

Leon and Mathilda arrive on the roof of a building which faces Central Park. They get close to a wall and maintain this position. Sunlight floods the park.

LEON (concentrated)

Firstly, you look. For more than one minute. Because there are alarm systems with one minute period. Therefore, you wait and look. Alarms firstly, the sky for helicopters, nearby buildings. Meanwhile, you observe soil's color and will try to wear dresses of the same color. Never lighter.

Mathilda listens very carefully.

LEON

OK. Good. Now you can assemble your weapon.

He opens the violin case and assembles a rifle with telescopic sight and silencer.

LEON

The rifle is the first weapon you learn to use, because you can keep far from the client. The more experience you have, the closer you get.

He finished assembling the weapon and hands it to Mathilda. She's going to pull off telescope's cover.

LEON

No. Always take it off at the last moment, because of light reflexes. They'll see you in two seconds.

They get close to roof's edge. Mathilda sits down and gets in position.

LEON

Relax. You must feel at ease.

Mathilda leans down properly.

MATHILDA

OK, I'm fine.

LEON

Good.

He removes telescope's cover.

LEON

Here, this is the light scoop for night shooting. There, you fix client's distance... How much to the bench down there in the park?

MATHILDA

Huh... 500 meters?

LEON

130... 140...

MATHILDA

How can you say it?

LEON

Look. When you can see his fingers, it's 50 meters. When you just see his hands, it's about 80 meters. When you distinguish arms from body, it's 120-130. When you see nothing more than a shape, you don't shoot. Not very sure. You have one chance out of five to miss. A contract means getting all chances on your side. 5 out of 5. You can't miss a client. Never... If the task is delicate or the risk is too big, you double. That is, you insure yourself by another means.

MATHILDA

What, for example?

LEON

Well, if the guy is far, in a car, and I know weather is going to be bad, rain for example, I think I would plastic the car, with a remote here. I shoot from the distance and if I miss I plastic.

MATHILDA

What if you can't approach the car or he changes car?

Leon thinks.

LEON

Rocket launcher.

MATHILDA

Oh really?

(She looks at the  
road and imagines)

But can you miss the car?

Leon pulls a small box out of the violin.

LEON (showing a special bullet)

It's a coded bullet... You put it in the  
rifle, you glue it to the car, no matter  
where. Then you take your rocket  
launcher and the rocket will get there  
automatically.

MATHILDA

Wow! It's brilliant!

LEON

Yeah... Come on, have a little  
training.

Mathilda gets in position.

MATHILDA

Who'll I aim at?

LEON

Whoever.

Leon pulled out binoculars. Mathilda looks for a victim by  
telescope. She passes over playing kids.

MATHILDA

No women... No kids....

Leon smiles: she learnt the lesson.

LEON

Begin from a steady target. It's easier.

She stops on a man who's reading a newspaper. The man wears  
a suit, Herald Tribune, fat.

MATHILDA

The fat man down there, on the bench.

LEON

Perfect.

Mathilda aims at the fat man. One of bench's boards explodes. The fat man turns his head. He doesn't understand what happened and resumes reading.

LEON

Try again. The same.

Second shot. The bench explodes on the opposite side. The man is still curious but doesn't understand.

LEON(at binoculars)

Too much to the left.

Mathilda concentrates again and shoots: nothing happens. Mathilda wonders whether she missed again and prepares for a new shot.

LEON

Wait...

The fat man softly leans down on his side.

LEON

Bull's-eye.

Mathilda is happy but, evidently, she expected death to be more spectacular.

LEON

Come on, now a walking one.

Mathilda aims at a businessman. She really chooses the ugliest one. She shoots. Man's case explodes and he hides behind a tree: he's scared and doesn't move any more.

LEON

Good! First shot!

MATHILDA

Yeah, but I didn't get him, I got his case and now he's behind the tree. What can I do?

LEON

It's not serious, it's just training.

You have to learn from the beginning to hit the target, then, to improve precision, you'll train, but on cardboards.

MATHILDA

OK.

LEON

Now, try a running guy.

Mathilda gets back to telescope and looks for a jogger.

MATHILDA

The yellow and pink.

LEON

OK.

The guy is footing, sweaty, with a walkman and headphones. Mathilda shoots once. Twice. Thrice. The bullets pass around the jogger, who can't see or hear anything.

MATHILDA

Shit! It's hard when he runs!

Leon hands her another charger.

LEON

Don't lose him! Concentrate. There, reload. OK, keep calm. Calm, breathe deeply. Look at his movements. Imagine you're running with him. Breathe... Hold your breathe... His movements... Now...

She shots and the guy gets a bullet in a thigh. He's scared, but doesn't know where to go.

MATHILDA

Did you see? First shot! It's good, isn't it? Did I learn well?

Mathilda proudly smiles.

LEON(serious and steady)

Put tools away.

Mathilda obeys, seriously.

Night over city. The two are on a small building's stairway.

LEON

Codes!

Mathilda gets by his side for her new lesson.

LEON

For codes, there are two solutions. You have to choose depending on your needs. First case: you have time. You need the code for a later time. So, you wait for night, you get a box with soot powder and blow a little on the keyboard. He does it and pulls out a screwdriver.

LEON

Then you break the little lamp to be sure the client can't see anything. You wait for someone who gets inside, so you have just to see which numbers he touched. Once you know the four or five digits, you have to try all combinations; once per hour and not more than a minute to do not get found.

LEON(continues)

Second case: you have no time but you mustn't get discovered. Screwdriver.

He disassembles lock's cover.

LEON

Here, wires need the code. Always four wires.

An approximately 40-year-old man climbs the stairway. He evidently lives in the building.

MAN

May I...?

LEON

Pardon.

(To Mathilda)

Let pass.

Leon opens the door by disassembled lock's wires. The man is going to pass, but doesn't. Leon's going to resume his

explanation.

MAN

Excuse me, but... What are you doing?

LEON

I teach to the girl.

MAN

Do you teach her how to break buildings' doors, don't you? Don't you give a shit about me? Get away before I call the Police! The man is very nervous, searches in a pocket, then pulls out an anti-aggression bomblet. He'll have no time to use it: Leon pulled out his silenced gun. A shot to the hand and the bomblet takes off. Shot's energy makes the man turn around. A second shot in the back makes the man get over the parapet and disappear in a decorative bush, almost without noise. Mathilda is immobilized. Leon looks around, then resumes.

LEON

So... the wire which starts from the bottom of the metal part and then, you try the other three wires, one by one.

At second wire, the door opens. Leon smiles.

LEON

Simple, isn't it?

She nods yes.

LEON

What's up? I don't feel you're concentrated.

MATHILDA

Yes, yes...

She gets close to the parapet and looks at the bush.

MATHILDA

It's incredible! How did you do it?

LEON

What?

MATHILDA

There, the guy... How did you do that, without even touching him? Without noise. It's like you put him away... How did you do it?

LEON (pause - proud)

Did you like it?

She pauses and seriously looks at him.

MATHILDA

It was brilliant.

Leon and Mathilda at cinema. On the screen, Fred Astaire breaks out as usual.

LEON (talking about Fred Astaire)

Look at his movements... Whatever he says, whatever he does, he never stops. Sad or happy, the movement always goes on.

Pirouette by Fred Astaire.

LEON

...Look! Even the wall, nothing stops him. The movement goes on. He uses everything: soil, wall, his rush, his weight. Life is movement, death is a part of it.

Mathilda listens carefully.

LEON

So, you have to let the client finish the movement he started. It's better, he thinks about other things and he can't see death's arrival. He's got no time to suffer. He isn't surprised. He's got no time even to think. He departs without realizing. He departs in the movement he started.

Mathilda looks at the screen, sparkling eyes.

MATHILDA

...It's brilliant.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSIC

Series of short sequences.

Morning in the apartment

Television turned on. Mathilda and Leon have some abdominals. After some bendings, Mathilda collapses and remains on the floor. Leon goes on, undisturbed. Mathilda tries again.

Weapons assemblage

Leon disassembled a big weapon in front of him. Mathilda observes, very concerted. Leon reassembles it in record time. She's stunned. He hands her the weapon. Mathilda doesn't know where to start from.

Mathilda's room

In the little room, Mathilda started a collection of target cardboards. The first targets have just two or three off-center hits.

Living room

Leon's making abdominal flexes, feet always blocked under a wardrobe. Mathilda is making gym in front of television. Leon glances at her now and then.

Kitchen

Leon pours a big glass of milk. Mathilda sits in front of him. She's tired. He hands her the glass. She shakes her head no, but he clearly shows she can't discuss. She takes the glass without pleasure.

Weapons assemblage

Mathilda's much quicker now, but makes an error. Leon stops her and takes over to explain her mistake. Mathilda understands and restarts.

Mathilda's room

Cardboard collection expands. More and more impacts on targets.

Living room

Mathilda was able to convince Leon to make his gym in front of television and with music. She teaches him, since he's not used to this and is quite embarrassed.

