

Le jour se lève

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Based on a story by Jacques Viot

Sequence 1

In a room at the top of a guesthouse, we hear – but don't see – two men arguing, then a gunshot. Valentin, one of the men, staggers out of the room and falls down the stairs. He is dead.

People gather on the street in front of the guesthouse. Inside, two policemen go upstairs and knock on the door. "Just leave me alone. I never want to see anyone ever again!" says François, the man inside, before shooting through the closed door. The police flee.

Outside, a crowd has formed. The police are mobilising. They speak with the concierge, who knows François. "There's no finer man in the building," they are told. Upstairs, François lights a cigarette and paces. "You're in sad shape," he mumbles to himself.

Later that evening, the police scale the outside of a building opposite and shoot through the window of François' room. François remains calm as bullets fly. He walks to the window and looks down at the large crowd in the street.

Fade to...

Sequence 2

Early morning. François leaves his apartment and cycles to his job in a factory. He meets and flirts with Françoise, who works in a flower shop.

Three weeks later. Evening. François shows up at Françoise's home. They talk, and François announces that he wants to marry her. Françoise is clearly in love with François, but she won't commit. She talks of her dream to live on the Riviera, visit the casinos, enjoy the sun and drink Mimosas.

Françoise tells François that he cannot stay because she has to go meet someone. François is surprised. He leaves and is about to cycle home when he decides instead to follow Françoise, who soon leaves home.

At a music hall, Françoise watches the show and from her seat stares at Valentin, who has a performing animal act. He is assisted by Clara, but the two are at odds. Clara storms off the stage and strikes up a conversation with François, who is standing at the back of the room. She tells François that she has quit, and mentions Valentin's endless talk of the Riviera and Mimosas. François notes that Françoise is still sitting, fixated on Valentin. François watches as Françoise leaves with Valentin once the show is over. Outside, Valentin asks Françoise to go home alone and he goes back inside to talk with Clara.

Clara insists that she doesn't want to work with him any longer. François and Valentin clash. Valentin leaves.

Fade to...

Sequence 3

François is up in his room. Police gunmen, out in the corridor, try to shoot down the door of his room. François barricades the door with a large wardrobe. A distraught Clara has arrived but is prevented by police from going upstairs to François' room.

Fade to...

Sequence 4

Two months later.

François leaves his room and walks across the road to a hotel where Clara is staying. Valentin shows up. François and Valentin leave together and talk in a café. Valentin explains that he is François's father. He doesn't want François to see Françoise any longer. François storms out.

François and Françoise meet. She knows he is involved with Clara. François tells Françoise that she should have told him Valentin was her father. She says it isn't true. "He's a lunatic, a liar," says François, who agrees to stop seeing Clara if Françoise stops seeing Valentin. Françoise gives François a broach and tells him: "My most prized possession."

François tells Clara he can't see her any longer. Clara gives him a broach – the same one Françoise gave him – and explains that it came from Valentin. "He gives one to each of his conquests."

Fade to...

Sequence 5

François in his room. He picks up the broach and throws it across the room.

The next morning he goes to the window and looks out at the crowd. Françoise arrives. The crowd offers its support to François. Françoise faints and is carried up to Clara's room.

Fade to...

Sequence 6

Valentin shows up at François' room. He is furious, but admits he isn't Françoise's father and that he came to kill François. He shows François the gun he has brought. François shoots Valentin.

Fade to...

Sequence 7

François in his room. Françoise and Clara talk. The police prepare to fire teargas into François' room when he shoots himself.