH (smiling)
Still nothing.

GEORGETTE
Still nothing...

Joseph notices a bit of wool caught in the clasp of Georgette's chain.

JOSEPH (murmuring)
You have... something there... don't move. May I...?

He reaches out slowly. His fingers brush Georgette's neck and she blushes like a poppy.

JOSEPH (his voice altered)

You're beautiful when you blush, Georgette... you look like a flower of the field.

GEORGETTE
It's ... it's ... it's just wind.

They freeze. Just then, a customer comes in.

CUSTOMER
Hello everyone. God it's beautiful out!

The spell is broken. Joseph, red as a beetroot, scurries towards the toilets.

In the toilets :

Turning on the cold water, Joseph splashes his face.

In the bar :

Amélie has seen all this. Grabbing her tray, she makes a beeline for the cigarette-stand.

AMELIE
Camel filters pl... oops!!!

She has tipped her tray over a bit too much, and coffee is now dripping on Georgette's knees.

AMELIE
Oh God, I'm so sorry!

GEORGETTE
Oh, well done! (to the customer) Do excuse me, I'll be right back.

Muttering all the way, she heads to the toilets as well.

In the toilets :

Georgette finds herself nose to nose with Joseph, who was on his way back out. The door shuts behind him, startling both of them. They stare at each other mumbling unintelligibly, then, suddenly, Georgette throws herself at Joseph and pins him to the wall.

In the bar, at the counter :

Amélie, one eye on the toilet door, distractedly dries the glasses.

Suddenly a teaspoon starts to tap rhythmically against the edge of a cup.
Amélie, dumbfounded, stares at it.

She then notices that the liquid in all the bottles is rippling gently at regular intervals.

The yolk of a fried egg on a Grilled Cheese is swaying slightly. Over the counter, a neon sign starts to hiss... and all of this in the same regular rhythm.

Suddenly, from the other side of the door, a moan can be heard.

The customer and Suzanne look round.

Amélie, thrilled, diverts attention by making the percolator whistle like a locomotive.

Scene 73 - int. day - Raymond Dufayel's apartment

As the television continues to show the picture of the clock, Amélie is studying the painting alone. Dufayel comes from the kitchen with a tray in his hands.

DUFAYEL
A little mulled wine... and biscuits.

AMELIE
Thank you.

DUFAYEL
I think I was a little hard on the girl with the glass of water the other day.

Amélie shrugs.

DUFAYEL
So, tell me. This boy that she saw once, has she seen him again?

AMELIE (embarrassed)
No, actually, they're not interested in the same things.

DUFAYEL (teasingly)
You know, luck is a bit like the Tour de France. You wait for ages and then it goes past very quickly. So when the moment comes... you have to jump the fence

without a second thought.

Amélie lowers her eyes to avoid Dufayel's gaze, then suddenly raises them again.

AMELIE
Tell me... have you never wanted to paint a picture of your own?

Scene 74 - ext.& int. day - Eros club

Amélie, the album of ID photos under her arm, arrives in front of a peep-show on Rue de la Gaîté. After a moment's hesitation, she enters uneasily. Nobody is at the till. Half-scared, half-amused, she looks at the imposing dildos, the whips and bottles of lubricants. Just then, Eva, a stripper in her 30s, comes out from a booth in a dressing gown.

AMELIE
Excuse me, I found this album in the street and...

EVA
Oh great! Nino'll be over the moon! He seemed so down the other day that I nearly went to light a candle to Saint Anthony. According to my mother, when you lose something important, Saint Anthony's the best thing after Lost Property.

AMELIE
And Nino... is he here?

EVA
Oh no, never on Wednesdays. He works at the Foire du Trône...

AMELIE
Oh. And... he's been collecting these photos for a long time?

EVA
Ever since he started here a year ago. I'm the one who got him this job. Before that he collected cement footprints...

In answer to Amélie's stupefied stare, she clarifies.

EVA
Yeah, he was a night-watchman, so he spent his days

taking photos of all the places where someone had accidentally stepped in wet cement.

We quickly see, superimposed, a hand turning the pages of a photo album containing fossilized prints in the cement : work boots, dog paws, children's sandals...

EVA
He's kind of weird... When I met him, he was Santa Claus in front of La Samaritaine, and he was totally into urban legends. You know the kind of thing: "It was friends of my neighbour's cousin. Their kid was kidnapped in the crowd at Disneyland. They found him three months later... with a kidney missing!"

We see, still superimposed, two guys in a bar. One of them tells the story to his friend, in perfect sync. with Eva. But we only hear her voice.

EVA
Another time he was doing tele-sales, and he kept all the weird answer-phone messages he heard...

We see, superimposed, Nino with a receiver in his hand, listening : "*You have reached the answeringah machinahh of the family of faxopytecs...*"

EVA
And then there were the laughs... those he let me listen to. As soon as he heard a funny laugh, he would record it...

Superimposed very briefly, we hear and see a woman with an idiotic laugh - and a child with a ringing one.

AMELIE
Well... it can't be very easy for his girlfriend....

EVA
Oh, he could never keep one. Hard times for dreamers.

At that moment another, near-naked, stripper appears at the booth door.

STRIPPER(impatient)
Eva! Whenever you feel like...

EVA (to Amélie)
Sorry, gotta go. Thanks for the album.

AMELIE
I've got a bit of time. I'll take it to him myself at the Foire du Trône.

EVA (disappearing)
Up to you... Look for the Transylvanian Train..! ask for Nino Quincampoix, like the street!

Scene 75 - ext. day - Foire du Trône

Amélie arrives at the "Transylvanian Train", a ghost train decorated with vampires, skeletons, witches, etc. Nino's Solex is parked right next to it.

Amélie picks up a skipping stone. She blows the dirt off, then grips it in her fist as if she were making a wish. Finally she slips it into her pocket with the others before heading to the ticket counter.

AMELIE (to the ticket seller)
Hello. I'm looking for Nino. Is he here?

TICKET SELLER
Nino? Oh, he doesn't get off until seven.

AMELIE
There's no way I can see him before then?

TICKET SELLER
Course there is. That'll be fifteen francs.

Scene 76 - int. - Ghost train

So, here she is in a small wagon, slamming into the metal doors. She meanders in the dark amid more-or-less fluorescent monsters. Flapping skeletons burst out of iron coffins, plastic spiders fall from the ceiling, while agonised screams and exhausted, cavernous laughter ring out... Suddenly, the image slows down and the sound disappears.

Nino, in a patched, black body suit, his face hidden under a ski mask, climbs silently into the back of the carriage... Moaning in her ear like a ghost, he brushes against the nape of her neck. Amélie, flustered and frozen, lets it happen, closing her eyes.

VOICE OVER
"Amélie can't believe that a man's hand barely touching

her can make her tingle all the way up to the roots of her hair. All of a sudden, life seems as heady as a seven-skip stone-skim."

Scene 77 - ext. evening - In front of the ghost train

It's the end of the day. Nino comes out of the ghost train, dressed in his normal clothes.

NINO (to the cashier)
'night Marcelle, see you Wednesday.

As he unlocks his Solex he finds a piece of paper stuck, with a safety pin, into the rear view mirror. He picks it up. It's an identical series of photos of the same man, from his collection.

On the back, an appointment for the next day at the Montmartre carousel... One stipulation: he must bring a two-franc coin.