Kitchen

Mathilda pours two glasses of milk. She gives one to Leon: he drinks then they have a race. Mathilda does everything to be fast. Leon is too used: he wins. The two laugh because Mathilda spread milk everywhere. Two kids.

Mathilda's room

Mathilda adds a cardboard to her collection. Five impacts, all virtually on target.

MUSIC ENDS

END of short sequences

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TONY'S RESTAURANT

Leon sits in front of Tony. From his position, he can see the window on the street.

TONY

It's a long time, Leon. You missed two nice contracts, you know.

LEON (badly lying)

...I was training.

He looks at the street: Mathilda is pirouetting in front of the restaurant.

TONY

...You moved too, didn't you?

LEON

Yeah.

TONY

Huh!? Because of the slaughter at your

same floor?

LEON

...Not at all.

TONY

It's better... You see, it's my turf, so I don't want contracts I'm not informed about, on my turf. I'm not opposing, but the least they can do is informing me, isn't it?

LEON

Yes.

Mathilda, outside, sends a "cuckoo" to Leon, who slightly leans down to reply. Tony didn't see anything.

TONY

At a certain moment I thought: maybe Leon would like working on his own? So he makes some little extras?

LEON

Dirty work, and I kill no women and no kids.

TONY

That's what I later told myself! No, Tony, forget Leon! It can't be him, he likes too much his job to make such a slaughter!

Leon can't avoid looking at Mathilda, who's looking up to breathe better. This little woman, only survivor of a massacre.

LEON

Tell me... The money I earn and you keep for me...

TONY

Do you need money?

LEON

No... Just to know... Because it's a long time I work... And I never did anything with my money... I should do something.

Tony is a little surprised by Leon's naivete.

TONY

It's true, you're right... Did you meet a woman?

Leon smiles.

LEON

No, no.

TONY

Pay attention to women, Leon. They are dangerous, you know?

LEON

Yeah... Well... I don't know.. I don't know any.

TONY

Listen, think about what you want to do, but don't worry, your money is there and it's safer than in a bank... Banks are robbed every five minutes!

Tony makes an effort to laugh.

TONY

Anyway, you can't have a bank account, so the discussion is finished.

Leon nods.

LEON

Why can't I have a bank account?

TONY

I'll explain you, Leon: they'll ask you to fill in a lot of forms and you can't write and they'll ask you your job, your employer's name and you can't tell them: My job, I'm a hitman and my employer is Tony, his record is longer than his restaurant's menu. That's why you can't have a bank account!

Leon thinks. Outside, Mathilda lets a young man approach her. They start talking. Leon gets nervous.

TONY

But your money is there, Leon. When you want, you ask me. Take...

He hands one thousand dollars to Leon.

TONY

Take...

LEON

Well, I don't need them...

TONY

Take them, you never know... If you want to have some fun. Take, it's a gift.

Tony puts the money in Leon's hand, who takes it.

LEON

Thanks.

TONY (smiling)

Good. Let's talk business, now?

LEON

I've got a hit perfect for you. I kept it for you. To be made alone. That's what you like. Don't move, I get the file. Manolo! A glass of milk for Leon!

Tony stands up and disappears. Leon looks out. Mathilda accepts a cigarette from the young man. They laugh. Leon can't resist any more. He stands up and exits. He kindly pushes Mathilda aside. The quite nice young man waits.

LEON (low voice)

Pay attention, Mathilda. You can't let people approach you like that. People are kind and very fast, they offer you drugs or other things.

MATHILDA (smiling)

Leon, don't worry. I'm on the street since I've born. I was just smoking a cigarette while waiting for you.

Leon pauses and looks at the young man, who smiles at him.

LEON

Keep away. He looks suspicious. A bad guy, OK?

MATHILDA (smiling)

OK.

LEON

Five minutes. Keep in front of the window.

MATHILDA

OK.

INSIDE THE RESTAURANT

Leon sits in front of his milk. Tony comes back and sits down.

TONY

I have to put on my glasses... My sight is worse and worse... I'm getting old... Here it is.

Tony hands a photo to Leon, who observes it.

TONY

Not easy. Armored car, isolated home, bodyguards all time. I don't know what he trades, but it's a good hit because I've got three contracts on him... Three times eight thousand for Leon. Good deal, isn't it?

Outside, Mathilda has disappeared. Leon gets upset. Tony takes the photo back.

TONY

I write client's data on the back. You have to be quick, he's going to quit the city at the end of the week. With the contracts on his head, I don't think we'll see him again.

Leon is too nervous. He takes the photo and stands up.

LEON

I come back later for details. I've got something to do and... I'm late.

He gets out, looks left and right. You've never seen anyone as nervous as him. Mathilda, crouched down behind the door, jumps on his back. He's relieved and slightly smiles. She hangs on him like a little monkey.

LEON

Come on, get down!

MATHILDA

You were scared, weren't you?

LEON

I was nervous, that's all! Where is the guy?

MATHILDA

I killed him... and cut him and ate all of him... I left nothing for you!

Leo suddenly realizes Tony is behind the window. He shyly smiles, slightly embarrassed. Mathilda makes a big smile to him and heels Leon.

MATHILDA

Let's go home!!!

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Leon arrives to the hotel, Mathilda still on his back. The receptionist smiles at Leon, who doesn't return. Mathilda gets the key with a big smile.

MATHILDA

We'd a nice walk!

RECEPTIONIST (smiling)

Good, Miss.

Mathilda cackles and leads her mount upstairs. In the room, she jumps on the bed.

MATHILDA

Leon? I think I'm falling in love with you.

Leon's milk goes the wrong way. She calmly said it, laying on the bed, spread arms. Like a simple truth. Leon got milk everywhere.

MATHILDA

...Anyway, this impressed you!

He dries himself, but doesn't reply.

MATHILDA

It's strange, being in love... It's the first time for me...

LEON

How do you know it's love, if you've never been in love before?... It may be friendship... or the love you can have with a brother or a father... How can you know?

MATHILDA

...Because I feel it.

LEON (upset)

Huh? Where?

Mathilda puts a hand on her stomach.

MATHILDA

Here... in my stomach... it's hot.

She turns, takes his hand and puts it on her stomach.

MATHILDA

I always had a knot... No longer...

Leon pulls off his hand. He stands up and nervously walks.

LEON

Mathilda, I'm... I'm very happy you've got no more stomach ache, but... this doesn't mean anything. I'm late for work and I don't like being late for work.

Mathilda smiles. She's calm. She rolls herself into the blanket. Leon gets out of the room. He puts various weapons into his case and in his violin. He's nervous. This conversation upset him. He hears a noise, flowing water: Mathilda sings. She's having a bath. He finished preparing his gear. He knocks bathroom's door.

LEON

Mathilda? May I come in?

MATHILDA

Yes.

Leon opens the door. Mathilda is naked and is brushing her hair. Leon closes back the door without entering.

LEON (embarrassed)

Sorry. I heard "yes", so I got in...

Mathilda opens the door. She's still combing her hair. She's still naked.

MATHILDA

Yes... You can come in.

Leon is rigid. He takes a towel and deploys it in front of her.

LEON

Take it, please.

She rolls herself into the towel, without speaking. Leon's relieved.

LEON

I... I've got a contract... I've got to go now. It's urgent. ...So, you stay here. You don't move. About telephone, I let it ring once then I call you back, else you don't answer, OK?

Mathilda is sulky.

MATHILDA

Why don't you take me with you?... I'm ready, now. You said I learn very quickly.

LEON

Quick doesn't mean "ready". And you can't discuss, we said. Right?

Mathilda has to surrender.

LEON

Go on learning like this... Then we'll see.

He gets in the living room and she follows him.

MATHILDA  
May I go to the cinema?

LEON  
No.

MATHILDA  
For musicals? That's part of the job!

LEON  
No, you can't go out.

MATHILDA (resigned)  
OK... you come back tonight, don't you?

He takes his violin and his case.

LEON  
During my absence, you have to work on a very important thing you badly lack: patience.

He slightly smiles. She's sulky.

LEON  
You see, five minutes ago you said you loved me and now you hate me... but I prefer this!

MATHILDA  
I hate you because you depart without kissing me. That's all.

She sweetly closes the door in face of him. For a moment, he's blocked behind the door. The receptionist is walking along the hall and notices Leon prostrated in front of the door.

RECEPTIONIST  
Did you lose your key, Mister?

Leon recovers from his shock.

LEON  
No... I just thought if I'd lost anything...

RECEPTIONIST

And did you forget anything?

LEON

Yeah... But "forgotten" doesn't mean  
lost

He passes in front of the perplexed receptionist, leaving the  
hotel.

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The receptionist is at his desk. The hall is empty. Mathilda  
walks down the stairs, slowly, like a kid who's got nothing to  
do.

RECEPTIONIST

How are you, Miss?

MATHILDA

Fine...

She puts her elbows on the desk.

MATHILDA

I'm sick with practicing, that's it...

RECEPTIONIST

I see. You're good, because I didn't  
hear anything.

