

When Others Linger

by DJ Sanders

We all have *others* from our past who haunt our present and stifle our futures. Feelings that never fade for friends, lovers, and infatuations can linger indefinitely. Desperate to escape her past, Anna, a waitress from Wyoming, finds herself traveling Europe in search of something or someone to ease her pain. While in Barcelona, she accidentally trips Xavier, a handsome Catalan sculptor, who three weeks later whisks her away to his summer residence in the Mediterranean town of Altafulla, Spain.

Anna is swept off her feet by late-night walks on the beach under a full moon; day-time excursions to the old Roman port town, Tarragona; and romantic dinners of fine Catalan cuisine with her artistic Latin lover. But no matter how engulfed she finds herself in Xavi, the sea, and her new romance, she cannot resist the temptation to see what is on the other side of the forbidden locked door leading to Xavier's studio.

After weeks of begging from Anna and with Xavier's newfound inspiration from their international romance, Xavi takes to the studio to sculpt his newest masterpiece in private. While the creative process invigorates Xavier, Anna nearly goes insane as she finds herself not only locked out of the studio, but temporarily locked out of Xavier's life. Not until Xavi finishes his newest work and passes out drunk is Anna able to gain access to the studio by stealing the key from his pocket.

“Exquisite,” she calls the sculpture that instantly allures her. But jealousy and deception quickly ensue the couple as they vie for the attention and affection of this inanimate statue. As this masterpiece takes on a life of its own, it slowly works to destroy their relationship in this bizarre love triangle between a man, a woman, and a work of art.

Sample scene from  
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Scene Three

(ANNA and XAVIER enter with shopping  
bags that they put down)

ANNA

What are all those boxes in the entryway?

XAVIER

I ordered some art supplies.

ANNA

But how would they get in the building without a key?

XAVIER

They probably buzzed the neighbor.

ANNA

And they would let a stranger in?

XAVIER

There's not much crime here.

ANNA

So why bother having the front door locked?

XAVIER

To keep criminals out.

ANNA

That system makes no sense.

(beat)

Do you want help bringing the boxes in?

XAVIER

They're heavy. I'll get them later.

ANNA

I can help if you want.

XAVIER

Thanks, but right now I'm really too tired.

(They sit on the couch exhausted)

ANNA

Oh my God! I totally forgot!

(ANNA looks through a bag frantically)

XAVIER

What? Did you forget something?

(ANNA pulls out a magazine)

ANNA

Cosmo quiz.

XAVIER

What?

ANNA

I was gonna do it on the train but we got window seats this time. The view is so great. I can't believe we go right along the sea--I mean it was like right there. But now we can do the Cosmo quiz.

XAVIER

What are you talking about?

ANNA

Cosmopolitan. It's a magazine.

XAVIER

Right. We have it in Spanish too. It's for women, right?

ANNA

I was so psyched to find a copy of the new issue in that opera café.

XAVIER

Café dell'Opera?

ANNA

That's the one. Some American must have left it. But it's mine now! And it's this month's issue!!

(flips open to a page)

Here it is.

XAVIER

"How do your love scenes rate?" Ooo, this sounds fun.

XAVIER

So what is this?

ANNA

Just listen. "Most movies include sex scenes that vary from a tame PG to a raunchy NC-17. If your last love sequence were converted to celluloid, how would the Motion Picture Association rate it? Take this quiz to find out how you and your lover's love making would rate for a general audience." Okay, are you ready?

XAVIER

For what?

ANNA

To take the quiz.

XAVIER

I don't see the point.

ANNA

We answer the questions and find out how our sex life rates. Like is it a PG-13, R-rating. I'd hope we'd at least get an R-rating, but I don't know if I want an NC-17, what would that say about us?

XAVIER

I still don't see the point.

ANNA

It's fun. That's all. Ok, question one. "Where does your lover first kiss you when initiating love making? A. on the hand. B. on the lips. C. on the neck. D. in the region that usually only your lingerie touches. E. he doesn't kiss, he goes right for the nibbling and biting." Well that would be B, right?

XAVIER

What?

ANNA

The lips. You usually kiss me on the lips.

XAVIER

Yes. Of course.

ANNA

Okay, that's a boring one. Question two. "During foreplay, what area of the body does your lover concentrate on? A. the lips." Lips has to be the coverall PG answer. "B. the neck or ears. C. the breast and nipples. D. what foreplay? He goes right for the strong sexual content." Hmm...I guess this one depends on the night, right?

XAVIER

Anna?

ANNA

What?

