

TUESDAY, AFTER CHRISTMAS / Marți, după Crăciun (2010) RADU MUNTEAN

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OVERVIEW

Auteur Radu Muntean (b. 1971) is a Romanian film director and screenwriter and prominent figure of the Romanian New Wave that emerged after the fall of the communist regime in Romania in 1989. The son of a reputed director, filmmaker and TV producer, Muntean obtained his film directing degree from the Theatre and Film Academy (Bucharest) in 1994. Apart from his highly valued work in the cinema (documentaries, short movies and feature films), Muntean has also applied his artistic expertise to the advertising industry and directed numerous commercials for which he has won national and international awards in industry-related festivals. Muntean's movies have gained him not only national but also international recognition the Film Festival Cottbus Grand Prize and Special Prize for Best Director and Namur International Festival of French-Speaking Film for *The Paper Will Be Blue* (2006); Best Director Romanian Union of Filmmakers Award, Best Screenplay at Hamptons International Film Festival for *Summer Holiday* (2008); Jury Prize at Sarasota Film Festival and Best Feature at Adelaide Film Festival for *Tuesday, After Christmas* (2010); Cannes *Un Certain Regard* Award Nomination and Special Citation by National Society of Film Critic Awards, USA for *One Floor Below* (2015); Namur International Festival Jury Special Prize and Carmel Award at Haifa International Film Festival for *Intregalde* (2021). His other productions (*The Rage*, 2002; *Alice T.*, 2018) have also received several special international mentions, accolades and nominations.

Film For *Tuesday, After Christmas*, Muntean has received several awards and nominations for either the best feature or the lead actors' best performance. At the Gijón International Film Festival, the movie was awarded the prize for the Best Film, Best Actor and Best Actress; at the Sarasota Film Festival, it won the Jury Prize for Best Narrative Feature. It also received notable nominations at Cannes Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, Mar del Plata Film Festival and Gopo Awards ((a highly prestigious national award in Romania, similar to the Academy Awards in the US).

The movie title marks the day when the characters' lives will take a dramatic turn: it means an end for Adriana (her marriage has fallen apart), a beginning for Paul as he moves in with Raluca, and the day Raluca is to come back from Constanta (her home town).

Critics have remarked the similarities between this movie and *Boogie* (2008), but this time the male character is in his forties and more mature. Muntean has not agreed that *Tuesday, After Christmas* is a continuation of his earlier movie. He has also refuted any misogynistic perspective that has been associated with his focus on the male character. He has declared that, as a matter of fact, he has sought to build strong female characters and highlight their remarkable resilience and wisdom when men fail to do so.

CINEMATIC NARRATION

The movie narrative is constructed in a quite minimalist mode, pursuing a linear unfolding of the story events. It is worth noting that the camera frequently zooms in to show the characters' body language, which is reflective of their dilemmas, anxieties and tension. Two stories run parallel and go into the three main characters' intimacy to a rather voyeuristic extent. The few instances of foul language are not censured, which heightens the realism of the protagonists' critical life moments and the strong emotional reactions they trigger. In one of his interviews, Muntean declared that the movie was 'easy to make logistically' due to the few characters and locations. However, given that the subject is quite delicate, he said that the difficulty arose when he had to 'film feelings', without turning the story into a melodrama. On the whole, the movie invites introspection by creating relatable characters whose lives are turned upside down when betrayed by the loved ones. Loss and eventually the disintegration of their world (the family) put the main protagonists on an emotional carousel that the camera subtly captures through zoom-ins and zoom-outs of their gestures, facial expressions and moments of silence.

SYNOPSIS

Tuesday, After Christmas, is a slice of life which follows an ordinary family around Christmas and their preparations for this festive time of the year (the story is set in Bucharest, around the 2000s). Paul Hanganu is a bank credit broker, married to Adriana, with whom he shares an eight-year-old-daughter, Mara. On one side, Paul acts like a dedicated family man who goes shopping with Adriana, picks Mara up from school and takes her to the dentist and piano lessons, and has planned a family skiing trip to Kaprun, Austria, for the winter holidays. On the other side, he has been having an extramarital affair with Raluca, his daughter's dentist for six months. One afternoon, Paul takes Mara for a dental check-up, but an announced strike at work gives Adriana the time to join them at the clinic. After the appointment, Raluca leaves for Constanta to see her mom, and refuses to talk to Paul about the unexpected encounter until her return. Anxious and worried about Raluca's feelings, Paul pretends he has to work on Saturday and leaves for Constanta to surprise her. The two lovers make up, and soon after Paul gets back home, he tells Adriana the truth, which causes their separation. For Mara's sake, however, Adriana and Paul put their differences aside to offer their daughter one more Christmas together as a family.

CHARACTERS

<i>Paul Hanganu</i>	A bank credit broker
<i>Adriana Hanganu</i>	A lawyer and Paul's wife
<i>Raluca</i>	A young dentist and Paul's lover
<i>Mara</i>	Paul and Adriana's eight-year-old daughter
<i>Cristi</i>	Paul's friend
<i>Nucu</i>	Paul's father
<i>Ica</i>	Paul's mother

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Paul

In his early forties, Paul leads a double life: at home, he acts like a good father and husband; when meeting his lover, Raluca, he is greatly enamored of her. He is able to dissimulate his feelings quite well at home for a while, which explains Adriana's utter shock when he tells her the truth. Paul is afflicted with guilt and remorse at leaving his wife, yet, determined and brave enough to risk everything on his relationship with Raluca.

Sarcastic Paul frequently makes sarcastic comments, especially when he is confronted with a situation that he is not comfortable with. For example, when he returns from Constanta and his sister-in-law wonders why his clients require his services even on Saturday, too, he sneers: 'Thank God that they do not ask for your opinion'.