MATHILDA

Yeah. I put a rag on the strings, to  
lessen noise.

RECEPTIONIST

Huh? That's smart!

MATHILDA

I'm used to it. Not everyone likes  
music.

RECEPTIONIST

Yeah, true. But what does your father  
exactly do for living?

MATHILDA

...Composer.

RECEPTIONIST

Huh, that's good!

MATHILDA

Yeah, but he's not exactly my father...

RECEPTIONIST

Huh?

MATHILDA

...No... he's my lover...

RECEPTIONIST (pale)

Huh?

Mathilda sighs and glances at the hall.

MATHILDA

I'm going to have a walk... I'll come back.

Receptionist's tense smile.

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MATHILDA'S OLD BUILDING

Mathilda slowly gets to her floor. In front of the door, a thin yellow "no entry" police strip. A cop is distractedly guarding the hall; he's talking with a young black girl. Mathilda gets in her apartment unnoticed. She gets in her room, recovers her teddy bear and her Polaroid. Then, she gets in the devastated living room. There's dry blood almost everywhere. In the corridor, she raises one of parquet's boards. A big roll of 100\$ bills is hidden beneath. There is a small check-book too. She carelessly puts everything away. Noise in the apartment. Mathilda crouches down. Stansfield gets in together with two more guys. Mathilda can see them without being seen. Stansfield is evidently not at ease, he's justifying his actions in front of upper-rank officers.

STANSFIELD

So, the guy was there, he'd hidden a shotgun behind the tent, here. His woman was armed too.

MAN

Where were the kids during first shots?

STANSFIELD

I don't know... that was very fast. I didn't see him pulling out his weapon.

The man writes some notes. The second man observes the cracked entry door.

SECOND MAN

Did you follow the procedure? Who got to the door?

STANSFIELD (getting nervous)

What are you looking for, guys? This guy was shit, we found five kilos heroin in the apartment, and you bother me?

MAN

The fact you're a public officer doesn't give you the right to do whatever you want! The narcotic had been following this guy for two years. They had a lot of information about him. Your quick lonely action upset them. It's normal they asked for an inquiry.

STANSFIELD

I give a shit about the narcotic department! And if you'll go on searching in this shit, you'll fall in it. You can find me at my office... 2702.

MAN

It's routine, why are you doing this to us?

Stansfield didn't listen. He got out. Mathilda slides behind him. She follows him downstairs.

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IN THE STREET

Stansfield gets on a car and departs. Mathilda stops a cab and gets on board.

MATHILDA

May you follow that blue car, please?

The driver smiles.

DRIVER

Do you also want music and skids at every turn?

She hands him 100\$.

MATHILDA

No, I want you to drive smoothly, get your 100\$ and tell me what the last question was.

The driver takes the bill and starts moving. He understood everything.

Stansfield's car stops in front of a building. Mathilda gets out of the cab and follows Stansfield. She gets stopped at the first check-point in the large hall.

COP (amused)

Where are you going, little girl?

MATHILDA

What's that man's name?

COP

Why do you want to know?

MATHILDA

He forgot his money... My mother's got a pub, behind the corner, and he forgot his money, about 100\$.

COP

Huh? I see, but this is the FBI, little girl, and I can't let you in. But if you leave me his money, I'll give him it myself.

Mathilda thinks.

COP (smiling)

You don't trust me.

Mathilda shakes her head no. The cop laughs.

MATHILDA

Give me his name, I will mail him.

COP  
OK. Mister Stansfield, Norman  
STANSFIELD.

MATHILDA  
...Office 2702.

COP  
Yeah... How do you know it?

MATHILDA  
...I heard he said... That's all...  
Thanks.

Mathilda gets away. The cop looks at her, smiling.

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Mathilda gets back in the hotel room. She sits on the couch, in front of the switched off television. One has never seen, nor heard her that concentrated, and determined. Her face looks thirty-year-old. Noise from the lock; she switches television on: anime. Leon gets in, gets off his stuff. He's got a parcel. He puts it on the table. Leon is stunned by her lack of interest for the parcel.

LEON  
...It's for you... It's a gift.

No reactions. No replies.

LEON  
Would you like me to open it?  
(He's too excited.)  
...I open it!  
(He pulls out a  
small dress, flowers  
motif. He's very  
happy.)  
...Do you like it?

MATHILDA (harsh)  
...You'd better directly buy the doll to  
fit in it, that would be clearer! Leon  
doesn't understand. He takes the dress  
and checks it out for defects.

She sighs and gets in the kitchen. Leon gives up. He sweetly

lays the dress down on the table and switches television off. Mathilda comes back with a lot of pop corn. She switches television on again, sits on the couch and turns volume up. Leon is perplexed, he doesn't speak. He gets in the bathroom for a shower. Mathilda turns volume down. She stands up, glances at the dress, touches it by fingertips. Her face is tense. Water flows in the bathroom, but Leon is at door's small opening and observes Mathilda. She eventually leaves the dress, switches television off and gets to the window to look at the sunset. Leon feels bad. He silently closes the door.

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Mathilda sits in front of him, like in an arena.

MATHILDA (cold)  
I'm sick of this, Leon.

LEON  
...You can leave whenever you want. I don't refrain you.

MATHILDA  
...This is what I don't like, you see: you don't refrain me, but at the same time I can't get out!

Leon is still cleaning his weapons.

LEON  
Do you think you learnt patience today?!

MATHILDA (getting nervous)  
Well, I'm a poor pupil about patience?!  
OK?

Leon slightly smiles.

LEON  
...You stayed home, not bad. A good start.

She smiles at him and he returns.

MATHILDA  
I've been out all the time, stupid!

Leon's smile disappears.

MATHILDA

I got home to get my stuff.

She pulls out some dollars and puts them on the desk.

MATHILDA

Here. Not 8000. They're 6800. I hope you will credit me for the missing 1200. Furthermore, I'm going to make your work easier: the guy is Norman Stansfield. Office 2702 at FBI, 5th Avenue, 68th Street.

Leon is pale. Open mouth.

LEON

And... How do you know all this?

MATHILDA (as if it's evident)

The above Norman was in my home when I was there, and I followed him, that's all.

Leon tries to keep calm.

LEON

Are you calmly telling me you spent the day at FBI?

She shrugs her shoulders.

MATHILDA

No! I can't come in! I remained outside! And why do you mind this? You've got client's name, money's on the table: it's a good contract, isn't it?

Leon looks at her, then looks at the money.

LEON

Not taken.

MATHILDA

Why?

LEON

Too heavy.

Mathilda thinks fast.

MATHILDA

Well... Then may you rent me your gear  
for the day?

LEON

I never rent my gear.

Blocked on every front, she sweetly starts crying.

MATHILDA

Why are you doing this to me, Leon? Why  
don't you take me with you for contracts?  
If you teach me, we'll can do mine  
together! That would be good, wouldn't  
it?

Leon intensely look at her, neither severe, nor badly. Just  
cold, like an iceberg.

LEON

Mathilda, nothing is the same, after you  
kill someone. Your life changes forever.  
You'll can never cancel it, neither from  
your memory, nor from your criminal  
record... You'll never sleep again like  
before, Mathilda.

Mathilda dries up her tears. She's abandoned, exhausted.

MATHILDA

If you knew, Leon...! I killed one  
thousand in my head... And this never  
disturbed my sleep.

LEON

OK... And if it's you who gets killed?  
(Mathilda doesn't  
reply.)  
...Then? Talking about other people's  
death is easy, but what about yours?  
She's here! She moves around you, and  
can get you in a thousandth of second.  
Because it was your day, your hour, your  
second...

Mathilda looks at him. Leon gets confused.

LEON (con't)

It's written in the sky, from the beginning, just you don't know! Then someone announces you like this! Suddenly! "Did you ask yourself what time you will die?" Well, it's now! And it's too late already, you've got a bullet in your lungs already! There!

He pushes her by his index finger, enough to hurt her.

LEON

Painful, isn't it?

(He pushes again.)

You don't like talking about death because you're like everyone: you fear it...

LEON

...Well, it's this fear that makes you live. It's because you fear death that you live with so much tenacity. It's because of it that you bear what's unbearable. You can live in a hovel, on lots of trash, everything is better than death and the fear you have of it.

(Pause)

But me... Leon... I don't fear it any more... They look at each other for a moment. It takes a long to lose it, this fear, but once you lost it... You are free... And just then you can start working properly... Because you can work on other people's fear, play with it... Because "kill or get killed" have become just words... Do you understand?

Mathilda slightly nods yes.

LEON

...You can't pretend to make this job, until you get beyond this stage. The day you get free of this fear... Not before...

Mathilda looks at his eyes, without challenge.

MATHILDA

Leon... I have no fear... It's so.

Leon stares at her. He tries to ascertain truth in Mathilda's eyes. A long pause.

LEON

OK...

He takes a weapon, empties the cylinder, then loads just one bullet.

LEON (con't)

...Do you know this game?

Mathilda nods yes. He turns the cylinder.

LEON

One shot ahead... I start.