Scene 78 - int. night - Nino's bedroom

In bed, Nino seems to be asleep. On the bedside table is a four-photo series of identical ID photos. Amélie's safety-pin is still stuck on a corner of the photos.

Suddenly, they come to life. The four faces of the same man turn towards Nino.

ALL FOUR OF THEM
Psssst....

Nino turns over and stares at them.

ALL FOUR
Don't you want to know more...!?!

NINO
You ... you saw her didn't you?

ALL FOUR (smirking)
Yeah, we saw her.

TOP LEFT
She slid us into the pocket of her blouse...

BOTTOM RIGHT
Against her breast!

NINO
And....and... is she pretty?

ALL FOUR (knowingly)
Ummm... not bad.

TOP RIGHT
Beautiful.

OTHER THREE
No... just pretty!

TOP RIGHT
No... BEAUTIFUL!

NINO
What does she want from me?

BOTTOM LEFT
She's broke and she wants a reward for giving the album back.

TOP RIGHT
Or, maybe she collects ID pictures too.

TOP LEFT
That's it. And since she's already got us, she wants to swap us for a one-eyed bloke with a moustache!

The four of them crack up like schoolboys.
They stop immediately when they see Nino's face.

ALL FOUR
Of course not you git. She's in love.

NINO
But... but... I don't even know her!

ALL FOUR
Of course you do ; you do know her.

NINO
How long for?

ALL FOUR
A long time ago...

TOP LEFT (in a whisper)
Forever... in your dreams...

Scene 79 - int. night - Amélie's room

Amélie, her eyes wide open, can't get to sleep. Suddenly, her pillow comes to life. Nino's face, deformed by the folds in the fabric, appears. Nino turns towards her ear and wails softly like a ghost.

Amélie closes her eyes. Fade to black.

Scene 80 - ext. day - Sacre Cœur park

From above, the Montmartre carousel. We watch as pigeons fly away.
At ground level, Nino is sitting on his Solex, looking around searchingly.

Suddenly, the telephone rings in a booth. Passers-by look at each other hesitantly. Finally, a young woman picks up the receiver. She listens for a moment, looks around and signals to Nino :

YOUNG WOMAN
It's for you!

Amélie, hidden in a café nearby, the receiver in her hand, is watching him. Nino leans his Solex against the booth and takes the phone :

NINO
Hello?

AMELIE'S VOICE (after a slight pause)
Follow the arrows!

She hangs up.

Nino stands there stupefied, the receiver in his hand. Only then does he see the arrows, drawn in chalk, at regular intervals on the pavement.

He comes out of the telephone booth and follows them. He starts going up the stairs to the forecourt of Sacré Cœur.

The arrows go all the way around the park. Sometimes they're drawn on the ground, sometimes on the low walls, but they all

converge at a MIME ARTIST dressed and made up to look like an Egyptian statue. He is standing absolutely still, his finger pointing towards the horizon.

Nino stares up, not understanding.

Suddenly a CHILD grabs his trouser-leg, and recites:

CHILD
When the finger points to the sky, only a fool looks at the finger.

And so saying, the kid runs away.

After a perplexed moment, Nino looks in the direction indicated by the mime, and spots a pay-telescope on the forecourt. At this point the MIME, breaking his frozen pose, winks at Nino.

Nino runs to the telescope. Suddenly recalling Amélie's note, he takes a two-franc coin from his pocket and puts it in the slot.

Looking through the telescope we see Amélie down below, next to his Solex, rigged out in a scarf and sunglasses. She waves the album of pictures wildly before slipping it into his saddle bag.

Nino rushes over. He runs, taking the stairs four at a time, climbing over the borders, cutting across the lawns...

When he arrives, out of breath, Amélie has disappeared.

Just as he grabs the album, the phone booth rings again. He picks up.

AMELIE
I know who the unknown man in the photo booth is, Mr. Quincampoix.

NINO
But...

AMELIE
He's a ghost. No one can see him, Mr. Quincampoix. He only appears on the surface of light-sensitive film. When young girls are having their picture taken, he leans into their ears and wails "Ooooooooohhh"... while he softly fingers the nape of their necks. Some of them are so scared that they run off before the flash. That's when he gets caught, Mr. Quincampoix...

NINO

Hello..? but... But who are you???

AMELIE
Page 18.

She hangs up.

Nino is dumb-struck. Then his eyes drift down to the album, which he opens to page 18. There he discovers a four-picture photo-booth series of Amélie:

On the first, her hand is thrust towards the lens, hiding her face. On the palm, written with a felt pen, are the words : "*Would you...* "

On the second, her head is out of focus because she is shaking it madly. She is holding up a piece of paper on which is written "*like...* "

On the third, she blocks the flash and appears in silhouette on a white background, on which she has written : "*to meet me...*"

And on the fourth is a huge question mark, drawn on her belly, dotted with her own belly button...

Floored, Nino closes his album and looks around.

Frustrated, he leaps on to his Solex and disappears towards the horizon.

Scene 81 - ext. evening - Montmartre's merry-go-round

An hour later, on the wooden merry-go-round at Montmartre, Amélie, flushed with pleasure, is spinning around and around as if drunk on her own courage.

We rise above the roofs of Paris. Suddenly, in unison, every single chimney begins to puff out billowing smoke. They look like the funnels of cruise-liners, tooting triumphantly atop their decks.

Scene 82 - ext. day - Raphaël Poulain's house

Amélie's father opens his mailbox. He pulls out an envelope with an exotic stamp, which he examines suspiciously. He turns it over and over before deciding to open it. It contains another Polaroid of his garden gnome, posing this time in front of the temple of Angkor. He studies it, mouth ajar.

Scene 83 - int. day - "Tout va Mieux"

At the café, Amélie, Suzanne, Gina and Hipolito are at the counter. Georgette, glowing, is listening to a song on the radio. Joseph is reading the newspaper in his usual spot.

JOSEPH (to the others)
Listen to this : "A six-year-old boy ran off in the middle of the night while his parents were asleep. He was driving his go-kart down the highway near Münster in Germany. The boy told the police that he just wanted to go and see the stars...."

GEORGETTE
Isn't life wonderful?

Joseph goes back to his newspaper while Georgette looks at him lovingly. At the counter, everyone sneaks amused glances at each other.

HIPOLITO
Love at first sight is about the only thing she hadn't caught.

SUZANNE (to Gina, pointing out Joseph)
At least this'll give you a break.

GINA
Too right...

HIPOLITO (pointing to Georgette)
Anyway, you can't say it hasn't given her a glow !

Amélie, automatically, looks at herself in the mirror over the counter...

Scene 84 - int. day - Eros club

At the peep-show Nino grills Eva, who is getting ready to go home.

NINO
Apart from that, was she blonde, dark? Short, tall?

EVA
Ummm. Well medium size, she's not a dwarf but she's not a giraffe either, you know, normal. Pretty, for

that type of thing. Otherwise, blonde or dark, ... difficult to say... In any case, she's not a redhead. Well, maybe....

NINO
Don't worry, leave it.

EVA
But I do remember that she tried oh-so-casually to find out if you had a girlfriend.

In answer to Nino's astonished stare, she teasingly adds :

EVA
I told her you're not interested... I did do the right thing, didn't I?

NINO
You didn't really ... did you ???