XAVIER

Would you mind if we not do this? You can do it. But I don't know if I feel right...

ANNA

Oh, Xavi. It's just a quiz. It means nothing. They're just for fun, like horoscopes. Ooo, we could read our horoscopes. What's your sign? No, let me guess. Capricorn.

XAVIER

No.

ANNA

Then, Scorpio.

XAVIER

Libra.

ANNA

Oh. Really. Wow. I wouldn't have guessed that. What about me? Guess my sign.

XAVIER

Anna...

ANNA

C'mon, guess.

XAVIER

Sagittarius.

ANNA

No. Do I seem like a Sagittarius?

XAVIER

I'm really not good with the zodiac.

ANNA

I'm a Gemini. Do you want me to read your horoscope?

XAVIER

Anna, I'm very happy that you found your magazine, but I'm not really into quizzes and--

ANNA

That's okay. Never mind. It's just that Debbie and I would always do this together. But you and I have other fun things that we can do together--like going into the city.

XAVIER

I'm glad you had a good time.

ANNA

I did. We have to do it again soon. Especially the Ramblas. I like all those people who paint themselves and just stand there on boxes. Do you think they make a lot of money doing that?

XAVIER

I suppose they would or they wouldn't do it.

ANNA

I looked in one of their little moneyboxes and people were only putting small coins. I bet I make more in tips on a bad day than they do on a good day.

XAVIER

I think many of them are theatre students practicing. If they make some money, all the better.

ANNA

Practicing what? Standing? I can do that right here. Watch.

(stands still)

See? I don't need an audience to practice standing.

XAVIER

Yes, but they also react when people give them money.

ANNA

I can do that too. Watch. Here's me getting a good tip.

(shows excitement)

Here's me finding a dollar tip from an elderly couple that spent two and a half hours to get through their meal.

(shows disappointment)

And here's me clearing a table from four high school students who made a complete mess and only left me a dime and three pennies.

(shows anger)

See? That's not hard.

XAVIER

And the next Oscar for best actress goes to Anna for her interpretation of an American waitress.

ANNA

Xavi, we forgot to walk through the "Barri Gòtic." That's my favorite part of Barcelona. That means Gothic Quarter, right?

XAVIER

Right.

ANNA

I'm picking up on this Catalan stuff. See?

XAVIER

Yes. And I'm impressed. What else do you remember?

ANNA

"*Bon dia.*" "*Moltes gràcies.*" "*Adéu.*"<sup>1</sup>

XAVIER

Your Catalan is sounding most exquisite!

ANNA

"*Moltes gràcies!*"

XAVIER

"*De res.*"

ANNA

That's "Your welcome?"

XAVIER

*Sí, sí, sí!*

ANNA

I want to walk along the beach again tonight. You still have to teach me that "*pin, pin, pin*" song.

XAVIER

Uh...if you'd like to, I suppose we could.

ANNA

You don't want to?

XAVIER

No, we can do that again if you want.

ANNA

Xavi, what's wrong?

XAVIER

Nothing.

ANNA

That's not a nothing nothing.

XAVIER

We've spent nearly every evening on the beach.

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<sup>1</sup> Catalan for "Good morning," "Thank you," and "Good-bye."

ANNA

I know, but it's still all so new to me. The closest body of water to where I grew up was a creek. This sand thing still fascinates me how it squooshes between your toes.

XAVIER

All my summers were spent allowing sand to squoosh between my toes. I still find it enjoyable, but not every night.

ANNA

Do I bore you?

XAVIER

No, not at all.

ANNA

Why not? Aren't you used to people who speak five languages, have traveled the world, and know the meaning of fine art?

XAVIER

Well, you're learning bits of Spanish and Catalan, you've been to three countries in Europe, and you appreciate the reflection of the moon on the Mediterranean. And you are much more genuine than the art connoisseurs I know. And you're beautiful.

ANNA

Ooo, don't stop.

XAVIER

And I rarely have people over here, so on a selfish level I enjoy the company.

ANNA

So who else has been over here?

XAVIER

Some people who have modeled for me, and a few others.

ANNA

Ah, "others." I guess we haven't discussed those yet.

XAVIER

Discussed what?

ANNA

Our "others."

XAVIER

"Others?"

ANNA

You know, all the past significant others which have become insignificant.

XAVIER

Oh, do you mean past lovers?

ANNA

Yes.

XAVIER

Right.

ANNA

So...?

XAVIER

Oh, there have been a few.

ANNA

I figured as much. Tell me about one of them. Tell me about your last one--no, the last woman you were really in love with. What was she like?