He gets the barrel to his temple so that, if the bullet explodes, blood will get out with a downward angle. He's ready.

He pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. He puts the gun in front of her.

Mathilda takes it. She looks at him with so much love he almost gets upset.

She's not scared. She'd just like things to be different; maybe she'd like Leon to open his heart to her. She sighs, looks at the gun. She takes it, lifts the cock and aims the weapon at her face. She's resigned.

MATHILDA

...Love or death.

She gets the barrel in her mouth and looks at Leon. A tear drop on Leon's front. She pulls the trigger. Nothing. She puts down the gun. Leon stands up, turns around the table and embraces her. He holds her tight. She's surprised. She kindly pushes Leon back, to look at his eyes.

MATHILDA

Am I ready?

Leon pauses, slightly smiles and nods yes. Mathilda closes her eyes, happy and relieved. She takes his hand and embraces him for a long. Leon lets her do.

\* \* \* \* \*

MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

Leon and Mathilda in a '50s building. Slightly luxury. Leon checks emergency exits, then gets in front of a door. He moves his hand along door's border.

MATHILDA

What are you doing?

LEON

I'm looking for chain's position.  
Sometimes you can't see it, but you can  
feel it... Here.

He opens his overcoat and pulls out large shears. He pulls a chewing-gum out of his mouth and squeezes it on the peephole.

LEON

I ring and you make him open, OK?

He rings.

MATHILDA (caught slightly off-balance)

What shall I say?

LEON

Whatever you want.

Mathilda thinks. The guy arrives behind the door.

MAN

Yes?

MATHILDA

Good morning, Mister... It's Danielle!

MAN

Huh! You made an error, baby. I don't  
know any Danielle.

MATHILDA

...I got lost, Mister.

MAN

Huh? Move back, baby, I can't see  
anything.

MATHILDA

It's not me, it's dark here... and I  
can't find the switch.

She looks at Leon and he mimics "mean".

MATHILDA

Mister... I'm scared.

Leon thumbs up.

MAN

Huh? Don't move, baby.

Noise: the man is engaging the safety chain. Leon prepares his shears at the correct height. The man opens the door. The chain explodes. Leon already pulled out his silenced gun. The man is pressed against a wall. Mathilda looks around, takes the gum off the peephole, gets in the apartment and closes the door. Leon catches man's throat.

LEON

Open your mouth.

The man obeys. Leon puts the silencer in his mouth.

LEON (con't)

...If you let go of the gun... I pull the trigger, OK?

The man, sweaty, nods yes. Leon checks out the apartment and the man follows him like his shadow. Leon moves without paying attention to him, forgetting the man is totally concentrated to do not let the gun out of his mouth. In the living room, on the desk, syringes and the stuff for them. Leon finished checking, everything OK. They go into the bathroom.

LEON(to Mathilda)

We go there, good.

(to the man)

Lets go.

The man is so scared he doesn't want to let go.

LEON (con't)

...You can let go, I said!

At last, he lets go.

LEON (con't)

...Get to the end.

The man obeys. Leon hands the gun to Mathilda.

LEON(to Mathilda)

Go... It's your time.

She aims at him, concentrated. She signs to the man to move left. He obeys. She pulls the trigger. A dull noise. The man collapses to the floor.

LEON

Good... Safety, now. The second shot. Mathilda approaches the man and shoots again. Maybe too low: a squirt of blood on her dresses.

LEON

Here it is! Look at your dresses, now!  
How can you walk in the street, now?

He recovers his gun.

LEON (con't)

...Not a good work, this. When you shoot from this angle, you always get blood everywhere. You have to move aside and shoot with a little more angle...  
There... This way.

He shoots. It makes no difference to the man.

LEON (con't)

...Can you see? Look: not a drop! Come on, try.

He gives her the gun again. Mathilda moves on a side and shoots. Perfect.

LEON

Good.

Mathilda returns the weapon. She looks for a little sign of gratitude, maybe a compliment, but Leon is hermetic.

LEON

...Let's go.

\* \* \* \* \*

They are in a luxury restaurant. Leon pours some champagne.

Mathilda is happy. They drink. Mathilda drinks everything in one gulp, like she's used to with milk.

MATHILDA (slightly inebriated)  
I thought we can't drink?

LEON  
It's true... But a first contract, it's an exception.

MATHILDA  
And... May I kiss you, like in the movies, may this be an exception?

Leon's champagne goes the wrong way.

LEON (serious)  
...No.

Mathilda smiles.

MATHILDA  
...Yes.

She stands up and sweetly turns around the table.

LEON (not at ease)  
Mathilda, what are you doing?

MATHILDA  
...I'm going to kiss you.

LEON  
Mathilda, stop, please!

She heels on the bench, close to him.

MATHILDA  
Come on, let me do. Just a kiss.

She tries to kiss him. He avoids her.

LEON  
Stop. Everyone is looking.

MATHILDA  
Of course, so kiss me quickly, or

they'll notice us.

Leon gives up, at last. She sweetly kisses him.

MATHILDA

Tongue, please.

Leon pushes her away, irritated.

LEON

No, that's enough! Sit down, now.

Mathilda smiles and gets back to her seat. Good timing, the waiter arrives with their dishes. Mathilda exploits his presence to fill up again her glasses with champagne. The waiter gets away. Leon grabs the champagne bottle and voids it in the ice cup.

MATHILDA

...You don't believe me, don't you?

LEON

What?

MATHILDA

When I say I love you.

LEON

Mathilda, don't resume, please.  
....Change subject, OK?

MATHILDA

...OK.

(pause)

I love you anyway.

LEON

Mathilda?!

MATHILDA

OK, OK! Excuse me! How old were you when you had your first contract?

LEON

...17.

Mathilda smiles and lifts the glass.

MATHILDA

Beat you!

\* \* \* \* \*

ANOTHER DAY - ANOTHER APARTMENT - RAIN OUTSIDE

The building is a little more modern. They arrive in front of a door. Peephole. Chewing-gum. Shears. Ring. Routine. But today nobody replies. Leon nods. Mathilda rings again. Again nothing.

LEON(thinking at high voice)  
I left him half-an-hour, after he got  
in... He couldn't get out from the back.

Mathilda waits. Leon puts down his shears and pulls out a crowbar.

LEON

Stairways cover.  
Mathilda pulls a gun out of her jeans and gets in position near stairways. Leon pulls out a metal plate and slides it beneath the door, breaks the lock by the crowbar. The door is virtually intact. Leon gets in, weapon at hand. Leon moves in along the corridor. Mathilda is at the entry, now.

LEON(low voice)

Interior cover.

Mathilda gets in and closes the door behind her, by the way she pulls in the shears Leon left outside. Leon is still moving, the living room is empty. Open windows, still rain. Leon sighs.

LEON

...Shit!! We'd found him. We waited for  
him to get upstairs and he got out of the  
window.

MATHILDA

What shall we do?

LEON

I think.

Mathilda turns back and walks toward the corridor.

LEON

Where are you going?

MATHILDA

Piddle.

She smiles and looks for the bathroom. She finds it and is going to go in when she sees the head of a man in the bath, walkman on. She withholds a shout and gets against the wall, without moving. She doesn't dare passing before the open door again to join Leon. In the living room, Leon still thinks.

LEON

...Why didn't he close the window?

He looks around and sees man's overcoat, still wet. His wet shoes are on the radiator.

LEON

...Because he didn't get out!

Leon stands up, pulls out his gun and runs toward the corridor. Mathilda, against the wall, looks up, to make him understand "it's not too soon"! Leon advances. Mathilda mimics to make him understand the bath, the walkman. Leon pulls out his personal periscope and looks into the bathroom. The man is still there, music at full blast. Leon puts away his periscope.

LEON

He's sleeping.

He silently gets in the bathroom, followed by Mathilda. They sit down and look at the man, sleeping in the mid of his warm bath. Leon pulls out his silencer and screws it on the gun.

MATHILDA

It's cool departing this way... warm... music...

LEON

There are better things. You see the importance of the "moment". Ten minutes early or late, he'd have seen death. He'd have suffered it. This way, he already departed. Without knowing.

MATHILDA

...I'd like knowing what he's listening to...

LEON

...Later.

Leon lifts his gun's cock and puts the weapon in front of the man.

- Close-up: a finger pushes a lift's button.
- Close-up: red light on, lift's coming.
- Close-up: Leon's hands open a packet of chewing-gums.

\* \* \* \* \*

ANOTHER BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

Mathilda and Leon in the corridor of a banal building. Leon offers a chewing-gum to Mathilda, who accepts it. She's listening to a walkman. Leon sweetly pulls the headphones off her head.

LEON(kindly)

Mathilda, we're at work! No music, OK!

She smiles.

MATHILDA

OK... I like it. It gives me the rhythm.

He smiles. Mathilda finds the door, places her chewing-gum on the peephole and gets in position for her "chat". True routine. Leon in position. Mathilda rings the doorbell.

MAN

...Yes?

