

PERSISTENT

FADE IN:

EXT. SHOE STORE - DAY

DIANE (early 30s), baby blue eyes on a good looking face, shivers from cold. FABIEN (early 30s) rubs her hands with both of his palms to warm her up.

DIANE
Thank you, I'm much better now.

FABIEN
But not as warm as I want you to be.

DIANE
No seriously, I'm fine.

Fabien continues rubbing her hands.

FABIEN
And I'm persistent. You should know better.

DIANE
Let's go over the plan. You walk inside and...

FABIEN
I go inside, ask for shoes, learn her size, buy the shoes in her size. Don't worry I'll be fine.

DIANE
You could just ask her out. That would work so much better.

Fabien shakes his head, turns towards the store.

INT. SHOE STORE - DAY

Fabien walks in.

TATYANA (early 30s), model looks, sizes him up.

TATYANA
Do you need any help?

Diane walks in right behind, pretends to check out the shoes.

FABIEN

Yeah. I need a pair of shoes, you know. For... my sister. Not wife. I'm not married. Yet. Not that I'm not a marrying type...

Diane makes crazy faces at him behind Tatyana's back.

Tatyana selects a pair, hands it to Fabien.

TATYANA

Take a look at these.

FABIEN

I really like the ones you're wearing. What size are you?

TATYANA

Thirty seven.

FABIEN

Me, too. I mean I'm forty one, but I do wear shoes. Just like yourself.

TATYANA

What about your sister?

FABIEN

She wears shoes, too.

TATYANA

I'm asking about her shoe size.

FABIEN

Right. Too bad I forgot to ask her.

Diane bites her lip, she grabs a pair of boots and approaches Tatyana to divert the attention from poor Fabien.

DIANE

May I see these in thirty eight, please.

EXT. TATYANA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Diane adjusts a tie on Fabien.

DIANE

What's it going to be today? I'm a marrying type, my shoe size is forty one?

FABIEN

No, today will be perfect.

Diane bends for something on the ground. It's a guitar case. Diane takes a guitar out, hands it to Fabien.

DIANE

What are you going to play?

FABIEN

Your favorite, Candella.

Diane pats him lovingly on the cheek and leaves.

Fabien checks out the strings. He looks around, checks on Diane. She rounds a corner, waves at him. He waves back.

He barely starts playing when A BITTER OLD LADY opens the window and throws something at him.

A BITTER OLD LADY

Have some breakfast first.

It's an egg. Fabien doesn't have time to duck and the egg hits him hard, smashes open and splatters all over his features and clothes.

Fabien shuts his eyes, screams, thrashes his hands in disgust. He tries to free his face from the gooey substance.

When he opens his eyes he sees a HOBO standing at an arm length from him.

HOBO

Let me try.

The Hobo grabs the guitar and tries to yank it out of Fabien's hands. He succeeds and runs away with it.

Fabien is hot in pursue.

Diane emerges out from the corner. She rushes after them.

DIANE

Fabien? What's going on?

She stops as she stumbles across Tatyana.

DIANE

Hi. Hey. We thought you were home.

TATYANA

Whatever gave you that idea. Do we know each other though?

DIANE

Sorry. I'm Diane. And... See, my friend Fabien is madly in love with you. He's a little shy but I want to convince him to wait for you in front of your store with flowers tomorrow, you know... since it's a Valentines Day and all. I hope you won't mind.

Tatyana shrugs.

Fabien appears from around the corner at that. His shirt is rugged, tie gone, pants stained and half of his face is still covered in egg.

He lifts his guitar up high in triumph.

DIANE

He was going to play you Candela.
(singing) Aye Candelaaa, Candelaa...
Anyway it's a very cute song and he sings it well.

Tatyana rolls her eyes.

TATYANA

Ask him to wash up.

Tatyana leaves.

Fabien approaches.

FABIEN

What were you two talking about?
Anything I should know?

EXT. SHOE STORE - DAY

Fabien with red roses in hands, fussily looks around. Next to him is Diane.

DIANE

Are you ready? Today is the day.

FABIEN

Yes. I'll hand her the flowers and ask her out for coffee. Piece of cake.

DIANE

And when you think nothing can go wrong...

FABIEN

Hey listen, why should I give her flowers after all? I don't even know her. I should just ask her for coffee.