XAVIER

Anna...

ANNA

C'mon. Tell me.

XAVIER

Why would you want to know about that?

ANNA

It's this theory I have. Okay, it's not my theory, it's actually Debbie's. Remember? I told you about her.

XAVIER

Yes.

ANNA

She wrote this book on dating, love, relationship, and all. It's called "Finding the Lock to your Heart." Most people talk about finding the key to your heart, but Debbie says it's more important to find the lock to your heart and understand it so that you know better what key will fit into your lock. She has this whole chapter on how your past relationships affect your current and future ones. So she has this thing she calls the "Linger."

XAVIER

It sounds like a bad horror film.

ANNA

No. This is serious. Debbie took a lot of psychology classes at the community college and her book was number two at the local bookstore for three weeks. That damn Stephen King is too popular.

(ANNA goes to her bag and begins looking through it)

ANNA (Cont'd)

Here, let me find the book, I know I have it... Here it is. It should be in Chapter Three. See I have the page marked and all.

(reading)

"Look back into your past relationships. If you need to, pull out a sheet of paper and make a list of your past boyfriends, girlfriends, partners, and/or significant others. From this list you should be able to identify one person that you loved the most. One person who you made a profound connection with. For some reason or another he or she came the closest to being your ideal mate at that period of time in your life. This person is your 'linger.' When you think about your 'linger' it should block out most of the memories you have of any dating partners previous to your 'linger.' Any relationships you had after your 'linger' will most probably seem worthless or a waste of time. These post-'linger' relationships all failed to bring you the comfort you found with your 'linger'—"

XAVIER

Do you really listen to what psychologists say?

ANNA

Of course. But don't you see. Everyone has this person that they loved and thought "I'm gonna spend the rest of life with this person" because in one way or another they came closest to being your ideal mate. After things end with that person, you...well, basically, everyone else you date afterwards--you're trying to see if they can fill that void. Am I making sense?

XAVIER

I don't understand where "linger" comes in.

ANNA

Just listen. Here's the important part.

(reading)

"In meeting new potential dating partners, you are looking to fill that 'linger,' the void that this person left in your life. This 'linger' is the lock to your heart and until you understand how this lock is shaped, you will never be able to find the key to fit the lock and unlock your heart to allow yourself to love again. For this reason you must explore what it was that made this person your 'linger' so you can identify the precise qualities that you are seeking rather than comparing new potential partners to you 'linger.'"

(looking at XAVIER)

Isn't that just so profound?

XAVIER

I suppose it's an interesting take on the topic.

ANNA

Okay, so who's your linger?

XAVIER

Do you want a list?

ANNA

No. There's only one. Weren't you listening? You can only have one linger, that's the whole point.

XAVIER

But every person I date in one way or another stays with me. Maybe they've helped inspire me to create a certain piece of art or they taught me a new recipe.

ANNA

You're still not understanding me. There can only be one person. Maybe you need to read the whole book.

XAVIER

So what about yours?

ANNA

My linger?

XAVIER

Yes. I assume you've known many men in your day.

ANNA

What are you trying to say?

XAVIER

Only that a woman of your beauty surely has had few dateless Saturday nights in her life.

ANNA

If only that were so.

XAVIER

So who was your linger?

ANNA

Just someone I worked with.

XAVIER

At the restaurant.

ANNA

Yes.

XAVIER

So how does he linger?

(Pensive pause)

ANNA

Well, I think about him a lot--but a lot less lately. And... I think from dating him I learned a lot about myself, about the shape of my lock, like Debbie's book says. So now I know better what I'm looking for in a relationship.

XAVIER

And what are you looking for?

ANNA

What am I looking for? In a relationship?

XAVIER

Yes.

ANNA

Umm...someone who can fill my linger.

XAVIER

And that would be...?

ANNA

I don't know... Just forget it.

XAVIER

What happened to your theory?

ANNA

It's not my theory. Maybe Debbie doesn't know what she's talking about. Maybe I listen to her too much. She is really smart, but she can be a little kooky. I just had an idea! Instead of the beach, we could go to Tarragona tonight. I want to go to that amphitheater again. And we didn't get to go up onto the Roman wall. And that house that guy from Jesus' time lived in.

XAVIER

Pontius Pilate.

ANNA

Right. And you still have to show me the aqueducts, how do those look at night? Do they have them lit up?

XAVIER

By the time we caught the train there those places would be closed.

ANNA

But not the aqueducts. They can't close the aqueducts.

XAVIER

We really need a car to see those. They are a bit outside of the city.