EVA (sarcastically)
What's so interesting about this girl? You don't even know her.

NINO
The mystery...

EVA (hurt)
Mystery. Well you're not going to find that here.... Tough shit.

NINO
Don't take it like that. The girl I'm looking for doesn't exist anywhere else either.

EVA
How do you know? Everyone's supposed to have a soulmate somewhere out there.

NINO
I know. My soul mate... I ate her.

EVA
What?

NINO
My mother had an ultrasound scan when she was pregnant. There were two of us. My sister and me. Two perfectly distinct foetuses. But at the end of the nine months,

who was the only one left? Me

EVA
But... what about your sister?

NINO (confidentially)
According to the doctors, I ate her...

Eva looks at him suspiciously and a little perturbed.

Scene 85 - ext. evening - In the street

Amélie goes home. On the pavement, she walks past the blind man and smiles at him. He obviously doesn't see her, but he recognizes the perfume in her wake and smiles a beat later.

Scene 86 - ext. evening - In front of the grocer's

Amélie waits her turn in front of the display at the grocer's. Lucien is serving a customer.

THE CUSTOMER
And a pound of apricots.

LUCIEN
Here, let me get you those over there, they're much nicer.

COLLIGNON (revved up)
Oh, yes, the gentleman is an artist. For the last two weeks I've been watching him leave every evening with a ton of unsold produce. I was starting to wonder if he hadn't won a pig at the ham fair... No no! The gentleman is taking drawing lessons by correspondence course. He spends all day selling leeks and all night drawing rotten turnips..! (he turns to Amélie) what am I s'posed to do with a walking vegetable?

Amélie looks away, upset by the grocer's remarks. Her gaze falls on a basement window.

VOICE OVER
"A wonderful street prompter, just like in the theatre, hiding behind each basement window, ready to give the perfect caustic remark. That's what shy people need so that they can get in the last word..."

(We see instead of the basement window, a prompter's box. Inside, a man with his hands cupped around his mouth)

THE PROMPTER (prompting)
Well you'll never become a vegetable... because even an artichoke's got a heart!

Amélie approves with a wink.

AMELIE
Well ... at least you'll never become a vegetable... because even an artichoke's got a heart!

All the customers look at the stunned grocer and laugh out loud.

The grocer himself literally disintegrates and falls into millions of pieces! (special effect)

Scene 87 - int. evening - Building's stairwell

In her stairwell, Amélie takes out the copy of the key and enters the grocer's apartment.

Scene 88 - int. evening - Collignon's apartment

Once she's shut the door she pulls from her bag a pair of dish-washing gloves that she puts on determinedly, like a professional burglar. In the bedroom, she slides from her bag a pair of slippers like those at the foot of the bed, and swaps them. Then she unplugs the desk lamp, slides a pin through the extension cord and breaks the protruding tip of the pin. Then she changes all the numbers stored in the memory of the telephone. Finally, she unscrews all the light bulbs in the bedroom and replaces them with others from her bag.

Satisfied, she takes off her gloves and leaves the apartment on tiptoe.

(Still spied on by the same pair of binoculars...)

Scene 89 - int. night - Dufayel's apartment

Raymond Dufayel, thoughtful, lowers his binoculars. He's the one who's been spying on her visits to the grocer's.

Scene 90 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Sitting on the sofa in her living room, Amélie starts reading the love letters written by the concierge's husband - the ones she stole earlier on.

VOICE OVER - HUSBAND (barracks atmosphere. We hear, in the background, the sound of boots)
"Dear Mado... With every day, your absence is harder and harder to bear. I am exiled, in a desperately khaki world. I no longer sleep, I no longer eat ... "

Amélie is now lying on the sofa, chewing on a straw which emerges from a glassful of milk. Letters are strewn all over the floor.

VOICE OVER - HUSBAND (we hear an American film on television)
"I've made the worst mistake of my life by going on this training, which will keep me from my beloved wife for five interminable weeks. I think about you all the time. Your Adrien... "

Here, Amélie is sitting on the toilet, other letters on her lap.

VOICE OVER - HUSBAND (sounds of a train trip)
"Good news Mado dearest. In just a little while, I'll earn a decent enough living to buy a car, and I'll be able to come home and sleep with you every night. In the meantime, I hope you are coming here on Friday night ..."

Amélie is lying on the bed in front of the lit, but silent, television.

VOICE OVER - HUSBAND (outdoors atmosphere - countryside)
I've turned down the money from my last commission, since I left so suddenly. I find myself dreaming of better days that are going to come soon. An orange-coloured day, do you remember my dearest Mado? Your Adrien, who has never loved you so much.

Scene 91 - int. night - Concourse of the train station

Amélie, alone on the concourse, photocopies the concierge's letters.

Scene 92 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Amélie is sitting in her kitchen. Before her : a pile of

photocopies, a pair of scissors, glue, and blank sheets of paper. She chooses certain sentences or parts of sentences, sometimes even just a simple word, and cuts them out meticulously with scissors. She then glues all the pieces on to a piece of white paper.

Scene 93 - int. night - Concourse of the train station

She photocopies her collage in the concourse of the Gare du Nord.

Scene 94 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Amélie soaks the photocopies in a tub of strong tea to yellow them. Afterwards, she hangs them up on the clothesline and dries them with the hair dryer.

She is finally finished. Tired but happy, she starts to switch off the lights, getting ready to go to bed.

Passing the window, she glances over into Mr. Dufayel's living room. She grabs the telescope. Dufayel is putting the finishing touches on the girl with the glass of water. Amélie smiles and lowers the telescope.
Below, Dufayel puts his paintbrush down, picks up his binoculars and, in turn, spies on Amélie. In the binocular-lens, the clothes-pinned letters are swaying slowly.

Scene 95 - ext. day - Street

Next day. Amélie is walking down the street. Suddenly she stops, dumbfounded.

On a wall is a little flyer -

"Where and when?"

- with the photo, blown up, of her own belly button dotting the question mark. Amélie blushes as her eyes meet those of the passers-by, and she steps up the pace. On the way to the metro, other flyers are exhibiting her belly button. Embarrassed, she hurries to rip them down and shove them in her pocket.
Then she dives down the metro stairs.

Scene 96 - ext. & int. - Street and train station concourse

VOICE OVER

"Fifteen minutes later, at 22 Blvd. Strasbourg, Amélie enters a costume shop. At the same moment, at 108 rue de Martyrs, a man leaves his house."

We only see his feet. The man is wearing red trainers decorated with a white star... (We recognize the man that Nino chased through the concourse of the Gare du Nord.)

VOICE OVER
"At 10 : 15, Amélie is on the escalator at the Havre Caumartin metro station. She can't help staring enviously at the children running up the down escalator. Meanwhile, in rue des Petits Champs the man in red trainers, at the wheel of his Citroën G7 van, is braking rhythmically so as to get a better look at the blonde at the wheel behind him."

(The sky is black and stormy. The red brake lights shine on the female driver. We see only the man's eyes in the rear view mirror.)

VOICE OVER
"Eighteen minutes later, Amélie arrives at the photo booth at the Gare de L'Est."

(We see her spinning the stool at top speed to adjust the height)

VOICE OVER
"At the same second, the man with red trainers parallel-parks perfectly, in front of the station, disturbing two sparrows taking their bath in the gutter."

Lightning rips open the sky.

