

Celine

by Grace Wadholm

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A long stretch of beach at sunrise, bordered by a dark wall of trees. Rocky outcroppings dot the shore. Across the water, a storm threatens on the horizon, lightning flashing occasionally within ominous clouds.

A young woman, CELINE, crouches on the sand, digging a wide scar into the beach with her hands. A large birthmark near her right eye adds mystery to her beauty.

She works at a frantic pace...too fast...she topples over, exhausted.

Celine catches her breath, eyes on the storm.

CELINE

Not yet, please not yet.

She stands and steps beyond her ragged crater, heading away down the beach.

Behind Celine, a young MAN steps out of the trees. He pauses, watching her.

He walks slowly her way.

Celine stops to pick up an especially pretty, large shell. She turns it over in her hands, then freezes. She has caught a glimpse of the young man, who is still moving toward her.

Celine drops the shell and begins to move away.

MAN

(calling out)

Wait...what are you looking for?

The man begins jogging to catch Celine. She walks faster.

CELINE

This can't be happening. This has to be a dream.

She runs. The man runs faster and starts to gain.

Celine weaves away. She scrambles over a pile of rocks at the edge of the beach.

The man jumps lightly onto the rocks. Celine climbs fast, over tidepools and gaping crevices. The man is faster and reaches Celine as she jumps onto a very slippery rock.

The rock juts over sharp stones battered by waves below. Celine loses her balance and cries out, but the man catches her hand and pulls her back.

Celine holds onto his arm for just a second before pulling away and jumping off the rocks. She hurries away. He follows.

MAN

Let me help you find it.

CELINE

Find what?

MAN

Whatever it is you're looking for.

CELINE

I'm not going to tell you what I'm looking for, so how can you help?

She stoops and picks up a handful of sand, packing it tight in her fist.

Celine points her clenched fist at the man.

CELINE

Go away.

MAN

I can help you.

Celine throws the sand as hard as she can his way. It falls short of him in a golden haze that blows away in the wind.

The man holds back a laugh.

Celine kicks another shower of sand toward the man, then scurries away as the dust cloud envelops him.

The man coughs, then darts around the sand cloud and goes after her.

CELINE

I'll kick sand at you all day!

She turns to keep her promise, but as she lifts her foot...

MAN

Just wait a minute!

He grabs her by the hand and catches her off-balance. She spins, like a pirouette, and lands in his arms. The man pulls Celine up off her feet and carries her toward the surf.

MAN

Maybe whatever you're looking for is in here.

CELINE

No! No! It's not. It's not!...

EXT. OCEAN SURF - DAY

The man carries her into the surging waves, looking around at surf sweeping the beach clean. Shells appear and disappear.

MAN

Is that it? No, maybe that's it.

CELINE

Let me down!

The man pretends to drop Celine toward the water.

CELINE

No, no, don't let me down!

MAN

Maybe it's deeper in.

He takes a step forward, then a big surge of water knocks him over. They fall together, flattened by the ocean.

He gets a big mouthful of water and sputters. Another wave pushes them over and he's knocked flat. Celine jumps up and out of the way.

He's helpless. Celine hesitates, then grabs his hand to pull him up.

CELINE

It's not in here, you dummy.

They scramble back toward the beach before the next wave.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

They stand together, catching their breath. The storm flashes lightning, just a little closer. Celine motions further up the beach.

CELINE
Come on, this way.

The man walks beside her. They scan the beach, checking out the many items the ocean has washed in.

MAN
If you told me...

CELINE
Nope. I can find it on my own, but you can help all you want.

MAN
That makes absolutely no sense.

He picks up a piece of driftwood washed ivory smooth.

MAN
How about this?

CELINE
Interesting, but no thanks.

He starts to dig in the sand. Celine walks a few more steps, then turns and walks backward as she watches him dig. He picks out an enormous shell.

MAN
How about this?

CELINE
Interesting, but no thanks!

The man tosses the shell and hurries to catch up.

They walk and walk, picking up items and discarding them as the sun rises in the sky and the day moves toward evening. The storm draws closer, distant thunder beginning to echo.

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Celine stops, then turns and watches over the water. The storm threatens as the sun approaches sunset.

CELINE
Can I tell you a secret?

MAN
Of course.

CELINE

I don't know what I'm looking for.
You've helped me all day, and I don't
even know what I'm looking for.

MAN

You seem to know what it's not.

Celine nods. In the glow of the setting sun, she closes her eyes against the light. The man watches, then picks up her hand. Celine opens her eyes, then they both turn around.

Behind them, lying peacefully but deathly still against a stone, is an old WOMAN. She has a birthmark exactly like Celine's.

The man watches Celine's face carefully.

MAN

Interesting.

CELINE

No thanks!

Celine backs away, then runs. The man watches her go.

He leans and touches the old woman's hand, then walks after Celine.

EXT. DUNES - EVENING

Celine runs desperately, sand dunes rising up around her. The ocean surf disappears, the trees disappear, she is surrounded by sand.

The storm rolls overhead, lighting spreading across the sky. Raindrops splash in the sand.

Celine falls against a dune. She covers her face with her hands, allowing the sand to wash over her, burying her.

Lightning cracks, thunder roars, darkness covers the world.

Celine lies deathly still. A gust of wind blows her hair over her hands. Celine uncovers her face and touches her hair...it's dry. In the pouring rain, she is dry.

She looks up, and through a break in the storm, the early evening moon casts a clear light. She remembers...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The young man, dressed in clothes from another time, spins Celine around in a pirouette. She is dressed in a party dress, also from another time. He pulls her in close, the moon lighting up the night behind them.

MAN

Stay with me forever.

CELINE

Nothing is forever.

MAN

We are. I'll prove it to you. I love you forever.

Celine kisses his nose and runs away, the man chasing her.

EXT. DUNES - EVENING

Celine pulls herself up out of the sand. She is clean and dry, the storm can't touch her.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Celine steps out of the dunes. Over the beach, the storm is rolling away. The sun breaks out from behind the dark clouds, setting toward the horizon in a golden glow.

Celine turns, and he's there, walking in the surf toward her. She waits until he draws close. He picks up her hand. She draws him closer, then kisses his nose.

CELINE

Yes, thanks.

MAN

Are you ready?

CELINE

Is this forever?

MAN

Almost.

The sun is at the horizon, a brilliant light behind them.

The surf washes in, the sun sets, and the beach is empty.

FADE TO BLACK