ANNA

We can rent a car, can't we? I heard that all the cars here are stick shift. I've never driven one of those. Maybe you could teach me. So we'll do Tarragona tomorrow and rent a car to see the aqueducts. Does that sound good? And tonight we can walk along the beach and you can teach me that "*pin, pin*" song.

(Pause)

ANNA (Cont'd)

Xavi?

XAVIER

Yes?

ANNA

Am I boring you?

XAVIER

*Ángel*, no.

ANNA

If you are sick of the beach we could do something else. I want you to show me what you love about this town.

XAVIER

I would love to do that, Anna. But the truth is...

ANNA

Xavi, what? What is it?

XAVIER

(hesitant)

I was thinking of beginning a new sculpture.

ANNA

Really?! That's great! When?

XAVIER

Tonight.

ANNA

Xavi, that's so exciting. What's it gonna be? No, let me guess... A duck!

XAVIER

No--

ANNA

A goose.

XAVIER

No--

ANNA

I'm joking! No...a...naked woman!

XAVIER

Anna, I'd rather not discuss it. While I know what it is, I still don't have it all thought out yet and I need to let the idea geminate.

ANNA

Geminate?

XAVIER

Like a seed, a seed geminates.

ANNA

I think the word is "germinate."

XAVIER

Oh. I need to let the idea germinate in my mind.

ANNA

Okay, I can respect that. Why don't we do this: I'll cook you a nice big dinner so you can start working on your new masterpiece and I'll go walking along the beach tonight.

XAVIER

By yourself?

ANNA

If I can walk around Rome at night by myself, I can do the beach alone. I'm a big girl. And I want you to be able to start your masterpiece without any distractions. So how long do you think it will take?

XAVIER

I really couldn't say.

ANNA

So is it gonna be a big sculpture or a small one?

XAVIER

Anna...

ANNA

I know, I know, you don't want to say. But this is so exciting. I can't wait till you finish it. You haven't even started and I'm already excited. I am gonna cook you a really big dinner tonight. Something special. It will help your creative juices.

XAVIER

What do you plan to cook?

ANNA

I prefer not to discuss my dinner creations while they're germinating in my head.

XAVIER

You're daft!

ANNA

Don't call me that!

XAVIER

I mean it in the most endearing of manners.

ANNA

In that case, you're a silly Xavi!

XAVIER

(laughing)

You truly make me laugh.

ANNA

Good. Laughing's good for your health.

XAVIER

How so?

ANNA

I don't know. I just read it somewhere. Reader's Digest...no...somewhere...I don't know, but I'm sure it's true.

XAVIER

The next time you're sick, I'll be certain to tickle you to health!

ANNA

You better not!

(XAVIER goes over and tickles ANNA.  
ANNA squirms in XAVIER's arms)

ANNA (Cont'd)

Stop it!

XAVIER

I'm making you healthy.

ANNA

Stop it!

(XAVIER kisses ANNA and releases her)

XAVIER

I'll let you go make a silly dinner while I clean up the studio.

ANNA

What about the supplies?

XAVIER

I'll get those later. I need to figure out where I want them first.

ANNA

If you need any help, just ask.

XAVIER

Thank you for offering. Now you get to work on your masterpiece and I'll prepare for mine.

ANNA

Okay.

(ANNA gives XAVIER a quick kiss on the cheek and exits.

XAVIER goes over to the door, pulls out a key and unlocks it. XAVIER enters the studio, closes the door, and the lock can be heard locking.

ANNA enters)

ANNA (Cont'd)

Xavi?

(ANNA goes over to the door. ANNA carefully tries the doorknob to find it is locked)

XAVIER (offstage)

Anna? Is that you?

ANNA

Uh, yeah. I was just wondering if you wanted linguini noodles or those 'c'-shaped macaroni ones.

XAVIER (offstage)

I thought you weren't going to discuss a work in progress.

ANNA

Huh?

XAVIER (offstage)

Either's fine for me. Cook whatever you like. I'm sure it will be magnificent.

ANNA

I doubt I'd use the word "magnificent."

(beat)

Is it a real mess in there?

XAVIER (offstage)

Yes. But I'm used to it.

ANNA

All right. I'm gonna go start dinner.

XAVIER (offstage)

Call me when it's ready.

ANNA

Sure.

(ANNA goes to walk away but hesitates.  
ANNA goes back to the door and listens.

XAVIER's voice can be heard on the  
other side of the door. ANNA puts her  
ear to the door. XAVIER's voice stops.  
ANNA backs away and listens for a  
moment before exiting)

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