VOICE OVER
"It is exactly 37 minutes past 10..."

Amélie's hand slides coins into the machine's slot.

The double doors of the station concourse open. The trainers with the white star appear.

A flash illuminates Amélie, decked out in a Zorro mask.

The man's feet approach the photo booth.
The image goes into slow motion. Amélie takes off her mask, grabs the curtain of the booth with both hands...

She opens them. The curtain rings clink...

Amélie freezes, mouth agape...

Lightning illumines the sky, thunder roars! It's as if the Gare de L'Est has been struck by lightning !!!

We recognize the man with the red trainers. It's the mystery man whose picture keeps on coming back in Nino's album.

Amélie looks him over from head to toe, and a smile lights up her face.

VOICE OVER
"At this precise moment in the story, Amélie is the only one to know the solution to the mystery of the unknown man of the photo booths....""

Scene 97- int. day - The concierge's apartment

It's morning. At the entrance of the building, the concierge is polishing the copper knob of the stairwell railing. The postman arrives and starts to distribute mail in the mailboxes.

POST MAN
Good morning Mrs. Walace. How are you this morning?

CONCIERGE
It's always better when it's not raining.

POST MAN (handing her an envelope)
Here, this is for you.

The concierge goes in and calls her cat... She opens the envelope. We recognize the letter that Amélie typed. She reads it.

VOICE OVER - MALE
Dear Mrs. Walace :
Following the recent discovery of a postal bag lost when a postal plane disappeared on the 12th of October 1964 in the Cordilleras of the Andes, the Mail is pleased to be able to send you the attached letter that was addressed to you. Please forgive us for this unusual delay.
Jacques GROSJEAN, Director of Public Relations.

A second envelope is attached. The concierge opens it, moved. Here is Amélie's yellowed cut-and-paste job. Slowly, she sits down on a chair and starts to read...

VOICE OVER - HUSBAND (different background noises : train, barracks, television film, etc. that are played according to Amélie's cut-and-paste like edited sound tracks.)
"Mado dearest, I am in exile, I no longer eat, I no longer sleep, I think about you all the time. I live knowing that I have committed the worst error of my life.
I have turned down the money and this woman. If everything goes as planned, in a very short while I will earn a decent enough living to buy a house; and I find myself dreaming that better times are on their way soon, and that you will forgive me, and that you will come here one day. An orange-colored day... Your Adrien who has never loved you so much. "

The concierge, overwhelmed, lets the letter drop. In tears, she picks up the portrait of her husband and studies it. Then, she compulsively takes the bottle of Ajax Window cleaner out of her pocket, sprays the glass once and wipes it lovingly.

Scene 98 - int. day - Mr. Dufayel's apartment

Dufayel is painting, facing his model of the "Déjeuner des Canotiers". Lucien bursts into the apartment with a step-ladder. He's holding a manila envelope between his teeth.

LUCIEN
Evening Mr. Dufayel. Here, you've got some more mail.

He sticks his jaw out and Dufayel takes his envelope, which is strangely similar to the first. As Dufayel discreetly wipes off Lucien's spit with his sweater, Lucien is setting up the stepladder to change a light bulb in the ceiling fixture.

LUCIEN
Did you hear what happened to the concierge this morning?

DUFAYEL
A letter.

LUCIEN
From her husband! Dated forty years ago!

DUFAYEL (smiling)
I see.

Lucien climbs down from the stepladder with the burnt-out bulb in his hand.

LUCIEN
Here you go, it's done for. It's a shame that light bulbs don't last as long as stars... I heard we can still see them millions and millions of years after they die.

DUFAYEL
You're interested in stars now?

LUCIEN
I saw a documentary on telly at Mum's.

Lucien sets himself up next to Dufayel at a second easel, which is covered by a protective sheet of paper. He lifts it up. We see another copy of the "Déjeuner des Canotiers", but it's a freer copy, more awkward and naïve but much more personal and creative. Underneath, we can make out faint sketches of turnips and other vegetables. Lucien sets to work.

LUCIEN (apologetically)
The still-lifes were a little boring, Mr. Dufayel.

Dufayel looks over Lucien's work irritably.

DUFAYEL
Maybe so, but in the meantime you'd be better off paying more attention to your dry coat. Oil on dry - always - never the opposite!

They work in silence for a moment. Dufayel can't help but keep glancing at Lucien's work.

LUCIEN
Mr. Dufayel?

DUFAYEL
Mmmm.

LUCIEN
In the newspaper they said there's going to be a new star in the sky soon.

DUFAYEL
Ye-e-e-s, and...

LUCIEN
It's the Americans. They're going to take the ashes of the rich who get cremated and, you see... they're going to put it into orbit and it'll shine like a star... for ever.

Dufayel, wound up, puts his paintbrush down.

LUCIEN
Do you think they'll do that with Lady Di?

DUFAYEL (exploding)
Argghh! God you can be a pain sometimes! I can't concentrate, dammit! OK, that's it, go on, finished for today!

Lucien doesn't object and takes off. Dufayel , muttering, grabs the envelope and heads toward the television. He opens the envelope, takes out the videocassette and slides it into the VCR.

Scene 99 - int. day - Mr. Dufayel's apartment (TV screen)

On the television screen, other incredible, unusual and poetic images follow one after the other. A document from the 20s shows a young Indonesian girl, swaying in a strange ballet, in front of an enraged cobra. She manages to kiss his head at each of his attacks. On another archive film from the beginning of the century, the Queen of has to walk across a muddy field. Footmen wade through the mud, breaking their backs to move two planks. As the Queen walks on one, they lay the second one in front of her, and so on. Thus her Majesty is never interrupted in her slow but queenly progress.

The images stop, leaving just static.
Amused and intrigued, Dufayel stops the VCR pensively. Just then, a voice can be heard outside.

AMELIE'S VOICE
Rodrigue ! Rodrigue !

Scene 100 - ext. day - Building's courtyard

Amélie, leaning out of the window, is shaking a box of dry cat food. The stewardess' cat walks back, balancing in the gutter. Amélie grabs him. Just then, she glances over at Mr. Dufayel's window; he's there and nods to her. Flustered, Amélie disappears quickly with the cat.

Scene 101 - int. evening - Collignon's apartment

It's the end of the day for Collignon the grocer. He sits in his armchair, takes off his shoes, massages his feet and finally slips on his slippers. (the ones that Amélie has changed...) But to his surprise, they seem to have shrunk, or maybe he has swollen... Collignon looks anxiously in the mirror.

He goes into his bedroom (where Amélie has changed the light bulbs), turns on the light. But the light is much dimmer than usual. Collignon remains at the doorway, stunned. Is his sight going? He notices his desk lamp is unplugged (the one where Amélie has stuck the needle in the cord). He goes nearer, perturbed. As he plugs in the lamp, the light bulb explodes and the fuses blow.

Later, depressed, he is sitting on his bed. Feverish, he hesitantly pushes the memory button on his telephone labeled : "Mom". We hear the electronic beeps and a voice answers :

MALE VOICE
Psychiatric emergencies, how may I help you?...

Collignon, his hands trembling, hangs up, grabs a bottle of vodka (into which Amélie has poured some salt) and pours himself a glass. He throws back a mouthful of ... salt... which he spits straight back out, on the verge of a breakdown...