MATHILDA

Excuse me, Mister... I'm looking for Mister Rubens' apartment, but it's dark out here and I got lost...

MAN

...One second.

She thumbs up, alright. Leon keeps concentrated. He hears a noise he knows. He searches in his memory. FLASH: Leon loads a kalashnikov. Same noise. Leon catches Mathilda and literally throws her to the soil. Behind her, the door explodes with numberless impacts. The man inside empties his charger on the door. Leon threw away his shears and pulled out his shotgun. He's furious, to this extent he fears for Mathilda. He gets concentrated as he's never been. The man inside shouldn't have become that nervous. Furthermore, he goes on.

MAN

Come on, little stupid? Is it enough or want some more! Then? Come on, show me your face! Come!

MAN

Did you think you could get me by such an old trick?! The gum trick, I played it before your birth, idiot! Come on, show me your little fucking face! The gum trick! Huh! I go.

Mathilda's recovering. Leon sighs.

LEON(to Mathilda)

When it starts this way, it's bad. You have to make it quickly, or he'll keep us here for hours with his bullshit!

Leon gets a hand under his overcoat and pulls out something.

LEON(to the man)

Hey!... What about the ring trick... Do you know it?

MAN

The ring trick? ...Come on, little idiot! Show me your famous trick. Come on, I'm waiting! Come!

From the inside, you see a grenade rolling in the apartment.

MAN

...Shit.

The apartment explodes. Nothing more.

Leon turns toward Mathilda and shows her the ring in his hand.

LEON

This is the ring trick.

Mathilda stupidly shakes her head: she's dismayed.

\* \* \* \* \*

TONY'S RESTAURANT

About 4pm. Restaurant is desert, apart from Dino, who's keeping books at his usual table. An elegantly dressed man gets inside. He's forced to put away his sunglasses because of the feeble interior light. He looks nervous. He sits in front of Tony. He's a little surprised.

TONY

Tell me, there's nobody in the restaurant: you're not forced to sit at my table?

MAN (still not at ease)

...I need company.

The man pulls out his badge and hands it to Tony. He works for FBI.

TONY

Rinaldi... Rinaldi... What region do you come from?

RINALDI

Messina.

TONY

Emilio? Due grappe!  
(to Rinaldi)  
...Why the hell did you come here?

He returns his badge.

RINALDI

Rightly... I came here to recover.

Rinaldi hands him a small photograph. Tony looks at it and turns it to read the note on the back.

TONY

But... He works for your same employer?

RINALDI

Yeah, but I don't give a shit about. I trade at left, at right and that's dangerous in there...

TONY

It's a little out of the world coming to visit me this way, on mid afternoon. It really isn't the usual procedure...

RINALDI

I know... But I'm a little pressed.

Tony is perplexed.

TONY

...Who sent you?

RINALDI

Giancarlo... Rinaldi.

Tony smiles.

TONY

Is he still alive?

RINALDI

Yeah... And still in Messina. He's my  
uncle.

TONY

Huh? Are you Alfredo's son, then?

RINALDI

No... Dino's.

The kid didn't fall in the trap.

TONY (smiling)

...It's true... How is he, the old  
Dino?

RINALDI

He's dead, five years ago...

TONY (saddened)

Sorry... You see what's this job, you  
work, you work. You even don't care  
visiting friends now and then...

He takes a blackboard and writes 16000 ahead. He gives it to  
Rinaldi. Rinaldi reads, then writes "Is it double". Tony  
smiles.

TONY

Have you ever been in Messina, son?

RINALDI

Yes... Twice.

TONY

Did you fish in Messina? The "pesce spada"?

RINALDI

No...

TONY

It's a specialty down there. It's a fishing boat with, in front, a long pole near the surface. Then, near the cabin, a very tall mast with a little cabin for the lookout.

TONY

A lookout above, one below, two fishers and a captain. A lot of people, for such a small boat like that. They depart to the sea, sometimes for days, never sure they'll get something.

Rinaldi listens. Tony speaks and writes at the same time.

TONY (con't)

Sometimes, it's a lot of work for nothing. ...And then you must know that, the bigger the fish is, the older it is, the more expert it is... ...Therefore, the more difficult he is to get. You understand what I mean, son?

Rinaldi nods his head yes. Tony writes 12000 on the blackboard.

RINALDI

I think I will get back in Messina this summer... It's too long I haven't been there.

TONY

You're right, son. You must care the links with your family, always. It's the only important thing in the world.

RINALDI

...Yeah.

He says "yes" to the phrase and to the deal. Emilio delivers two grappas. Tony gives him the photo and the blackboard. The two drink.

TONY

Salute.

RINALDI

Salute.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW APARTMENT - DECREPIT

Leon prepares his tools. Mathilda sits on the windowsill.  
Leon wears his overcoat.

MATHILDA (sulky)

...I preferred the hotel.

LEON

Mathilda, hadn't you told that bullshit to the receptionist, we'd still be in the hotel, I make you notice.

MATHILDA

That wasn't bullshit, I said we love each other.

LEON

Yeah!... Anyway, I don't like hotels. Too much people, everyone's got the key... I don't like it.

Mathilda gets even sulkier.

LEON

...I prefer apartments... Furthermore, there are always kids in a building. What about getting some friends?

MATHILDA

Friends? You're crazy! In my building, before, they just cared drugs all day and you couldn't get one, or they just cared video games and you couldn't get one, no more.

LEON

You're darkening the picture, aren't

you?

MATHILDA

A little...

LEON

Is there a normal 13 or 14 year old boy?

MATHILDA

Yeah... There's a lot on TV.

Leon is slightly annoyed by Mathilda's lack of cooperation.

LEON

Well, then watch television!

He switches on.

LEON

...I won't be long, Mathilda, OK?

MATHILDA (kind)

Why don't you take me with you?

LEON

It's too big.

MATHILDA

Yeah... I'm just good for left-overs!

LEON(kind)

Let me alone for a while, Mathilda, OK?  
My life changed since I met you, you know? ...I have to find back myself a little... And, last time, you really didn't pass... And I wouldn't enjoy seeing you explode against a wall...

MATHILDA

Risky business, isn't it?

LEON

...You're young, Mathilda... You still have a chance to get out. You can't give up this chance. You have to protect it. There's a lot of things to do in life, a lot of other jobs...

MATHILDA

There are just two things I'm interested in: love and death. For the moment, I have none of the two!

Leon tries to reply, vainly.

LEON

Mathilda... There's equally a lot of other things!

MATHILDA

Huh, really? What? Come on, I'm waiting!

Leon searches.

LEON

...Nothing, I tell you! Everything else reminds me a big yogurt: warm and rancid.

Leon laughs, she doesn't.

LEON

No, excuse me... It's the yogurt that made me laugh.

MATHILDA

You've just to love me and I'll be the happiest woman around.

LEON

Yeah, I know! But for the moment you're not yet a woman. So, be patient... I need time... And you too. You have to grow up.

MATHILDA

I don't grow up any more. I just get older.

Leon sighs. He takes his case and gets out.

LEON

I won't be long. Two days at most, promised.

He closes the door. Mathilda remains sad, at her window.

\* \* \* \* \*

RAIN ON THE CITY -

MATHILDA'S BORED

SERIES OF SHORT SEQUENCES

- She's on the windowsill and looks at the flowing water that will temporarily clean the city.

She smokes a cigarette.

She opens the double bass.

She assembles and disassembles a Uzi, last model.

She watches television, falls on her head, embedded in her soft chair. She eventually switches off, at this extent the program bored her.

She finishes her syrup peaches, while listening to music.

She shoots some self-portraits by her Polaroid, mandatory grimace.

\* \* \* \* \*

NO MORE RAIN - SUN RAYS OVER THE CITY

Mathilda is at a public phone.

MATHILDA

...Good day, Madam, may I talk with Jenny, please?

JENNY

Yes?

MATHILDA (smiling)

...It's Mathilda.

JENNY

HEY!! But what did you do?! What happened?? It's months you've disappeared. Everyone thinks you got killed, at school, above all since some FBI guys got to school and asked a lot of questions about you!

MATHILDA (surprised and proud)

Huh?... Did they ask you any questions?

JENNY

Yeah, pal! And I didn't say anything, I said I don't know you. But do you know what did she say, that stupid Raphaella?

MATHILDA

No?

JENNY

She told them you wanted her things and that she wasn't surprised police looked for you! Can you believe it?!

MATHILDA

Asshole. But she won't miss anything, that. You'll see.

JENNY

Good, what are you going to do? Do you come back?

MATHILDA

No... I can't... I got tired. I want to live my way.

JENNY (surprised)

...Did you leave alone?

MATHILDA (smiling)

...No.

JENNY

(shouting)

YEAH! I was sure! Come on, tell me! I know him?

MATHILDA

No.

JENNY

Come on, shit, tell me! Is he beautiful?

MATHILDA (moved)

...Yes, I think.

JENNY

I can't believe it! "Yes I think"...  
How she kids me! I can't believe it! And did he pass your threshold or not?

MATHILDA

...What?