Caring Paul's caring side emerges not only when he is around his daughter, Mara, but also his wife, Adriana. One of the most relevant examples of his affection for Adriana is his evidently troubled and concerned attitude when he sees the suffering he provokes by telling her the truth about his affair. In spite of her bitter and harsh reproaches, he begs her gently: 'Please, understand that I am destroyed, too. I am devastated...and I don't want to hurt you.'

Weak Paul's weakness manifests itself especially in the scenes in which Raluca treats him coldly. This happens, for example, when he calls her to say sorry about putting her in the awkward position of meeting his wife at the clinic. She refuses to talk to him over the phone and says that they will discuss when she is back on Tuesday. Unable to keep his feelings under control, he lies to Adriana that he has to work on Saturday and goes to Constanta to soften Raluca up.

Adriana

Adriana is also in her forties and comes across as a caring mother and wife. She is a strong and independent woman, who accepts no half measures. She carefully hides the pain and suffering caused by Paul's actions in order for Mara to enjoy her Christmas holiday, blissfully unaware of her parents' separation.

Caring Adriana is a warm and caring mother, for whom her child's welfare is a priority. She takes care to teach Mara good manners, such as washing her hands before a meal, but she also shows interest in what the girl tells her. For instance, in the dental clinic waiting room, Mara excitedly explains the entire procedure of having the X-rays that she shows to her mom. Adriana looks at the X-rays and listens to Mara carefully, praising her for being so brave.

Strong Adriana's strength emerges especially in the scene in which Paul tells her the truth about his affair. Although her state of mind goes from numbness to fury and then acceptance, at no point does she beg Paul not to leave her. When he says that being together with her and Raluca at the same time would not have been possible, she sarcastically replies, 'Why not? There are women who find out that their husbands cheat on them and they choose to ignore it'. However, she regains herself quite quickly and asks him to take his things and leave the house.

Responsible As hurt as she may feel about Paul's betrayal, Adriana's attitude in the final scenes of the movie

highlights her deep sense of responsibility towards her child. She wants to save Mara's Christmas and turns up for the Christmas dinner at her parents-in-law's house. Mara greets her at the door and Adriana talks to her cheerfully. When alone with Paul in the kitchen, she changes the tone and tells him that she wants Mara to find out the truth at the right moment to avoid traumatizing her.

Raluca

Raluca is an attractive twenty-seven-year-old woman, with an accomplished professional career; despite her young age, she has managed to set up her own dental clinic. Her interactions with Paul reveal her complex personality: she shows herself as sensitive and vulnerable in some moments, but also as cold, dominant and an emotional manipulator on other occasions.

Direct Raluca does not hesitate to speak her mind when she is bothered by something that Paul does against her wishes or expectations. When, for example, he gives her two tickets to a concert to which to go together, she gets upset because it is on a day when she will be in Constanta to see her mother. In a reproachful tone, she says to him, 'I would prefer to decide such things together'.

Strong One particular scene that highlights Raluca's strong character is when she meets Adriana at her clinic. Visibly troubled by the situation, she still manages to remain professional and calm. Later on, Paul calls her to say sorry that he could not prevent the meeting. From his reactions and words, viewers can understand that Raluca is upset and refuses to discuss the matter with him over the phone, thus leaving him to boil with misery.

Sensitive Raluca's reaction when Paul unexpectedly turns up at her mother's house is initially cold and dismissive, but, once they make up, her sensitive side comes out as she softens her voice and tells him how much she has suffered because of him: 'Of course, meeting your wife has troubled me...I cried like a fool all night, thinking about what I should do.'

THEMES

1. Family The theme of family is explored in relation to appearance and reality. Paul and Adriana seem to have a stable and harmonious relationship: they have been married for ten years, share a daughter whom they both love, have arranged to spend their winter holidays all together in Kaprun, discuss daily-life matters and do the Christmas shopping together. In reality, however, Paul has been leading a double life in the past six months since he started an affair with Raluca, Mara's dentist. When Paul is neither able to cope with his feelings of guilt for lying to his wife, nor willing to spend time away from Raluca any longer, he makes the decision to tell his wife the truth, which causes the immediate disintegration of his family. At the opposite pole, there are Paul's parents, who have passed the test of time and still quite involved in their son's life. The Christmas tree that Paul and his father meet to buy is put up in their house. Despite the fact that Paul is an adult now, his parents give Adriana money to buy him a pair of winter boots and spoil Mara with presents even though Paul disagrees with the idea. The two families have the Christmas meal together, with the older one excited to have their son and his family with them while the younger one pretends to still be a family for their sake and Mara's.

2. Marriage After ten years together, Paul and Adriana's marriage is shown as based on trust, communication and shared preoccupation with their daughter's wellbeing and education. Adriana is shown styling her husband's hair, and Paul massages her feet when she is tired. They also have a social life because they go out with friends. Before breaking the news of his affair to Adriana, the two protagonists treat each other in a respectful and affectionate way. They joke about various things and share similar views, especially when they comment on Adriana's sister's tendency to spoil her husband with expensive gifts. When Raluca and Paul have a fight and she leaves for Constanta, Paul can hardly hide his anxiety. Adriana shows genuine concern for his state of mind, which she puts down to tiredness. Adriana's complete trust in him does not even make her suspect his decision to go to Constanta to meet some customers on a Saturday. If the scenes showing Paul together with his wife were to be compared to those in which he is in the company of Raluca, the emotional dynamic is completely different. Paul's marriage has settled into a dull, monotonous and predictable routine, whereas his affair with a much younger woman displays thrill and exhilaration.