Scene 102 - int. day - Raphaël Poulain's garden

The next morning, Amélie's father, pretending to garden, is anxiously watching for the postman. The postman arrives and hands him an envelope. Raphaël Poulain hurries to open it. This time the garden gnome is posing in front of the Kremlin in Red Square.
Amélie's father, completely bewildered, lays the new Polaroid on the sideboard. The Kremlin meets up with the Empire State Building, the Angkor temple, Kilimanjaro and the Hotel Luxor in Las Vegas...

Scene 103 - ext. day - Outside "Tout va Mieux"

Wheeling a small suitcase behind her, Philoméne the stewardess stops in front of the terrace of "Tout va Mieux". Amélie goes to meet her. Philoméne gives Amélie a package. We see the garden gnome's feet sticking out of the box.

PHILOMENE
So, mission accomplished?

AMELIE
Perfect! You couldn't have done better.

PHILOMENE
And the result?

AMELIE
We're getting there.

PHILOMENE
In any case, I'm ready to do it again whenever you want. Now the harm's done.

AMELIE
What do you mean?

PHILOMENE (smiling)
Snow White. That's what they all call me now.

Amélie laughs.

PHILOMENE
I'm leaving again in 3 days, could you keep Rodrigue a while longer?

Scene 104 - ext. & int. day - Street, supermarket, station concourse

Nino is pedaling furiously on his Solex.

Here he is at a supermarket photo booth, sticking up his flyer "*where and when?*". He can't resist glancing over into the dustbin, under the suspicious gaze of the security guard.
In the rain, his glasses drenched, he slaloms through the traffic jams.

Another photo booth, another flyer.
Still on his Solex, he grabs a passing refuse truck for a free ride.

At the photo booth of the Gare de L'Est, having stuck up his flyer, he pulls out, with the help of a long ruler, the pieces of a picture stuck behind a pillar.

One last sprint on his Solex and here he is at the peep show.

Scene 105 - int. day - Eros Club

As raincoated customers, overnight bags in hand, slip in and out of the booths, Nino meticulously reconstitutes the torn photo as

if it were a puzzle. Little by little, we recognize a young woman with a lovely *décolleté*, wearing a Zorro mask. She is holding a piece of paper in her hand :

"*Cafe 'Tout va Mieux'. I'm often there in the afternoon after 4:00.*"

Nino studies it, impressed.

NINO (pushing the intercom button)
Eva, could you handle the till tomorrow afternoon?

Scene 106 - int. day - Tout va Mieux

Suzanne and Amélie are busy behind the counter. Amélie, nervous, looks at the clock anxiously. It's 4:10...

Gina serves customers. Joseph, at his usual place, is in a bad mood. He's still got his dictaphone, and is making a *sotto voce* commentary.

SUZANNE (to Georgette)
What's wrong with him?

GEORGETTE
He thinks I smile too much.

SUZANNE
He'd prefer you to scowl?

GEORGETTE
With men, yes...

4:11 according to the clock. Amélie is more and more nervous.

VOICE OVER
"*Nino is late. For Amélie, there are only three possible explanations : First, he hasn't found the photo yet....*

(We see the wind scattering the debris amidst the dust)

"*Second, he found it but couldn't put it back together again...*

(We see Nino pulling his hair out)

"*Third, he didn't have time to finish putting it back*

together because three blokes with ski-masks came out of a bank just as he was going past and grabbed him as a hostage. Once the cops were off their tracks, they threw him out of the car. He rolled to the side of the motorway and his head hit the crash barrier. When he came to, he couldn't remember anything. An ex-con lorry-driver picked him up and, thinking that he was on the run, hid him in a container bound for Istanbul. Getting off the cargo ship, he fell in with a bunch of Estonian adventurers who offered to take him with them to steal Soviet warheads. But their truck hit a mine in Chechnya and he was the only survivor of the blast. And, since he has been taken in by a village of mountain people, Amélie really doesn't see why she's getting into such a state for a guy who's going to spend the rest of his life eating borscht with a stupid flowerpot on his head... "

(We see the whole adventure very rapidly)

Suddenly Amélie's face lights up. Nino pops up all of a sudden, completely out of breath. He sits down at the terrace and looks around, staring at the passers-by. A beautiful girl comes towards him. Nino freezes... but she goes past him. A very tarty girl approaches him. Nino is terrorised. But all she wants is a chair. He starts breathing again...

Not for one second does he suspect that, behind the counter, someone is eating him up with her eyes. Amélie is hanging on his every move. Twice, he almost spills his coffee. Amélie finds his clumsiness incredibly moving. Almost as much as the up-and-down of his Adam's apple when he swallows.

Flustered, she washes a glass, wipes it and immediately puts it back in the dirty dish-water.... Amélie examines Nino, his hands, his eyes, his clothes.

VOICE OVER
"That little stain on his collar, that shirt button hanging by its thread... She would be so happy to fix those little things!"

As he drinks his coffee, a little froth stays on his lips.

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
"If he hasn't wiped it off in five seconds, everything is finished between us.
One... Two... Three... Four... "

Nino wipes his lips. Amélie is thrilled... Gina is watching her, surprised. Amélie tries to put on a good front by bustling about even more.
After a slight hesitation, she takes a deep breath and walks towards him, to get a closer look. Here she is, just a few centimetres away from him, but ... on the other side of the window.
Nino turns round. Amélie's attitude changes immediately. Pretending to be completely indifferent she starts, with practised dexterity, to write up the next day's menu backwards on the window.

Menu du jour

Œufs mimosa
Veau Marengo
Tarte tatin

Nino looks away. Amélie is overcome by emotion and her writing becomes a scrawl.

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
"Now he's going to put his teaspoon down. Then he'll lick the tip of his finger to pick up the last bits of sugar on the table. After that, he'll turn around slowly, he'll look at me and then... he'll recognize me. "

Nino puts his teaspoon down. He licks the tip of his finger and picks up the last bits of sugar on the table.

Amélie holds her breath.

Nino intuitively, turns round slowly. He looks at her a long while.
Amélie is like a statue behind the window. Nino stands up and slowly approaches.

NINO (his voice muted through the window)
It's you.

AMELIE (Also through the window)
What's me?

Nino pulls out Amélie's Zorro photo.

NINO
Is it you?

VOICE OVER- AMELIE
And here, obviously, I'm going to say, "Yes, it's me."

She writes on the window :

"NO"

Then she fakes a "So Sorry" face.

Nino, disappointed, goes pathetically back to his seat.

Behind the bar, Amélie drops her head into her hands, ashamed of her cowardice. With nothing left to lose, she rips off a piece of paper and scribbles a few words. She grabs Gina by the elbow and, pointing to Nino, gives her the piece of paper.

The next moment Gina, thrilled to be the accomplice in an affair, slips the paper discreetly into Nino's pocket. She flashes him a smile as she goes by. At his table,
Joseph, who has seen it all, nods his head in disgust.

After a last look at his watch, Nino leaves regretfully.

And here, Amélie literally liquefies and falls to the floor in a puddle. (special effect)

Scene 107 - int. evening - Raymond Dufayel's apartment

We're looking at the Renoir painting; more specifically the young girl drinking the glass of water and the two men behind her.

DUFAYEL
So, which one is your gentleman-caller? The tall one with the top hat ?

AMELIE
Certainly not. That's the nasty man who likes spending his time humiliating people who can't defend themselves. But he's paying for it.