JENNY

Well... Did you sleep with him or not?

MATHILDA

No... Not yet. He's very shy... and very sensitive.

JENNY

...Good... But what's special in him?

MATHILDA

...I don't know... It's true he touches me. I love him.

Tears slide down along Mathilda's cheeks.

MATHILDA

I'll miss you, Jenny.

She softly puts down the receiver. Sun recovers. City is yellow.

\* \* \* \* \*

TONY'S RESTAURANT

The old Tony at his usual table. Three little boys in front of him. Their hands on their eyes.

TONY

Don't peep, OK? Attention...

Emilio arrives and puts down a chocolate cake with five candles on it.

TONY

You can look!

The boys shout with joy. Stansfield now gets in the restaurant with six men. Tony immediately stiffens. Stansfield blows on the candles and leans toward the children with a stupid smile.

STANSFIELD

Happy birthday!

Without smiling, he signs one of his men to regroup the kids with Emilio. The children obey. As if they feel it's not the moment to bother. Tony doesn't oppose.

TONY

You'd better talk good, son, because, for the moment, I've got a quite bad opinion about you. Norman smiles.

STANSFIELD

I respect your business, Mister Tony. Every time we asked your help, we were very happy with the result. It's right this that makes me nervous, now. I hope you'll excuse my temporary bad mood?

TONY

Then...

STANSFIELD (to one of his men)

Take me the pork!

One takes in the young Rinaldi who had visited Tony. His face is made swell, unrecognizable.

STANSFIELD

Do you recognize him?

TONY

...Even his mother wouldn't.

Stansfield looks at Rinaldi.

STANSFIELD

You're right.

He pulls out his gun and kills him. Like one kills an insect. Tony strongly stiffens. Emilio looks after the children.

STANSFIELD

I've got an offer for you: you keep your 12000\$, you call back your shitful cleaner and you tell him the contract is cancelled. You see, the man to be killed is my boss, and I'd be really sorry with losing him because he's a good boss. He lets me work like I wish... It's fine. And 12000\$ to do nothing aren't bad, aren't they?

Tony is really disturbed.

TONY

Listen, son, you know as well as me this kind of hitmen: they come from nowhere, get the contract and disappear. They're lonely, worse than wolves.

STANSFIELD

May we have this wolf's name and address?

TONY

These guys have no place. They change virtually everyday. And his name... It's a surname.

Stansfield pauses. He stares at Tony.

STANSFIELD (to his right hand)

Take me the children...

Tony closes his eyes. Stansfield puts his gun on the table. Children make a row in front of the table.

STANSFIELD

...Come on, I make you a favor. Tell me which is the one you love least. I'll kill him first.

Tony slightly sighs.

TONY

You know, boy, I know their parents very well; I think they won't appreciate your sense of humor.

STANSFIELD (falsely naive)

Huh, really?

TONY (serious)

If you touch them, you'll have all the hitmen of the city on your ass!

STANSFIELD (pause)

...You're right. It's a little risky.

Stansfield takes his gun and kills Emilio.

STANSFIELD

It's good he had no family. Come on,  
speak, now!

Tony is petrified. Children shout and get under the table.

STANSFIELD

Else, I'll have to ruin this birthday.

TONY (surrendering)

...Leon... Leone MONTANA. I know he's in  
a small hotel in Noho... But I don't know  
where... Houston Street, I think... I  
can't tell you more... Even if you kill  
all the neighborhood.

Stansfield puts away his gun and stands up.

STANSFIELD

Thanks Tony. Justice will be grateful  
for your precious collaboration.

He points at Emilio's corpse.

STANSFIELD

...Would you like me to call the police,  
for this little incident?

Tony looks down, then shakes his head no. Stansfield smiles.

STANSFIELD

Good!

The group gets out. Children run into Tony's arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW BUILDING

Mathilda sits at stairways' end, in front of a long corridor  
and a small court.

Five kids, about 13-year-old, play baseball in the corridor.

THE BOSS

You're the new one at 5th?

Mathilda nods yes.

THE BOSS

Shall we explain her everything, ok?  
This will avoid misunderstandings.

Mathilda waits, curious.

THE BOSS

(to Mathilda)

You can't sit here like that.

MATHILDA

Huh? Why?

THE BOSS

Because you have to pay. It's like a  
parking meter: if you stay, you pay. It's  
the rule...

MATHILDA

...And how much is it?

THE BOSS

Ten dollars... A month.

Mathilda looks at them and pulls out a roll of 100\$ notes.

MATHILDA

Got the change for 100?

The kid is impressed but tries not to show.

THE BOSS (playing serious)

...Wait, Poly's the treasurer.

(to Poly)

Poly, have you got the change for 100?

POLY (shrugging his shoulders)

Why do you ask me? You know I haven't a  
dollar!

Mathilda saves his face. She hands him the note.

MATHILDA

...It's not serious... It means I'll  
pay ten months in advance.

The kid takes the money, perplexed.

THE BOSS

...OK... Good.

MATHILDA

Can I sit on the stairways now?

THE BOSS

Huh... Yeah, yeah... Of course.

Everyone is surprised by Mathilda's calm.

A KID

...Would you like a cigarette?

MATHILDA

Yes... Thanks.

Another kid lights it. The last one pulls out a bottle of whisky.

THE KID

A little draught?

MATHILDA

No thanks... Never alcohol.

\* \* \* \* \*

LATER - IN THE COURT

The kids and Mathilda play baseball. The ball gets to Mathilda. A little too fast: she avoids it.

THE BOSS (shouting)

Huh! Mathilda, bitch! Run! Run!

Mathilda runs, gets the ball and launches it very awkwardly. The boss is furious.

THE BOSS

...Bitch! You're really nil! Come on, get away! Get back to your stairways!

Mathilda abandons the game, oppressed.

THE BOSS

You fear a ball?! I can't believe it!!  
Gals!... Come on, let's play, not a game  
for gals!

Mathilda stands up, this time she's really annoyed. She gets upstairs. She opens the violin and takes a gun. Downstairs, kids have a pause.

THE BOSS

Good, let's have a break, five minutes.  
Poly? Cigarettes.

Mathilda joins back the kids downstairs.

MATHILDA

Look, the fearful's got a game for you.

She pulls out the gun, opens the cylinder.

MATHILDA

...You can show me your balls! Russian roulette, you know?

\* \* \* \* \*

IN FRONT OF MATHILDA'S BUILDING

Police line. Two cops guard. Open ambulance waiting for its load. Leon arrives by cab. He immediately realizes something happened. Mathilda. He's worried about her.

He gets off the cab. He stammers something to the first cop.

LEON

...I live in here...

He breaks through. At the end of the corridor, near stairways, a little corpse, covered by a white sheet. Blood at one end. Two male nurses easily lift the corpse and lay it down on the stretcher. Leon's scared by that sheet, that little corpse. He lifts one end. Big sport shoes. Far from Mathilda's small feet. He's going to climb upstairs, but a cop blocks him.

COP

No entry for the moment.

LEON

I live in here.

The cop puts a hand on Leon's chest to stop him

COP

When I say no entry, I mean "no entry".

He said this with a bad tone. Leon stares at him.

IN THE APARTMENT

A plain clothes detective sits in front of Mathilda, who's crying on her couch. Evidently, the cop's waiting for her to stop crying, for interrogation. He looks at his wristwatch.

Another two cops calmly, sweetly check out the apartment. Routine. They pass by the double bass without opening it. Leon gets in. She jumps in his arms. He's relieved. She cries with joy.

LEON (sweet)

Come on, it's over, I'm here.

MATHILDA (in tears)

You mustn't leave me, Leon... I do stupid things, when you're not here.

LEON

I'm here, I'll never leave you again, Mathilda, never. I swear.

MATHILDA

I love you so much, Leon.

LEON

I love you too, and I don't want to lose you.

The cop is really stunned by Leon's arrival.

COP

Can I have a word with you, Mister? Are you her father?

Leon signs him "stop". The cop is slightly annoyed by such an authority.

LEON (to Mathilda, sweetly)

What did you do? What happened? Tell me.

He caresses her hair. She's calming down.

MATHILDA

...Well... The kids. They didn't want me

to play baseball. They said I'm a fearful gal.

The cop listens, interested.

LEON

Poor darling, and then?

MATHILDA

Well... I proposed them to play roulette... Like we played...

(She resumes crying.)

...And I lost.

He takes her in his arms. The cop is stunned.

LEON

Don't cry, Mathilda, please. Take.

(hanky)

Prepare your case and we get away for a while, OK? We change neighborhoods! Come on, go, I wait, OK?

COP (determined)

Mister? I'd like seeing your papers.

Leon already pulled out his gun and showed his identity. Thrice.

LEON

Come on, prepare your stuff, we move in a much calmer place, you'll see. Near the country.

Leon doesn't care he just killed three cops.

Mathilda puts her Polaroid and her teddy bear in her sack. A photo falls on the ground. They leave the apartment. No more double bass. Just violin and sack.