3. Parenthood Paul and Adriana are good parents to Mara, both showing concern with her health, education and happiness. For example, in the scene in which Paul goes to pick Mara up from school and she is sad because her friend has stolen her pen and now makes nasty comments about her together with other classmates, he tries to reassure her and advises her to ignore them and stop being a friend with that girl, whom he 'did not like, anyway'. Then, in the dental clinic scene, although Raluca gives her expert advice for Mara to wear braces for at least a year, Adriana does not impose it on her daughter. On the contrary, she gently asks Mara whether she is sure about the braces and explains to her the inconveniences of wearing them almost all the time. Adriana is worried that Mara has started suspecting that Santa Claus is not real. She and Paul try to keep her innocence intact, so, when it comes to putting the presents under the Christmas tree, Adriana has her grandfather distract her while Paul sneaks the presents

under the tree. They also tacitly agree to keep their falling apart as a family a secret so as not to ruin her Christmas fun.

4. Betrayal Paul has embarked on an affair with Raluca for six months already, but is unable to be honest with his wife about it. As a matter of fact, the opening scene of the movie that closely follows the two lovers in their intimacy introduces viewers to what is to be a recurring theme in the movie, that is, betrayal. The most relevant scene in which betrayal is revealed and discussed is when Paul can no longer hide his feelings and tells Adriana about his affair. Her reaction at the news of his affair is initially calm, but when she hears that he has been in a relationship with another woman for six months, that Raluca is Mara's dentist whom she also met and consulted about Mara's oral health problem, Adriana starts seething with anger. She feels betrayed and deeply disappointed that her husband has chosen a younger woman over their ten-year marriage and child. She says, 'You tell Mara that her father is no longer together with her mom.' She is completely taken aback by Paul's confession because nothing in his behavior at home until that moment could have prepared her for that sudden break-up.

5. Attraction Paul treats Adriana with respect and affection, but he seems to relive his youth when he is with Raluca. He becomes more energetic, laughs more and looks more relaxed. He is physically drawn to her as his body language suggests in their private moments. When she has to leave town, he gets restless and cannot stop thinking about her, as he confesses to her during one of their conversations. In the scene in which Adriana finds out about Raluca, Paul confesses that he 'is deeply in love' with someone else and does not know how that has happened. Adriana blames 'his idiotic behavior' on the fact that Raluca is much younger than he and she: 'So, you have eventually found a younger woman'. He begs her to understand that his relationship with Raluca was not something planned and that he has hoped that he will grow out of it. Even though he looks genuinely sorrowful that his confession has caused her so much suffering, the attraction that he feels for Raluca is evidently stronger than his feelings for Adriana.

6. Deception / Lies Paul has hidden the truth from his wife and continued to play his husband-father's role as if nothing was happening in his life outside home. One of the most illustrative scenes is when Paul sits on the sofa, pretending to watch TV while Adriana is resting next to him. He looks upset and thoughtful as he and Raluca had an argument on the phone when she was on her way to her mother's place in Constanta. Adriana asks him for a foot-rub favor, and while he is massaging her feet, he wants to know what she will do the next day. She says that she may go out with a friend and invites him to join them, but he nonchalantly finds the excuse of a work trip to Constanta that he has to take the next day. Not having the slightest suspicion of the real reason behind Paul's trip, Adriana sounds upset when she hears that he has to work even on Saturday: 'What do they still want from you...on a Saturday?' He sighs and gives an evasive reply, 'They still want...', then changing the subject to Mara. The next day, he drives on the motorway to Constanta and has a return call from Adriana. He continues to behave like a responsible and caring husband and asks her if she wants him to buy anything on the way back home.

7. Anger The theme of anger is anticipated from the very first scene and somehow looms in the background until the truth-revealing moment when Paul can no longer keep his double life a secret. That scene shows Adriana in a state of shock that gradually turns into utter fury as she finds out more details about the woman her husband has an affair with. When Adriana hears that Raluca is Mara's dentist, and that she has actually met and even talked to her in the clinic, she bursts out in a fit of anger and starts hitting Paul, calling him terrible names and threatening him that she will make sure he will never see his daughter again. At some point during their talk, she sarcastically tells him: 'I don't know what you have imagined. That she and I will become friends? Or, that I will ignore it?' He tries to explain to her that things are not the way she says, but she is too frustrated and angry to listen to or believe him. He tries to tell her that he thought it fair for her to know the truth, but her reaction is very hostile: 'What do you want me to do now? To congratulate you that you have been honest? Well done, Paul! Thank you for telling me and destroying my life'. When Adriana finally manages to calm down a little, her voice remains extremely sharp: 'Take your things and leave! Go wherever you want!'

8. Separation The theme of separation comes up for discussion in Paul's confession scene. However, it is not Paul who says they should break up, but Adriana. When it comes to Mara and how they are going to tell her about their separation, Paul suggests they should do it together, but she firmly rejects the idea, 'No, Paul! We are no longer doing things together!' After their fight, Paul is about to leave the flat while Adriana sits in the living smoking quietly. He approaches her and gently holds her face as she bursts into tears again, which points to the fact that their separation is difficult for him, too, even more so because Mara, whom they both love, is also involved. They arrive at Paul's parents' house for the Christmas dinner separately. Even though they act as if they were still a family in front of the others, when alone in the kitchen, Adriana explains to Paul the legal implications of their separation for Mara.

9. Love The theme of love is explored from different perspectives: parental, marital and extra-marital. First, Adriana and Paul both clearly love Mara and make efforts to offer her a good education (e.g., they pay for piano lessons, take her on holidays abroad like the forthcoming skiing trip to Kaprun, Austria) and life (e.g., they have meals together as a family and buy her the skateboard she has wished for). The scenes in which Paul and his wife are together, their conversations, tender gestures and shared concerns show their love for each other. After ten years of marriage, Paul and Adriana's relationship may have lost its intensity of passion, but they are still comfortable with each

other, spend time and plan family activities together. With Adriana, Paul experiences love in its mature form whereas with Raluca, he lives passionate love combined with physical attraction, separation anxiety and possessiveness. Paul's decision to confess his feelings for another woman to his wife, yet maintaining his calm and an understanding attitude towards Adriana's emotional outburst, paradoxically shows his affection for both women. For Paul, love is a complicated matter: on the one hand, he feels guilty and cannot lie to Adriana any more, which means that he will lose her; and on the other hand, he ventures into a new life with Raluca without whom he thinks he cannot live.