DUFAYEL
So it's the other one? The boy raising his hand?

AMELIE
Yes.

DUFAYEL (pause)
Is she in love with him?

AMELIE (blushing)
Yes.

DUFAYEL
In my opinion, I think the time has come for her to take a real risk.

AMELIE
That's just it, she's thinking of doing just that. She's trying to come up with a plan to ...

DUFAYEL
No, no. No. She is telling herself that it is high time to drop the plans. And if you ask me, she's finishing her glass to give herself enough courage before standing up, turning towards him, baring her soul completely, and telling him how she feels.

Amélie is speechless.

Scene 108 - ext. night - St. Martin canal

On the edge of the canal, a thoughtful Amélie skips stones, unloading all the stones stored up at the bottom of her pockets.

Scene 109 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Back home, distraught, she turns on the television. Two famous politicians are debating.

MINISTER
The real question is whether or not Amélie Poulain wants to spend the rest of her life as an introverted young woman.

MEMBER OF THE OPPOSING PARTY
True. But this is not a pretext for thoughtless action!

Amélie, upset, changes the channel. There is a black and white Polish film with subtitles. Two dangerous looking men are talking.

SUB-TITLES OF THE FIRST MAN
For Amélie, it's too late Krzysztof.

SUB-TITLES OF THE SECOND
OK Zbigniew. Raymond Dufayel is wrong. If Amélie fails, she'll never get over it.

SUB-TITLES OF THE FIRST
No, never.

Amélie changes the channel again. It's a documentary about baby turtles trying to reach the river bank.

COMMENTATOR (fatalistic)
They've got to believe in what they're doing. They have to try...

Amélie changes the channel. Close-up of a sweating rugby player with half his ear ripped off.

RUGBY PLAYER (heavy southern accent)
If you don't try, you'll never win.

Amélie changes the channel... It's *Interville*. A terrified contestant hesitates before diving into a huge pile of blow-up rabbits.

GAME SHOW HOST (beaming)
The hardest part is the first step!

She changes channels nervously. It's a literary talk show.

GUEST SPEAKER (excited)
Quincampoix is a loner, a collector of the useless! You have to understand that he's passionate about mysteries... so it's only to be expected that, once Amélie Poulain is no longer an enigma to him, he'll lose interest in her.

Amélie turns the television off, even more confused.

Scene 110 - int. day - Raymond Dufayel's apartment

Close-up of the clock ticking the seconds away. Suddenly the picture moves and pans slowly across the inside Dufayel's apartment and stops on a close-up of ... Lucien concentrating on his painting.

Dufayel, lost in thought, observes him.

After a while, Lucien looks up and sees the television screen.

LUCIEN (uneasy)

What are you doing Mr. Dufayel?

DUFAYEL
Tell me Lucien, my boy... for your deliveries, do you still have the keys to the other apartments ?

Scene 111 - int. day - Station concourse

Determined, Amélie walks confidently towards the photo booth at the Gare St. Lazare.

Sitting inside, Amélie opens her change purse and pulls out an old rusty nail, a screw and a paper clip. After one final hesitation, she slips them into the coin slot of the machine.

Then, she calls from a phone booth.

AMELIE
Hello... Hello. I'm calling to tell you that one of your machines is out of order. No, it's not working. It's jammed! (faking annoyance): And it's not the first time, either... Gare St. Lazare, in the waiting room... That's it. And when will it be fixed?

Scene 112 - int. day - Eros club

At the Eros Club, Samantha is shimmying naked on a narrow stage, in front of the one-way booth mirrors, to the beat of syrupy music.
At the till, Nino is giving a customer his change for an inflatable play-mate.

NINO
Would you like an automatic air pump with that?

CUSTOMER
Uhh... no, no... (he runs off)

Nino hits the button on the sputtering intercom.

NINO
Samantha..? Samantha, can you hear me?

The intercom starts whistling. Nino, irritated, gets up. In the booth, Samantha continues her number, wiggling her bottom in front of anonymous windows.

Suddenly, behind the window of the service door, she sees Nino

screaming something.

NINO (from inside a booth)
Can you take over this afternoon at 4:00?
Samantha shakes her head : she can't hear him.

Nino fumbles in his pocket and pulls out a piece of paper, and scrawls on it :

"Can you stand in for me this afternoon?"

He holds it up to the window. Only then does he discover the note from Amélie that Gina slipped into his pocket, with the message on the back :

"*Meet me at 5:00 on Tuesday in front of the waiting room photo booth at the Gare St. Lazare*"

Scene 113 - int. day - Station concourse

Fast zoom towards the enormous clock at Gare St. Lazare. It's 5:00.

Nino, nervous, is pacing near the occupied photo booth.

Amélie, hidden further away behind the newspaper stands, watches him...

A man is inside the machine. We only see his feet, sticking out from under the curtain. Getting closer, we discover that he is wearing red trainers with a white star...
Suddenly a flash sparks four times...

Nino looks away from the photo booth to study the passers-by. A fat woman with a little dog, a sexy girl in a hurry... 5:04, still no Amélie.

Suddenly, Nino freezes. Slowly he turns towards the photo booth and studies the red trainers. They remind him vaguely of something... And why doesn't the man come out of the booth?

Nino approaches slowly. We hear metallic noises, like the sound of tools...

Nino gets even closer, even more intrigued.

Just then, the damp photos slip down into the holder. Nino automatically glances over...

...and almost faints...
It's the unknown man! The man from the recurring photo!

Nino opens the curtain and unveils him in the flesh.

Behind the newspapers, Amélie doesn't miss a second.

THE UNKNOWN MAN
Just a second, I'm almost finished.

He leans over and starts to put screwdrivers, wrenches and pliers away in his tool box.

VOICE OVER
"The Unknown Photo Booth Man was neither a ghost nor a man obsessed with hair loss: it was simply the repairman... Just a technician doing his job... That's all."

The man leaves the booth, glancing uneasily over at Nino, removes the pictures, verifies the quality. Satisfied, he crumples them and throws them into the closest dustbin.

Then he heads off, again looking suspiciously at Nino, who is staring at him, stunned...

Amélie, still hidden behind the pillar, is torn.
Forcing herself, she decides to come forward.

Nervous beyond all description, she walks straight towards Nino.
Still shocked by his discovery, he doesn't see her coming.
When there are only a few metres left, a convoy of little luggage wagons comes between them.

It's too much for her : she grabs the chance to hide.

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
Sissy!... Wetty!... Pathetic blob!

But all is not lost! Amélie takes a deep breath, closes her eyes...

VOICE OVER - AMELIE
One, Two, Three, Four, Five..!

She opens her eyes, determined.

No Nino.
Scene 114 - int. day - Tout va Mieux

At the café, Suzanne is alone behind the counter.
Amélie isn't there. Gina goes to Georgette for a pack of cigarettes for a customer.

GEORGETTE
Just look at him.... He never stops spying on me!
It's making me ill... I can't even breathe anymore!

Gina sneaks a peek into the mirror : Joseph is staring at the two of them, recording his comments on the dictaphone.

Gina squeezes Georgette's hand.

GINA (in a whisper)
Hang on in there.

Gina goes to the terrace to serve another customer. He grabs her wrist. It's Nino.

NINO (pulling out Amélie's note)
You slipped this into my pocket the other day, didn't you?