While going downstairs, one realizes how difficult Leon's climb was: killed cops at virtually every floor.

They get out of the backdoor. Leon and Mathilda, holding each other's hand, walk across the city. Sun's tired. City's orange.

\* \* \* \* \*

It's almost night when Stansfield and his men arrive in front of Leon and Mathilda's building. In the apartment, three corpses covered by white sheets. Police commander on place. STANSFIELD gets in.

COMMANDER (nervous)  
...What are you doing in here?

Stansfield checks out the apartment.

STANSFIELD  
...I've been following the guy for a while.

STANSFIELD finds the forgotten Polaroid photo.

STANSFIELD is perplexed, then recognizes the girl.

COMMANDER  
May I know this typhoon's name?

STANSFIELD  
...Leon.

\* \* \* \* \*

Leon's having a shower. Face in his hands. Evidently, he's trying to recover. New apartment's door opens, after a few knocks that look like a code. Mathilda gets in. Leon quickly moves in the bathroom. His hand approaches a gun.

LEON  
Mathilda?

Mathilda passes before bathroom's door and scratches it without stopping.

MATHILDA  
Yes... Alright.

She gets in the room and unpacks her things, including cosmetics. She gets close to the window and starts making up herself.

Leon in a towel, small for his size. He gets in the living room.

LEON

Mathilda?

MATHILDA (out of scene)

Yes.... I'm coming

Leon gets to the window and looks out. Something changed in Leon. He's tired by all this, maybe. He sits on the chair. Mathilda's walkman is on. He hesitates, then eventually puts on the headphones. It's a sweet, almost classical music. Very beautiful, like the arriving Mathilda. She wears the dress Leon offered her, she's made up. She looks 20-year-old. Leon's mouth is open. She smiles and heels down before him. He gets off the headphones.

LEON

What's going on?

MATHILDA (surprised)

Nothing... Why?

LEON

Well... I don't know, suddenly, the make up... All this... How are you? Are you OK?

MATHILDA

Of course! I'm fine! I put on your beautiful dress, I slightly made up... I tried to get beautiful! Don't you like it?

LEON (shy)

...Yes.

MATHILDA

So say it!

LEON (pause)

...I like it...

Mathilda smiles and stands up. She gets in the kitchen. Leon feels weird, like he was falling in a trap, without being able to do anything. Mathilda comes back with a glass of milk she hands to Leon. She lowers the tents to dim the strong sunlight. Mathilda heels down in front of him. Leon doesn't dare move any more.

MATHILDA

...Don't you drink?

LEON

I prefer waiting for a while... I feel  
it would go the wrong way.

Mathilda takes the glass from his hands and drinks half. She passes her tongue along her lips to dry up the milk. Leon looks at her, like a child in front of a sweet shop. She returns his milk. Mathilda looks like a calm cat.

MATHILDA (sweetly)

I love you, Leon... Totally. It's the  
first time I feel it that strong. It's  
also the first time I trust a man. I  
trust you.

She caresses his hand.

MATHILDA (con't)

...I love your hands...

(pause)

Leon... in your hands... I'd like you to  
be my first lover.

Leon retracts his hand and finishes the milk.

He looks at Mathilda with as much sadness as happiness. By a fingertip, Mathilda takes the milkdrop on Leon's lips and gets it in her mouth. Leon is going to cry.

LEON(feeling bad)

...I can't, Mathilda... I can't.

MATHILDA (with a sad smile)

...Have you got a girlfriend?

LEON

...No...

MATHILDA

...Don't you like me?

LEON(sincerely)

...Yes...

(pause)

...You're the most beautiful, Mathilda.

Mathilda looks relieved by these magic words. She puts her face on Leon's lap, who caresses her hair.

MATHILDA

You know, girls think about their first boyfriend for a long time... I imagined him with grizzled hair, elegant... A little like Georgia's father. Georgia is a classmate of mine... Kinda guy makes you feel sure! Cool, isn't it? Leon nods yes, without really knowing what he's saying "yes" to. My mates told me the first time they made love was awful. They had pain everywhere, afterward... But that's because they made it with men they didn't love. In fact, they did it just to show off, at the beginning. Later, they liked it. ...Like cigarettes.

Leon closes his eyes. Kind of pain on his face.

MATHILDA

How many girlfriends did you have?

LEON

...I don't know.

MATHILDA

Well... 1... 2... 10... 100... 1000? How many, approximately?

LEON

...Mathilda, I don't feel like talking about this.

MATHILDA

Why? Did you have too many and you fear it may shock me? I won't get shocked. I'm used to this! My father was a true pig. He fucked the bitch I'd as mother all around the apartment. Whenever a door was closed, you could be sure they were making sex behind it! And my sister, if you didn't sleep with her, you're building's exception!

LEON

Stop, Mathilda! Don't talk like that!

Mathilda's going to cry.

MATHILDA

I talk because you don't talk, Leon. I declare my love and you say nothing. That's why I'm nervous and I can't stop talking. Tell me you love me, or you don't love me, or you love someone else. ....But tell me something.

Leon tries to recover, before speaking.

LEON

...I had a girlfriend... A long time ago. Before coming here, in my country. I was 14-year-old... We flirted like kids... Her father didn't want her to meet me. My family was not very respectable.

MATHILDA

Then? You didn't give a shit about her father, didn't you? You met anyway?

Leon pauses for a long, then nods yes.

LEON

...He killed her, a bullet in her head...

Mathilda is stunned.

MATHILDA

...That's awful. I hope you killed, that asshole?

LEON

...Yes. The day he got out of jail. I allowed him to make ten steps... No more. And bang. Two hundred meters. By telescope. That night, I left my country and came here, to join my father, who worked for Tony. ...I was 17. Then, I never left the city... And never had another girlfriend...

Leon sweetly looks at her.

LEON (con't)  
...You see, I wouldn't be a good lover,  
Mathilda.

MATHILDA  
Leon, I don't know life very much... I  
just know I love you... And love is  
stronger than anything else.

Leon is more and more nervous, like a child.

LEON  
Maybe... Sure... But... I'm scared,  
Mathilda.

Leon cries. Mathilda caresses his face.

MATHILDA  
Don't fear, Leon. You mustn't fear  
love, when it's this beautiful.

She caresses his chest.

MATHILDA (con't)  
I want you to be the first to touch  
me... The first to make love with me.  
Nobody before you.

She stands up and modestly gets off her briefs without taking  
off her dress. Leon cries, unable to oppose her. Mathilda is  
too young, but she's also too beautiful and lovely and sweet  
and tender... She sweetly, very sweetly, gets on him.

LEON(crying)  
Why me, Mathilda, why me?

Mathilda leans over to speak in his ear.

MATHILDA  
...Because you deserve it, Leon...

Leon embraces her. He's full of happiness, shame, so many  
emotions, he can't control very well. But, hell, how  
beautiful it is seeing them sweetly making love.

\* \* \* \* \*

MORNING

A beautiful morning, like one wishes everyone to be. Leon in the bed. It's the first time one sees him in a bed and, furthermore, he sleeps. By his side, on a small table, a gun. You never know. On the other side, Mathilda looks at him, smiling, because he's almost nice while he sleeps. She starts moving to stand up. Leon abruptly wakes up. His hand reaches for the gun. He sees Mathilda and the room. Mathilda puts a hand on his chest and kindly forces him to lay down.

MATHILDA

Did you sleep well?

LEON

...I never really sleep.

Mathilda smiles.

MATHILDA

Huh, yes? I forgot! ...When you fake sleeping, you'd better not snore!

LEON (trapped)

...I snore?

MATHILDA

Like a baby!

She stands up and wears jeans.

MATHILDA

I go looking for some milk for breakfast... I come back.

(She kisses him.)

...I love you, Leon.

Leon is shy.

LEON

You... You knock the code, when you come back, OK?

MATHILDA

Yes.

LEON

Three times, then two times.

She nods her head yes. She tenderly looks at him.

MATHILDA

May I ask you a personal question?

LEON

...Yes.

MATHILDA

What do you do, with the money you earn?

LEON

Nothing, for the moment.

MATHILDA

Maybe it's the time to do something,  
isn't it?

LEON

Yeah, what?

MATHILDA

I don't know... Getting far away, the  
two of us, for example... And forgetting  
all this...

LEON (pause)

...Far... Where?

Mathilda smiles.

MATHILDA

I'm gonna buy a globe, you'll see. Bronx  
isn't even marked, so much the rest is  
big.

(She walks toward  
the door.)

...Think...

Mathilda gets out. Leon relaxes himself in the bed. He shyly  
opens his arms and learns how to exploit a bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

INSIDE THE BUILDING

Mathilda comes back with her milk. She gets out of the lift  
and a hand covers her mouth.

The man is member of a SWAT team: bullet-proof jacket,  
gloves, and Uzi at hand. He's not alone. They're seven.

THE BOSS (low voice)  
From now, you don't make a noise and  
reply by nodding yes or shaking your head  
no, OK?

Mathilda nods yes. She learns quickly.

THE BOSS  
Is he alone?