10. Caring One of the most representative scenes for this theme is the Christmas meal at the house of Paul's parents when he and Adriana make visible efforts to set their differences and hurt egos aside for Mara's sake. They keep their voices down during their brief heated exchange in the kitchen as they do not want to spoil their daughter's joy. Grandpa also participates in this plan of distracting Mara while the Christmas presents are placed under the tree. To this end, he takes her to listen to the carols sung by a group of children that have just rung the doorbell of their flat. In the meantime Paul carries the presents hidden in the pantry next to the living room where the Christmas trees decorated. In this way, the entire family aims to prolong Mara's innocence and let her continue to believe in Santa Claus as long as possible.

SCENES

Paul's sexcapade Paul and Raluca have had sex and now snuggle up to each other a little longer, chatting and giggling. Raluca checks Paul's teeth and suggests his having a scaling procedure when he brings his daughter, Mara, to her clinic. Raluca tells Paul that she will go to Constanta (the main port city on the Romanian Black Sea coast) to see her mother. When he asks for a cigarette, she throws a pack of quit-smoking gummies at him.



Christmas shopping Paul and Adriana are in town, shopping for Christmas presents. Adriana is trying on some clothes while Paul is looking around the shop, waiting for her. At some point, she hands him a pair of winter boots to try on, saying that his parents gave her the money for them. They then decide to buy a pink skateboard, which is too big for Mara, but it is the last one in stock.



Dinner time Paul and Adriana have started eating in the kitchen while Mara is in the bathroom, washing her hands. The parents talk about Mara's suspicions that Santa Claus may not receive her letters any longer. When Mara is back to the table, they change the subject. Mara makes a fuss about the salad she has to eat, saying that she is not 'a giraffe to eat grass'.



In Raluca's flat Raluca tells Paul about her plan to buy Mara a Christmas present, too, but he does not see the point. However, Raluca gives him a red gift bag out of which he takes a pair of children's pink winter socks, which he finds beautiful. He kisses her on Mara's behalf.



Paul's Christmas present Before leaving Raluca's flat, Paul gives her two tickets for a concert on December 23rd, but she reacts sharply, saying that she will be visiting her mom in Constanta on that day and that 'these are things they should decide together'. Paul acts hurt, then Raluca playfully pushes him towards the exit door and they kiss goodbye passionately.



Mara's problem Paul has picked Mara up from school to take her to the dentist (Raluca). While driving to the clinic, Paul finds out from Mara that she is upset because one of her school friends now makes nasty comments about her with other friends. Paul advises her to try to ignore them.