GINA
Yes. But I'm not the one you're looking for.

Nino looks at her inquiringly. Gina shakes her head.

GINA
She's not here. She went to see her dad.

NINO
Where can I find her?

GINA (hesitating)
I'd like to tell you one or two things first. I get off at 6. Can you come back then?

Joseph shoots her a murderous look, glances at the wall-clock and records a comment.

Scene 115 - ext. evening - Raphaël Poulain's garden

Raphaël Poulain is napping in his garden chair.
Through the open window, the radio is playing American jazz from the Twenties..

In his sleep, he hears the fence squeak. A few moments later, he wakes up. The door is open. He gets up with difficulty and goes

to close it. Then he freezes, as if struck by a presentiment. He turns round slowly : the garden gnome has taken up his former place on the pedestal...

Scene 116 - int. evening - "Tout va Mieux"

Hipolito is at the counter. Suzanne is serving the customers alone, spying on the full-scale lover's quarrel between Joseph and Georgette.

JOSEPH
That's right... the fair-haired bloke with the suede jacket, he was 'just absent minded' as well...

GEORGETTE
What do you mean "as well"...?

JOSEPH
Because he came back three times in the same afternoon "as well"...

GEORGETTE
Yeah ... once for cigarettes, once for a lottery ticket and the last time... the last time I don't know why...

JOSEPH
That's what I thought.

GEORGETTE
Stop it! Stop it! My red blotches have started again! I hope you're happy!

She runs over to Suzanne.

GEORGETTE
Suzanne... look... just look at my red blotches... they're starting again! He's driving me crazy...

JOSEPH
If you weren't so guilty you wouldn't get into such a state.

GEORGETTE
I can't stand it anymore! I can't ... anymore! I'm going home!!!

She storms out and disappears.

SUZANNE (to Joseph)

Stop suffocating her like this! A woman's got to breathe a bit.

JOSEPH
That's right - she'll start by wanting to breathe, and then she'll start wanting a change of air.

HIPOLITO
A change of air... is pretty fair....

JOSEPH (aggressively)
And you, you failed writer...

HIPOLITO
Failed writer... failed life... how I love the word "failed"... That's the way human destiny unfolds, through failures.

JOSEPH
Will you listen to him !

HIPOLITO
And from one failure to the next we become accustomed to never getting past the first draft. Life's just the endless rehearsal of a play that will never be performed...

JOSEPH
Oh, yes, keep it up! I bet he didn't even write that!

HIPOLITO
You'd be surprised. I do have a few original ideas, but someone else always steals them. It's like you and women.

JOSEPH
What the hell is that supposed to mean???

HIPOLITO
That you should start getting used to it.
JOSEPH
Hold on, speak for yourself ... you f...

SUZANNE
OK, enough of this performance!

At that moment, Amélie comes in. She stares at the scene, surprised.

AMELIE
What's going on?

SUZANNE
Oh nothing. Georgette's gone for a breath of air and Joseph is having a turn!

JOSEPH
A breath of air ... like hell! She's gone for some fresh blood is more like it... Just like Gina... Do you know what Gina's up to???

Everyone looks at him in stupefaction.

JOSEPH
She's also having a breath of air. With that guy she picked up yesterday while she was "working" the terrace. I saw both parts of her little manoeuvre. First the note in the jacket pocket: 16:45. That way the guy comes back today at 15:12, they set up a date for 17:00 and then away you go... No one saw, no one knows and then they're off having a breath of air!

Amélie goes white.

Scene 117 - ext. evening - In the street

Gina is walking alongside Nino, who is pushing his Solex.

GINA
What worries me a bit about Amélie is that I think you're pretty nice.

NINO
In what way?

GINA
Generally speaking, the more I like a guy the less mentally structured he turns out to be.

NINO
Oh, really?

GINA
And when I find one that's completely irresistible, that means he's ripe for the asylum.

NINO
Lucky I'm only nice.

GINA
Anyway, I'd like to know a little more about you.

NINO
Like what?

GINA
Don't know.

NINO
Ask me some questions, then.

GINA
Umm... what doesn't a swallow make?

NINO (surprised)
What doesn't a ... spring?

GINA
What can't you judge a book by?

NINO
A book... umm... its cover.

GINA
Not bad.

NINO
Any more where those came from?

GINA
In my family, we've always said that someone who's good at proverbs can't be all bad.

NINO
And Amelie? You know her well?

GINA
I'm getting to know her a bit. She's not exactly wild, but you do have to tame her.

Scene 118 - int. evening - Building entrance

Amélie, looking emotionally worn out, gets ready to climb the stairs. The concierge, dressed to the nines and in a state of euphoria, comes out of her apartment.

THE CONCIERGE
Ah... the pretty girl from the fifth floor! I just have to tell you something unbelievable... do you believe in miracles?

AMELIE
Not today, no.

THE CONCIERGE (lowering her voice)
And what if I were to tell you that a climbing expedition in the Cordilleras of the Andes has discovered irrefutable proof that my husband loved me...?

AMELIE
Oh... really..?

THE CONCIERGE
Come in and have a Port, I'll tell you the whole secret.

AMELIE
No, thank you. Another time, I'd rather get home.

She starts to climb the stairs slowly.

THE CONCIERGE
Don't worry so much. Life's full of surprises!

Scene 119 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

She double-locks her door.
She goes to the table and picks up the flyers that Nino pasted up everywhere. She crumples them up and throws them away.

Noticing one last flyer stuck in the mirror frame, she grabs it and rips it up furiously.

Only then does she catch a glimpse of her face in the mirror...

VOICE OVER
"That nervous twitch of anncyance: Amélie discovers it for the first time. But she knows it well - she saw it so often on her mother's face. Suddenly, it is as if she has just seen how she might end up if things don't change. It is exactly what it takes to do her in at this precise moment."

Not wanting to get depressed, she heads straight for the kitchen and, recipe-book before her, she starts feverishly collecting the requisite tools and ingredients for a *kougnamann*. (It's a traditional Breton cake).

She opens her jar of vanilla... perfect : it's empty.

As she is feverishly breaking eggs and adding butter, we see superimposed behind her what she is dreaming of...

Nino is walking in the rain, covering his head with his raincoat. He goes into Collignon's grocery.

NINO
A vanilla pod, please.

Lucien has replaced Collignon. Dressed like him, the pencil behind his ear, he has taken on the confidence but not the arrogance. Collignon, a little lost in the back room, is carrying crates.

LUCIEN (smiling)
Is it for Miss Amélie? I bet she's making her famous *kougnamann*. Collignon will get that for you.

Collignon, servile, obeys feverishly.

Still superimposed behind Amélie, who is kneading the dough, Nino goes back out into the rain with the fruit, climbs the stairs four at a time. He arrives on the landing, goes into the apartment, changes his mind, comes back to the door to wipe his feet on the mat, comes back in for the second time and slowly goes to the kitchen... He stretches out his hand... pushes the door...

...which really does open...

Amélie, her hands filled with flour, stops, her mouth agape. The door stops opening... Nobody. Amélie lowers her eyes : it's just the cat coming in to rub up against her legs.

Amélie's chin starts wobbling like a little girl who's going to cry. Large teardrops fall into the flour.

Scene 120- ext. night - In the street.

Gina and Nino are still walking side by side.