Yes from Mathilda.

THE BOSS  
Does he expect you?

Yes from Mathilda.

THE BOSS  
Have you got apartment's keys?

Yes from Mathilda. She hands him the keys.

THE BOSS  
Is there a code, a way to knock the door  
or something?

Yes from Mathilda.

She approaches her hand to the wall: two knocks, three  
knocks, two knocks. Wrong code.

The boss is satisfied anyway. He signs the group, they get in  
position. Mathilda in a corner, a man remains with her.

MAN  
Don't fear.

MATHILDA  
I have no fear.

The first three cops are in position. The leader is nervous.  
Everyone is ready. He knocks the code on the door. Reply  
isn't late. Inside, a classical music starts. Cops get in, one  
by one, commando style. From the corridor, one clearly sees  
apartment's open door, and one clearly sees also the hand  
above the door, that sweetly closes.

In the corridor, the other cops have no time. They hear the

slaughter in progress: shouts and shots, for twenty seconds. Then door opens again. Three corpses in the apartment's corridor. The man with Mathilda uses his walkie-talkie.

MAN

Shit! We need reinforcements! Maximum!  
Come on!

Mathilda puts a hand in her parcel and pulls out a gun she keeps along her body. On door's side, a small reflex. It's Leon's periscope, checking the other three cops' progression.

Two of them progress behind armored shields. Suddenly, Leon's voice breaks the silence.

LEON (shouting)

Mathilda?... Now.

Leon appears from nowhere and empties his kalashnikov in the corridor. The three cops don't shoot for a long. Mathilda lifts her arm, kills the cop at lower landing and aims at the cop who kept her.

LEON (loud)

Mathilda?!

She appears in the corridor, her hostage before her, still her milk with her. Leon is relieved.

LEON

Don't expose your back! Turn!

Mathilda obeys and walks backward.

She needs her hostage for protection and he remains in front of her. Leon covers her from the apartment.

A group of cops, a dozen, gets upstairs. Leon breaks the fire equipment niche's glass, unrolls the pipe in the corridor, throws the axe into the apartment and opens the water at full pressure. The pipe twists and beats all around the corridor.

Leon shoots. Reply is immediate. Fortunately, Mathilda is behind her hostage, his bullet-proof jacket is insufficient. Leon and Mathilda get back in the apartment and close the door, leaving the hostage crucified on it.

Mathilda is nervous. Leon is concentrated.

MATHILDA

Why did you unleash the pipe, I don't know?

LEON

It will take them five minutes! How long ago did they arrive?

MATHILDA

I don't know... Five minutes.

LEON

Good! Snipers can't be in position.

Leon gets close to the wall and gets rid of the tents, allowing light to explode.

Window explodes too: they shoot like never before.

LEON

...Ten minutes at least... Not five.

In the corridor, cops eventually catch the pressurized pipe and close the water. On all fours, Leon and Mathilda get in the kitchen. He gets the axe and the violin case by the way. Mathilda is more and more nervous. Leon is more and more concentrated.

MATHILDA

How shall we get out now, Leon?

LEON

Let me work. We'll get out, I tell you!

He shoots at the dustbin duct and makes it explode. He enlarges the hole by axe. Leon throws in the duct his overcoat, his sack's content, and his violin (grenades, weapons, etc...). Mathilda then throws in her teddy bear and Polaroid.

In the corridor, sand bags are becoming a wall, armored shields and cops multiply. A cop gets in position with a rocket-launcher and shoots. The door explodes and smoke floods the interior.

Leon helps Mathilda to get into the duct. She's half in when she seems to realize something.

MATHILDA

But... Leon? You'll never get in it!  
It's nearly too small for me!?

LEON (smiling)

I know, my love!

Mathilda starts crying.

MATHILDA

No! I don't want to leave you!!

LEON

Mathilda, listen!

MATHILDA

No, no! I don't want to go! I don't  
want!

He rudely takes her face in his hands.

LEON

Listen to me, shit! We've got no chance  
to get out together! Alone, I will get  
out! Trust me! I'm in perfect shape,  
Mathilda, now! I slept well! I love you!  
I'm happy! And I thought! I'll get all  
the money Tony keeps for me and we'll  
leave, OK? Together! We'll leave  
tomorrow.

MATHILDA

You say it just to calm me!

LEON

Not at all, Mathilda! I tell you because  
it's true! You'll buy the globe you told  
me about and you will choose, OK? We'll  
go where you want! I swear, you'll see,  
Mathilda!!

He kisses all over her face. Mathilda is a little confused.

LEON

Come on, go! Don't let them find you! I  
finish this work and we meet at Tony's,

OK? Spread your arms to do not fall too fast. So, good. At Tony's! One hour or two, OK? I love you, Mathilda!

He kisses her again.

MATHILDA

I love you too, my darling.

He pushes her. She disappears in the duct.

Leon pushes his back against the wall and dries up his tears. He shouts: terrifyingly. In the corridor, three first line cops progress with gas masks; they decide to get in through the destroyed door.

Mathilda gets in the trash bin. She carefully looks out: nobody around. She gets out and recovers some weapons.

APARTMENT

A wounded cop, mask on his face, gets out of the apartment and out of the smoke cloud.

He's therefore protected and taken over by another cop. He accompanies him a little farther.

A BOSS

Get downstairs, guy, get down!

He slaps him on his shoulder. The wounded cop obeys and gets to the lower floor. He's somewhat surprised when he realizes the stairs are literally full of cops everywhere.

The wounded cop passes by his colleagues and gets down. Cops everywhere, sandbags. It looks like a trench warfare. He didn't yet pull his mask off. One makes him sit on a bench and starts pulling off his mask. A doctor comes in and checks out cop's arm. He pulls off his mask. It's Leon.

DOCTOR

It's deep. You'd better get down to the ambulance, they'll care you properly. A cop chief doesn't recognize Leon.

CHIEF

3rd district? ...A mess up there, isn't

it.

Leon nods yes.

DOCTOR

Let him breathe five minutes!!

(to Leon)

Would you like me to take you down?

Leon shakes his head no.

LEON

Let me put my mask on. I breathe better with it.

DOCTOR

Yeah, right. Get down and wait for ten minutes. I'll get to check you, OK?

LEON

OK.

The chief gets away. Everything seems to work properly. There's just one thing Leon didn't notice: it's STANSFIELD's right hand, climbing upstairs, who identifies him and gets back down. Mathilda got out.

She observes, from a corner, the movements in the street. Police cars and ambulances all around.

IN THE APARTMENT

A cop's checking out the apartment, he pushes kitchen's door and a grenade falls to his feet. The explosion shakes the whole corridor. Cops crowd it. Below, Leon exploits the moment to stand up and discreetly walk downstairs. Floor after floor without problems.

SLOW MOTION

Behind him, unheard and unseen, STANSFIELD follows him. STANSFIELD rises his arm. A gun at hand. The gun aims at LEON'S back of the neck.

Leon advances and can see just the light filled exit, synonym of freedom. But his vision gradually gets paler and the image tilts, without noise. The image is now completely inclined and gets paler and paler. Overexposed image, then suddenly:

BLACK.

Leon's died. Without even realizing it. Mathilda is still observing. Stansfield's right hand gets out of the building and lifts an arm to the sky. He wants everyone's attention.

RIGHT HAND

It's alright! We got him! It's over!

Some cops clap, others whistle. Mathilda leans on the wall and cries. Stansfield is in the corridor, near Leon, officers are congratulating him.

CHIEF

Shit! Never seen anything like this before!

ANOTHER

He almost fucked me, furthermore!

STANSFIELD

He killed Richmond, my boss, two days ago... And Rinaldi too! We've been on him for months.

A chief slaps on his shoulder, but he's embittered, he lost many men too.

CHIEF

Nice shot.

SLOW MOTION

Mathilda appears. She wears Leon's large overcoat. A silenced gun at hand. Her face is harsh and immobile like never before. In front of building's entry, two cops look at her, stunned. This will be their last expression.

She gets in the corridor. At the end, STANSFIELD laughs together with his colleagues. Mathilda advances until the white sheet on the ground. She crouches down, lifts one end. Leon's got blood everywhere, but his expression is sweet and relaxed. Mathilda caresses his cheeks.

A man tips on STANSFIELD's back. The group turns and sees the little girl crouched near the corpse. Mathilda kisses Leon's mouth and stands up. She leaves her gun on the floor.

She looks at STANSFIELD, straight in his eyes, with a big

smile. STANSFIELD doesn't understand. Mathilda pulls her hand out of a pocket and launches something to him. STANSFIELD catches the object. It's a metal ring. STANSFIELD understands lesser and lesser.

Mathilda opens her overcoat: inside, a dozen of grenades everywhere. One lacks its ring.

STANSFIELD UNDERSTANDS EVERYTHING.

COMPLETE, GENERAL, ABSOLUTE EXPLOSION

The shockwave shakes everyone in the street. Still in slow motion, thousands of debris fall on the street. A rain which is even sadder than usual.

THE END