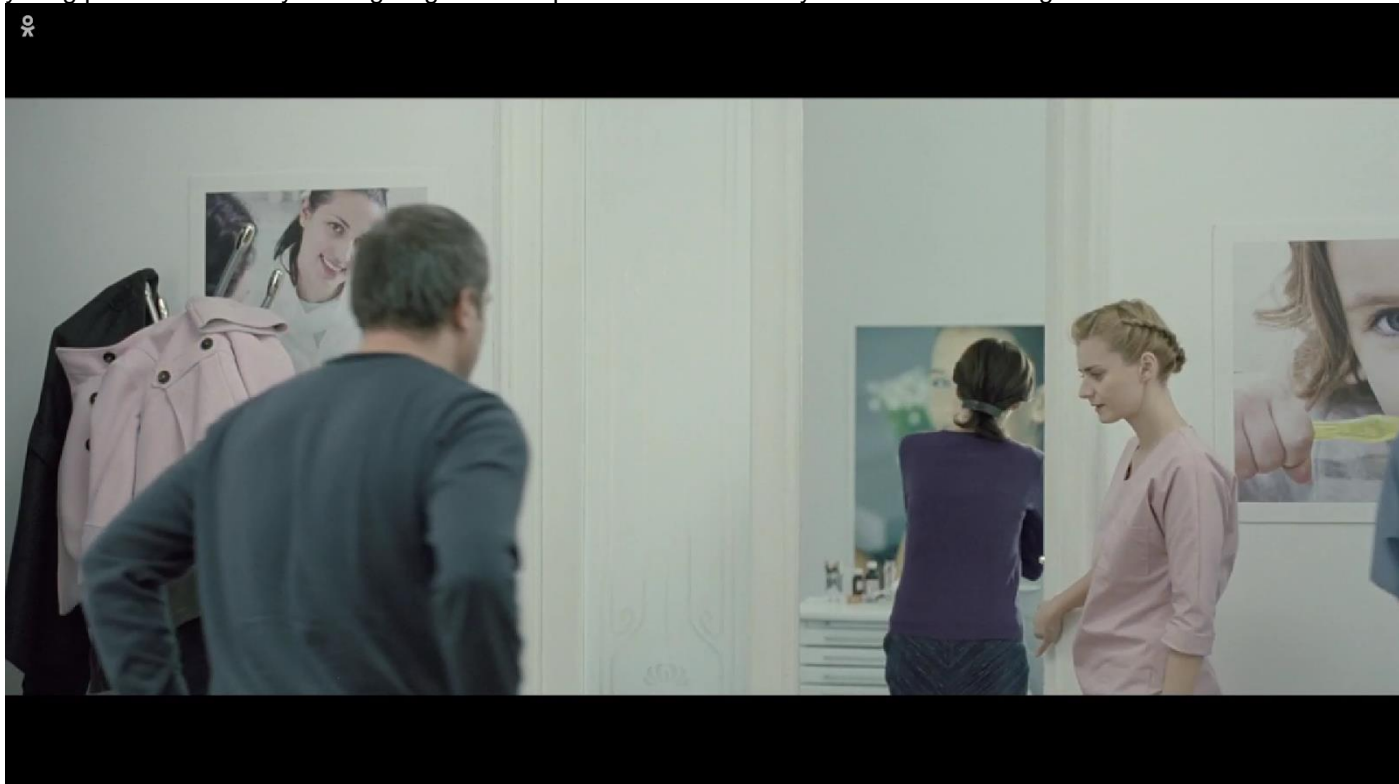


An unexpected situation Adriana calls Paul to tell him that the Court registrars have gone on an announced strike and that she is now free to meet them at the clinic. Paul says that it is only a check-up and that he could go to pick her up, too, afterwards, but Adriana insists on joining them at the clinic. Paul sends Raluca a text after his wife's call.

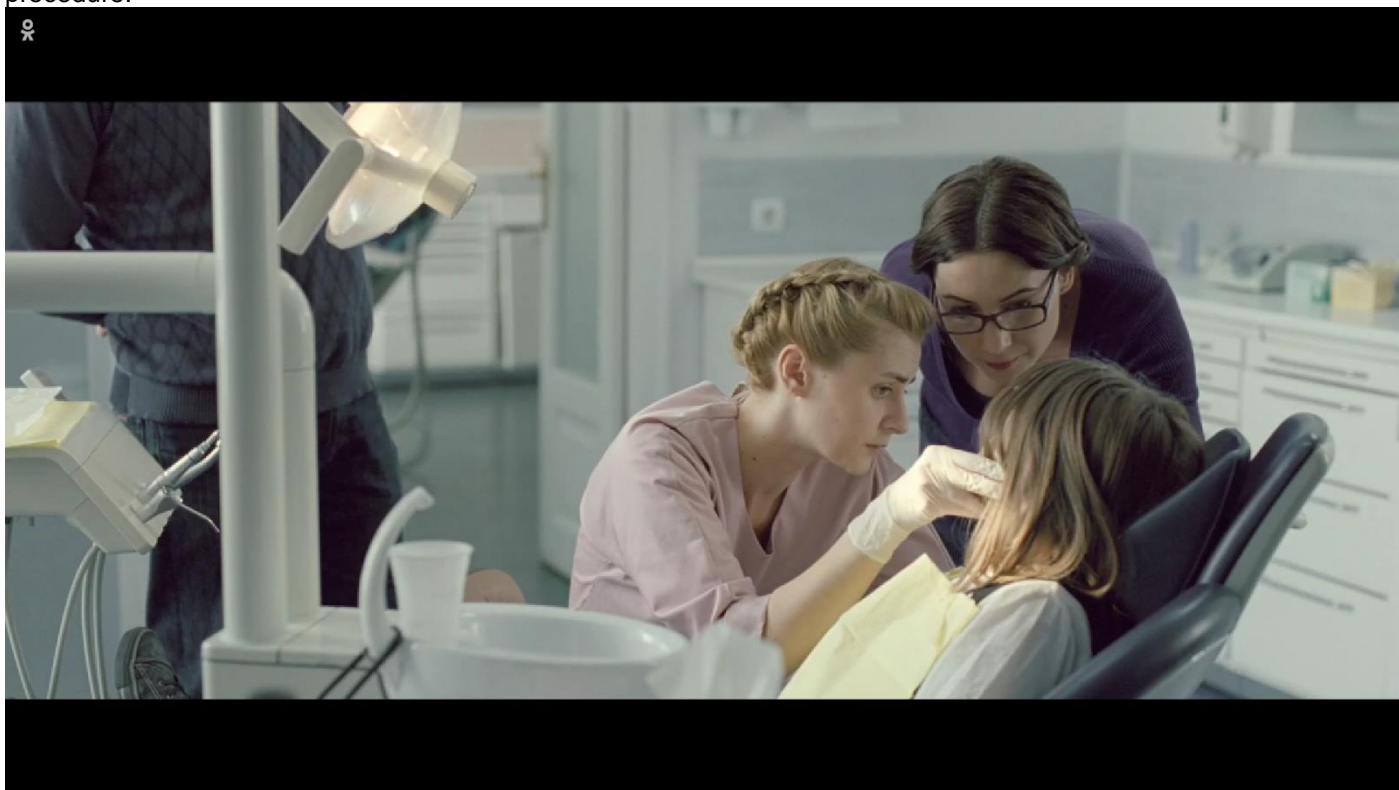
At the dental clinic Adriana is already there when Paul and Mara arrive at the clinic. Mara excitedly shows her mother the X-rays of teeth and describes the procedure she has gone through to get them. Adriana praises her daughter for being so brave while Paul quietly listens to them, with an anxious look on his face.



A brief conversation Raluca's assistant, Mircea, comes out in the hall to tell Paul that Raluca will see them in a few minutes. The two men talk about Mircea's house, whose construction he had to stop for financial reasons. Mircea tells Paul that he may contact him for extra credit that he needs to be able to finish the house. Raluca politely greets her young patient and family while giving Paul a reproachful look as they enter her consulting room.