GINA
When she first started to work there we'd take the metro home together a lot. It's impossible to get her to speak about herself. She has a much easier time talking to complete strangers, or the paper-seller.

NINO
I can understand that... when I was little, I had binos.

GINA
Albinos ?!?

NINO
No, binoculars - to see with. I used them both ways : to bring faraway things closer and to push away things that were close. It was a kind of reflex.

GINA
So ...?

NINO
Well, when Amélie talks more easily to a stranger than to someone she knows, she's doing the same thing.

Gina, intrigued, looks at him.

GINA (pointing to a building behind Nino)
She lives there. Fifth floor on the right.

Scene 121 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Teary-eyed, she is kneading the dough angrily.

The doorbell rings. Amélie tiptoes towards the door. The bell rings again.

NINO
Amélie! Open up, I know you're in there.

Amélie doesn't answer. She's frozen.

In the hallway :

Nino listens. We hear the wooden floorboards creak softly. His ear against the door, he hears Amélie trying to hold her breath.

He pulls out a piece of paper and scribbles a word.

In the apartment :

Amélie, intrigued, hears a pen scratching against the door. Suddenly a piece of paper appears under the door. She reads :

"*I'm coming back...*"

We hear Nino's footsteps walking away.

Paper in hand, she goes carefully to the window. Nino appears in the street. He turns back towards her window. Amélie immediately hides behind the curtain.
Below, Nino, his hands in his pockets, crosses the street and camps out on the opposite sidewalk.
Amélie, confused, goes back to her baking.

Just then the telephone, which we've never seen or heard before, rings. Amélie is taken aback.

She goes back to the window. Nino hasn't moved.

The ringing continues. Amélie goes slowly towards the sofa. She rummages in a huge pile of pillows and books from which she finally unearths the phone.

She picks up the receiver cautiously.

MALE VOICE
Go to your room Miss Poulain.

The line is cut.

Amélie is at a loss. She walks slowly to her room and turns the lights on. All the lamps are aimed at her VCR.
The pig on her bedside table is positioned as if he were pointing to the "Play" button. Amélie, hesitatingly, presses the button.

Raymond Dufayel's face, in close-up, appears on the screen.

DUFAYEL
My little Amélie... ever since I was a child, I've been in the habit of staying outside the picture, where other people can't touch me. I know it's been the same for you. The only difference is that you don't have glass bones. You can risk getting hurt : you won't break into a thousand shards. But if you let this chance get away, with time your heart will become as brittle and fragile as my bones. So, go ahead for God's sake! It's now or never, little Amélie... Plunge into life head first!!!

The picture disappears, leaving static.

Amélie remains frozen for a long moment. Then, suddenly, she leaves her room and rushes to the window.

Below, Nino has disappeared.

Amélie rushes to the door!

She opens it and dives into ... Nino.
As he starts to speak, Amélie puts a hand to his mouth to shush him. Then, she kisses him lightly on the neck, then under the eye, then on the corner of the mouth.

She closes her eyes and waits her turn...

As he stands there frozen, she points to the corner of her mouth, leaving a flour print.
So Nino kisses her exactly the same way, at the same rhythm.

Then Amélie grabs Nino by the neck and kisses him wildly, dragging him into her room.
The stewardess's cat looks on, miffed.

Scene 122 - int. night - Mr. Dufayel's apartment

We see Amélie and Nino's silhouettes in the window - through binoculars.

Raymond Dufayel, satisfied, puts them away. Just then, he sees on the television screen the same image of Amélie and Nino...

He turns around. Lucien, his eye glued to the camcorder's eye-piece, is watching the scene as well...

Dufayel clears his throat loudly. Lucien, embarrassed, moves the camcorder away.

DUFAYEL
Lucien my boy, tonight we're dining on artichokes and detergent!

Later :

Pop! Dufayel uncorks the champagne that Lucien had hidden in the bottle of detergent. On the table are canapés of caviar from the artichoke.

The toast each other happily.

Scene 123 - int. night - Amélie's apartment

Amélie and Nino are curled up in bed.
Amélie turns around slowly, turning her back to Nino.
She offers up her nape.

AMELIE
Do the ghost train.

Playing along, he starts to caress her with the tips of his fingers, all the while murmuring in her ear.

NINO (like a ghost)
Oooooohhhhhh... Ooooooooooohhhhhhhhhh..

Fade to black.

A little later :

AMELIE
People who drag their feet...

Nino makes a face :

NINO
Horse butchers...

Amélie's turn to make a disgusted face

AMELIE
Men with beards but not moustaches...

BOTH TOGETHER
Eeeuuuggggghhhh!!!

Fade to black.

A little later :

Despite Amélie's protests and desperate giggling, Nino dives under the duvet and puts his lips to the hollow of her waist and blows, making a huge and hilarious noise. Amélie, still struggling, screams and cries with laughter.

Fade to black.

Scene 124 - ext. day - In the street

The next morning.

As joyful music starts up, Hipolito the writer walks towards the bar.

Suddenly he stops, unable to believe his eyes. In front of him, spray-painted on the wall, signed with his name, stretches a quote from his collection of short stories :

"*Today's emotions are no more than the sloughed-off skins of yesteryear's.*"

Hipolito, radiant, starts walking to the café again, a spring in his step, turning to watch a pretty girl go by.

Scene 125 - int. day - Kitchen

The music continues.

In a kitchen, somewhere in the South of France, Bretodeau is picking the meat off the steaming carcass of a chicken.
He carefully picks out the juiciest bit between two fingers... and slips it into the mouth of a small five-year-old boy (his grand-son), who greedily bites into it.

Scene 126 - int. day - Dufayel's apartment

At home, Raymond Dufayel has started to paint again.

He is still using the Renoir as a model.

But Raymond, light-hearted, doesn't pay the least bit of attention to the original and is happily improvising, Lucien-style.

Scene 127 - ext. day - Raphaël Poulain's house

As the music continues, in Enghien-les-Bains, Amélie's father double-locks his garden gate. All the shutters are fastened.

A suitcase in each hand, a cap on his head, he's waiting for a taxi that has just pulled up in front of his house.

RAPHAEL POULAIN
Roissy, please.

Scene 128 - ext. day - The streets of Montmartre

Amélie and Nino are on the Solex. They zigzag their way across Montmartre, as happy as children!
The singer, Fréhel, appears superimposed:

If you're not there, how can I go on living?
I'll know no more this intoxicating happiness:
When I'm in your arms, my joyful heart arises -
So how can I live if you're not there?

At this point Fréhel disappears, and the song stops in mid-air.

Amelie is clearly trying to say something to Nino, but can't find the words. Suddenly, she sees:

The STREET PROMPTER, from his basement window, moves his lips silently:

STREET PROMPTER
I lov...

Amelie, relieved, places her palm against Nino's face and repeats the phrase into his ear.
Nino smiles and accelerates.

And Fréhel reappears over the image:
The song starts again.

If you're not there...

THE END

Footnotes :-

1/ Brand of shoe polish

2 / Reference to "Poinçonneur de Lilas" one of Gainsbourg's big hits that tells the story of the suicidal fantasies of a metro ticket puncher on the Porte de Lilas line in Paris.

3 / Nephew of the late President François Mitterand, who hosts an exalted television shows about celebrities.

4 / A famous, traditional, Parisian "county fair"