

GOODBYES AFTER GAZPACHO

Written by

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5th Draft

FADE IN:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - AFTERNOON

A man, ANTOINE (29), French, walks up the porch steps to a house, a bouquet of flowers in hand, matching his blue cardigan.

He mutters a pep talk to himself in French, leaning against the porch railing. He closes his eyes, takes a breath, and gets up, forcing confidence as he walks to the door, turns the doorknob and enters...

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY

ANTOINE

Em, Jess-?

Antoine peaks his head in. On the walls are several photographs, all with the same woman. Antoine lingers on one of her hugging him.

He hears someone talking on the phone and covers his mouth. He walks quietly, trying to eavesdrop.

JESS (O.S.)

Yes, yes, it's going well! Of course I'm nervous!

(pause)

No, he has no idea. He's always so oblivious. You know Antoine.

(another pause)

I feel like our life is like a movie.

Now we see JESS (27) with her cell phone pressed up to her ear, hands busy stirring a pot over the stove. Antoine stops in his tracks. His eyes widen then he creases his forehead, pointing to himself and mouthing "me??"

JESS (CONT'D)

Ah shit- I almost burn it! So, I told Antoine to come at 8 so- Ya, okay, okay, bye.

Antoine creeps back to the front door.

ANTOINE

(whispering to self)

Putain merde putain merde.

He gets behind the front door and closes it as quietly as possible. On a second thought he tosses the bouquet of flowers behind the bushes. He takes a breath and knocks.

Jess opens the door, an apron flung over a fuzzy orange sweater. She is pretty with her messy hair tied up and hands a bit dirty from food in the kitchen.

JESS
Antoine? Honey!

She goes in for a kiss as he tries to hug her.

ANTOINE
Hi, how are you?

JESS (CONT'D)
You're early!

They both laugh awkwardly.

JESS (CONT'D)
(flustered)
I thought I told you to come at 8!
I haven't finished making dinner- I
mean- Shoot. I ruined the surprise-

ANTOINE
Oh, Jess, you didn't have to do
that, really.

JESS
Aw, don't be crazy. I wanted to do
this for us!

She smiles at Antoine sweetly. He grimaces, a half smile. She looks back inside the house, then back at him.

JESS (CONT'D)
Well, since you're here already,
might as well come inside. No use
waiting out here until 8, yeah?

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM

They arrive at the open kitchen layout adjacent to a nicely furnished living room. Antoine starts scanning the living room and kitchen.

JESS
Take a seat! Don't worry about
helping me over here.

ANTOINE
You sure? Let me-

JESS

NO!

Antoine is taken aback by her firm tone.

JESS (CONT'D)

I mean- No. Thank you, honey, but really, just relax and I finish up here.

He takes a seat on the edge of the couch in compliance. He looks around and thumbs through the magazines on the coffee table in front of him.

Jess stands by the kitchen counter, chopping red bell peppers on a cutting board. Next to the board is a HANDWRITTEN RECIPE with the title "Antoine's Gazpacho".

JESS (CONT'D)

Since you already know I'm making us dinner, at least I can keep the surprise of *what* I'm making!

Antoine gets bored of the magazines, tossing them back on the table and quickly standing up. He looks at the knickknacks and items on the bookshelves. He picks up a snow globe and puts it in his pocket.

JESS (CONT'D)

What are you doing, love?

ANTOINE

Um. Nothing. Just sort of looking around I guess. I-

JESS

Antoine, I've made a personal discovery. Cooking!

Antoine looks up at her, eyebrows raised. He closes his eyes and puts a hand to his temples just as Jess takes out a few LEMONS and places them next to the cutting board.

ANTOINE

That's great, Jess, I'm happy for you-

JESS

But you know what I was thinking? Well, I was thinkingggggg...

She looks at him expectantly. He wears a blank expression.

JESS (CONT'D)

We should make dinner together sometime! Wouldn't that be such a sweet thing to do together? As a couple. Like Matt and Larissa.

ANTOINE

Matt and Larissa don't make dinner together.

JESS

Well yes they do! I was just on the phone with her-

ANTOINE

Matt said they were breaking up.

JESS

Really?? No... I thought- didn't they get engaged?

ANTOINE

Mm... not sure. But besides, I'm not sure when-

JESS

Wasn't that the whole point of their party from like a month ago? Like an *engagement* party? We got them a gift, you remember?

ANTOINE

No, you got them a gift-

JESS

Ah well, I think you got super drunk that night and blacked out. So that's probably why you don't remember. See, I remember now! You were just super fucked up.

She laughs to herself.

ANTOINE

(unenthusiastically)

Haaaaaaah.

Antoine picks up a guitar leaning against the wall. He puts it behind his back and walks it to the hallway. Jess scoops all the ingredients into a bowl and squeezes a lemon over them, not noticing Antoine.

ANTOINE

I've been thinking about this for sometime and I really think that we should talk about our relationship. I don't know if we should continue... if we should be together. We're just not on the same page anymore and-

Finally she stops the blender.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

I'm moving to Begium and I need to take all my stuff from here and we need to break up.

JESS

What.

ANTOINE

I'm sorry, I've been meaning to tell you I just-

JESS

Jesus, Antoine. WHEN exactly were you going to tell me this? Now all this gazpacho is going to waste.

ANTOINE

No, no, no- I'm sorry, Jess. You went through all the trouble to make it... let's still eat it. I'm sorry.

INT. HOUSE - DINING TABLE

Antoine and Jess sit across from each other on a long rectangular table. They sip the gazpacho silently.

ANTOINE

Good, em, gazpacho.

JESS

(interrupting)

I was going to propose to you but I guess I'll take that as a no.

Antoine has just taken a sip of gazpacho and chokes on it after hearing those words. Jess stares coldly at him.

Antoine starts fanning himself with his hands, he has an uncomfortable expression on his face.

JESS (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

ANTOINE
Yeah, I'm just a little... hot.

JESS
That's weird, I have the AC on-

Antoine starts coughing. Then choking. He knocks the bowl of gazpacho over on to himself and falls out of his chair and onto the ground with his choking fit.

JESS (CONT'D)
Antoine! What's happening to you?

She rushes over to him. He can barely speak.

ANTOINE
Allergy- I think- Something-
Gazpacho-

JESS
Something in the gazpacho?

ANTOINE
Lemon.

JESS
Lemon?

ANTOINE
I- lemons- allergic. I- die.

JESS
You- you die??? From lemons?? How
did I not know that? Oh no, what
have I done???

She shakes his body.

JESS (CONT'D)
Antoine! Please!

She continues to shake him.

JESS (CONT'D)
But I thought gazpacho with lemon
was your favorite!

ANTOINE
I never- said that.

Antoine turns over, dead. Jess pauses. Then keeps shaking him. She lets out a cry of anguish and despair. She takes a few heaving breaths then looks around slowly. She lets his limp body drop to the floor.

She puts her head on his chest. She notices that his shirt is covered with the gazpacho. She sticks out her tongue and licks it a little.

JESS

(whispering to self)

Ah. It was the best gazpacho yet.

She smiles to herself. A little evil smile.

FADE TO BLACK.