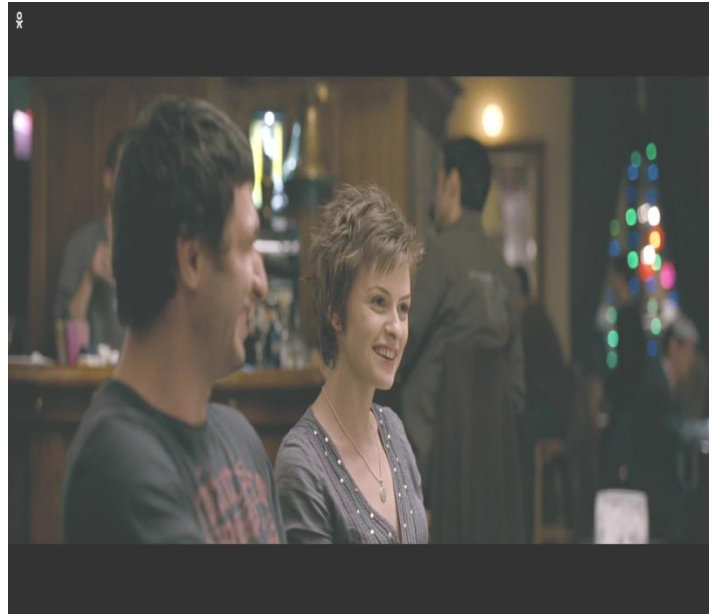
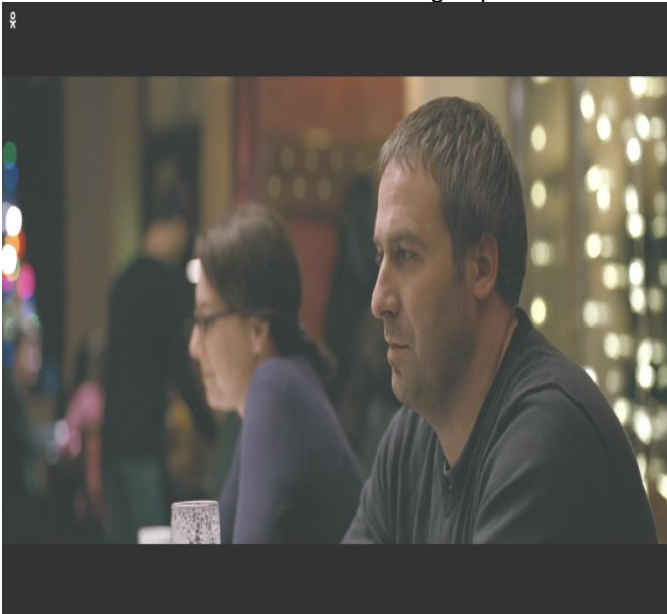
The consultation Raluca checks the X-rays and starts explaining to Adriana why she recommends mobile braces. On hearing that Mara should wear braces for a year, Adriana hesitates to make a decision. She asks Mara whether she is sure she will wear the braces, and the girl says she will. As Raluca gets ready to take measurements for Mara's braces, Paul suggests going out 'to let the people their job', but Adriana asks for permission to stay and watch the procedure.



On the way to grandparents' place Paul and Adriana take Mara to spend some days over at his parents' place. As they come out of the car, Paul tells Mara off for slamming the door and shows her how she should close it. On their way to the block of flats where Paul's parents live, Adriana gives Mara several gentle reminders on how to take her medicine.



Dinner out with friends Paul and Adriana have dinner out with their friend, Cristi and his girlfriend. They chat and have good fun together. Cristi says that he has decided not to share the car ride for the skiing holiday in Austria with them because there will not be enough space for his skateboard and skis.



The phone call Paul excuses himself and leaves the dinner table to go the bathroom. He calls Raluca to apologize for not being able to dissuade Adriana from joining him and Mara at the clinic. He says that she has every right to be upset and they should talk about it when she is back from Constanta.



Family time Paul watches TV quietly when Adriana, who is lying next to him, says that he can turn the volume up because she is not sleeping. She gently asks him if he could give her a foot massage, which he does while they talk about work matters, payments for Mara's piano lessons and dental treatment and their plans for the next day. Paul tells his wife that he will have to go to Constanta to talk with some clients.



Driving to Constanta Paul is on his way to Constanta when he receives a return call from Adriana. They gossip a little about Adriana's sister, who has bought her husband an expensive Christmas present. Then Paul says he has called her to check whether she wants him to buy anything when he comes back home.



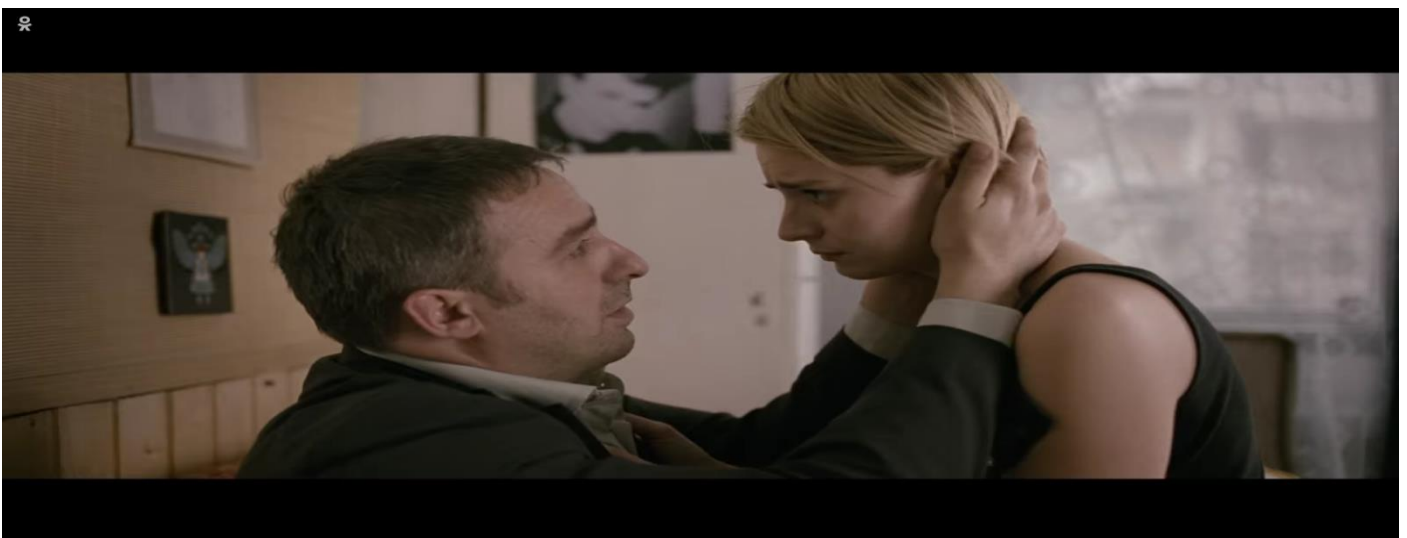
An awkward meeting Paul rings the doorbell of the flat where Raluca's mom lives and, as she invites him in, she tells him that her daughter is having a shower. They politely exchange some thoughts about Mara and Raluca, but at some point, Raluca's mom says she has to go to the kitchen as she has 'something on the cooker'.