DIANE

It's a Valentines Day for God's sakes.

FABIEN

You take these roses if you love them that much.

He hands her the flowers.

DIANE

Are you crazy?

FABIEN

I haven't even got anything for you. And you're my best friend. Happy Valentines Day, Diane. Do me a favor take these flowers as a token of my love and appreciation for you.

Diane pushes his gift away.

DIANE

Stop it.

FABIEN

I'll ask her out for coffee. That should do for the first date.

DIANE

No it won't.

FABIEN

Take the roses, Diane, or I'll give them away.

He turns toward a passer-by.

FABIEN

Flowers? Anyone?

A PASSER-BY takes the flowers and shoves some money into Fabien's hand.

PASSER-BY

Thanks man.

Before Fabien says he was kidding the passer-by appears gone. In a moment, Fabien and Diane watch the passer-by present the bouquet to some lady. They see the two kiss.

Diane sighs.

DIANE

At least someone's enjoying his
Valentines day.

They turn toward the shoe store and see Tatyana come out. Diane gives Fabien a push forward.

Fabien steps up to Tatyana, clears his throat. He talks as if he's a speaker at a conference.

FABIEN

Dear Tatyana. Please allow me to
ask you to join me for a cup of
coffee. Or tea. Whatever you
prefer. If it's a margarita at 11
am I won't judge. Or--

TATYANA

Let's go. Just follow me.

She points at a coffee shop and proceeds forward. Fabien turns to Diane, she has her lips pressed tight.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Fabien and Tatyana drink coffee. Fabien sits with his back to the front door.

FABIEN

Do you have the boots she was
trying on in your store?

TATYANA

Yeah, I asked the guys here to hide
them for me under this very table.

She bends down, retrieves a shoebox from under the table. Fabien checks out the boots.

FABIEN

The damn Hobo man had to ruin it
for me the other day. I was going
to sing Candela for her.

TATYANA

Right, I've heard all about it.

FABIEN

It's her favorite. I was going to start with Candela and switch to something I came up for her. It starts with (singing) Do It As Noone Ever Will. You get it?

TATYANA

I certainly don't.

FABIEN

D for Do. I for It. A for As, E for Ever. Spelled Diane. Her first name! I was going to drop a hint.

TATYANA

Oh. Oh... That obvious, huh?

She hisses - Diane just got into the shop. Fabien freezes.

FABIEN

Tell me when.

Tatyana nods. She watches Diane. Another guy approaches Diane. It's JAKE (30s). Jake has chocolates behind his back. He presents them to Diane with a bow.

TATYANA

Oh-oh. You're screwed.

Fabien turns around to see Diane with Jake. He slumps.

TATYANA

That's because you had to ask her out instead of beating around the bush all this time.

FABIEN

I couldn't. She's my childhood friend. We've known each other since ever.

TATYANA

Do you know him?

FABIEN

They live on the same floor. I should have known he's after her. I mean who wouldn't be.

He grabs his head with both hands. Tatyana sighs.

TATYANA

Sorry, I'm out.

FABIEN

Wait!

TATYANA

What again? She's not getting any younger. She'll marry her neighbor and never know you love her.

He comes up with idea.

FABIEN

Hey, just throw your coffee in my face and say something nasty as if I wronged you in some way. She'll react to that.

TATYANA

Just tell her you want he for ten years already.

FABIEN

Twenty.

TATYANA

Nice.

FABIEN

I realized it ten years ago though, so you're not way off.

Tatyana rises to her feet.

TATYANA

Tell her!

Diane reacts to the commotion. Everyone in the coffee shop does.

Fabien breathes hard - about to attempt something that requires all of his strength.

FABIEN

Diane!

Diane's eyes are fixed on Fabien.

FABIEN

I didn't even say anything to her, yet she hates me. Don't you, Tatyana? Didn't you want to splash me with your coffee?

Tatyana throws coffee in his face, or rather around it, careful not to burn him.

FABIEN
(in a whisper)
Don't worry, I got it. I'm really
persistent.

Tatyana sees Diane's chocolates slip out of her hands to the floor. She sees Jake bend for them, grab Diane's hand. Diane pushes him away.

TATYANA
Yes you are.

Tatyana strides off and away.

Diane rushes to Fabien with a kerchief in hands.

FADE OUT.