A cold greeting Raluca comes out of the bathroom, but she treats Paul coldly, asking him why he is there. Paul replies that he wanted to surprise her and that he is sorry that she is not happy to see him. In the same sharp tone, she says she is happy to see him and invites him to her room.



A make-up present Raluca confesses to Paul that it was very difficult for her to manage her feelings when she met 'the other woman in his life' at the clinic the other day. Paul takes a watch out of his pocket and gives it to her. Impressed to see that he has found the exact type of watch that she has wished for, she softens her tone and they make up.



Back home Paul arrives at home and finds his sister-in-law, Cosmina, and Adriana chatting. Cosmina annoys Paul by wondering how come he has to work even on Christmas Eve. Paul unpacks his shopping while Adriana sees her sister off. When back to the kitchen, she asks him why he is so crabby and he says that he is just tired.

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The Christmas tree Paul meets his father at an open-air market to buy the Christmas tree. While waiting for their tree, Paul tells his father off for spoiling Mara with extra presents that were not on the Christmas list. The grandfather ignores the reproach and double-checks with Paul whether a bag would be a good present for Adriana.

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SEPARATION

Confession The next morning Paul is making coffee while Adriana is on her phone with her sister. She finishes the conversation and notices that Paul is very tense when she touches his shoulders. After some quiet moments, Paul confesses that he is deeply in love with another woman. Adriana tells Paul that he is 'her greatest disappointment' and goes to answer the ringing phone.



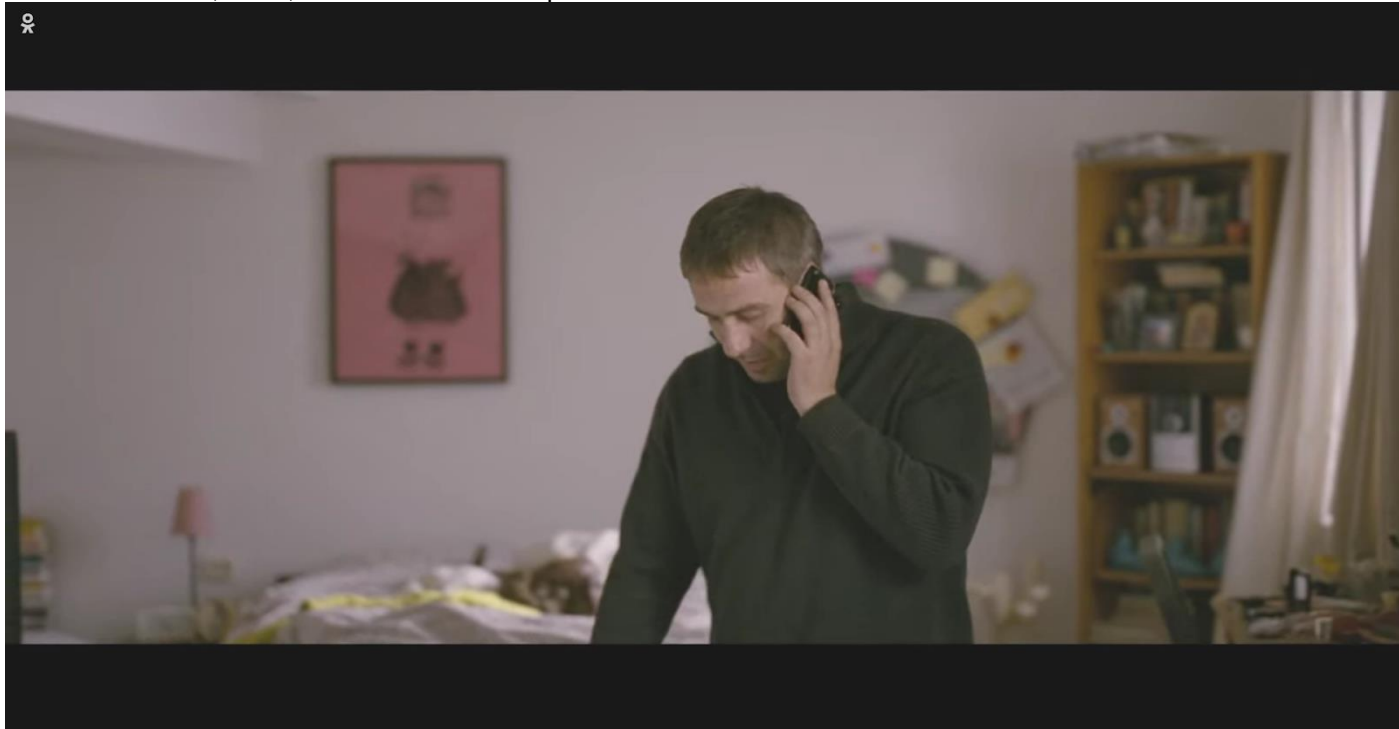
The fight Adriana gets more and more distressed as Paul gives her more details about his affair. She completely loses her temper when, upon her request, Paul calls Raluca to tell her that he has told his wife the truth. She hits him several times and they start wrestling. Adriana eventually calms down and urges him to pack his things and go away.



A painful goodbye Before leaving the flat, Paul stops to talk to Adriana, who sits on a chair disconsolate. She first threatens that she will make sure he will never see Mara again, but then bursts into tears. He caresses her face gently, unable to say something to comfort her.



Moving in Paul is tidying Raluca's bedroom up a little. She is still at her mom's place in Constanta, so he gives her a call to tell her that he has moved some of his things in her flat. The intercom rings and Paul lets Raluca know that it is his friend, Cristi, who has come to help him assemble a new wardrobe.



Friends' chat Cristi asks Paul for a beer before they start assembling the flat-pack wardrobe. Cristi looks around and praises Raluca's taste in interior designing. He also remarks on the small size of the flat, which he says will make it difficult for two people to live in.



THE CHRISTMASS DINNER

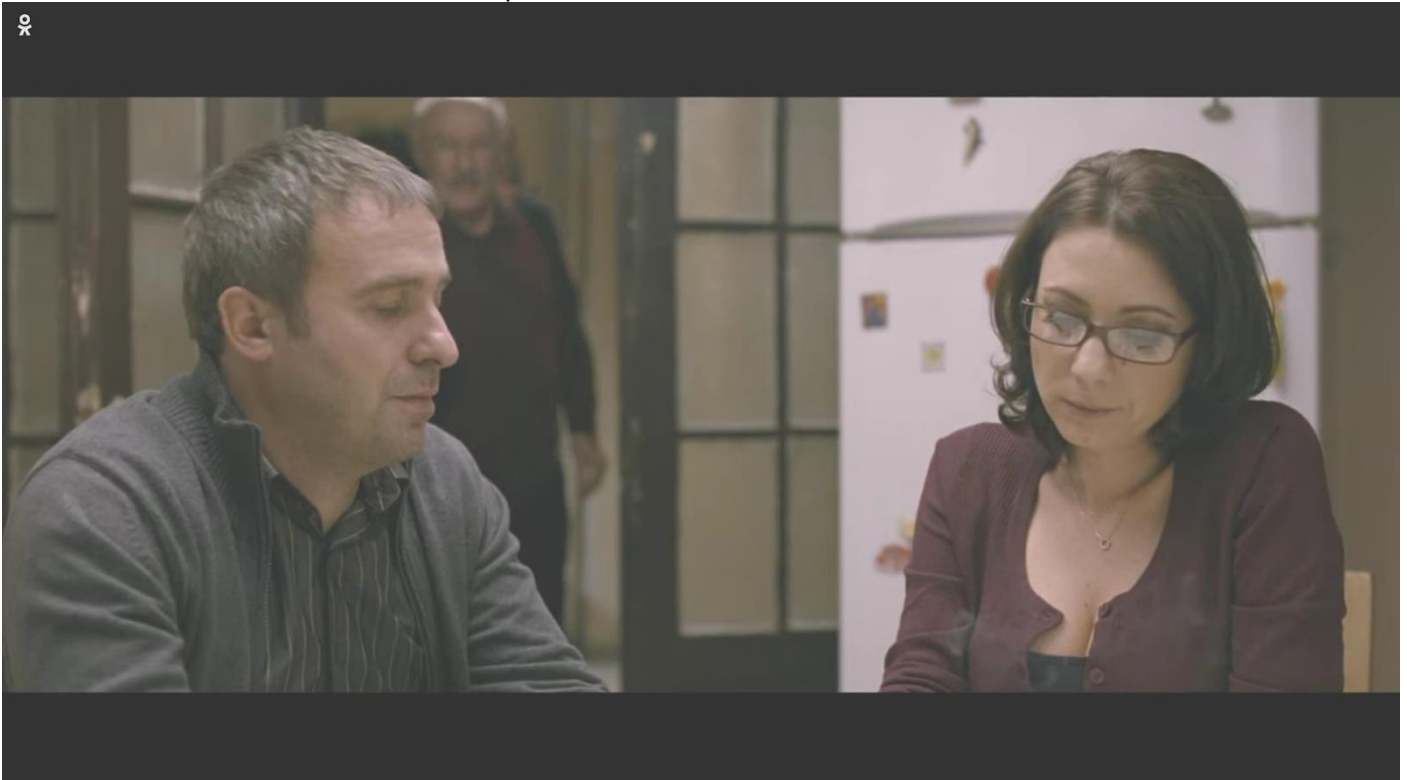
Grandparents Paul has arrived at his parents' flat for Christmas dinner and his parents ask him why he has come alone. Paul tells them that Adriana is on her way, too. While the grandparents set the table, Mara shows her father some presents she has received. Paul's father gets impatient as Adriana is late for dinner.



Adriana's arrival Adriana and Paul are in the kitchen, talking about what to do next. Paul has put off telling his parents about his separation from Adriana until after the holidays, which makes her sarcastically comment on his taking so much care not to hurt them. Adriana does not want to cancel the holiday to Kaprun, but take Mara there on her own.



The Agreement Adriana tells Paul that she needs a notary public declaration that she can take the child out of the country. Paul agrees to do as she says. She concludes that they will see when and how it is best to tell Mara about their separation. Grandmother and Mara go to open the entrance door for some children carolers while grandfather comes in the kitchen to remind Paul of the presents.



The presents Grandfather and Adriana stand in front of the living room doorway while Paul carries the Christmas presents from the pantry to the tree. To keep Mara distracted until her father has sneaked all the presents in, grandfather asks the carolers to sing one more song.

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